

### Talking Points for Letter

1. Thank you (MEMBER OF CONGRESS) for the HEERF funding provided to the higher education institutions/students in California.
2. According to the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), the state of California:
  - Was awarded a total of \$10,071,415,256 in HEERF funds
  - The student portion was \$4,132,945,977
  - 500 Institutions of Higher Education received these funds

Some examples of how students in California used the HEERF emergency grants:

- San Joaquin Delta College (HSI in Stockton, California) has already earmarked \$6.2 million of their ARP allocation to provide direct grants to over 4,100 students that have shown the highest need for financial support.
  - Foothill-De Anza Community College (Los Altos Hills, California) established a Mental Wellness Ambassador program aimed at promoting mental health services, reducing stigma surrounding mental health disorders, creating community, and fostering an inclusive and non-judgmental campus culture, using previous rounds of relief funding.
  - The University of San Francisco provided HEERF funds to nearly one-third of their student population. Students in our nursing program were especially thankful for the funds as some of them have been on the frontlines throughout the pandemic.
3. Some examples demonstrating the impact the emergency grants had on students' wellbeing, as well as their postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion:
    - Prinezz Sangco, 23, spent the pandemic working full time while attending college, but even with that income, she said, she often struggled to pay those bills. She said she felt relief when she received two separate emergency grants of \$700 and \$400, which she put toward rent. "Covid Relief for California Community College Students Depends on the School They Attend" *EdSource*. Michael Burke August 25, 2021
    - Heather, a single mother and student at Sierra College's satellite campus in rural Nevada County, was able to continue her studies by using HEERF 3 funds for books and to service her car.
    - Hannah, a third-year nursing student, expressed gratitude for the funds as she used them to "purchase additional PPE and fund her transportation to and fro the hospital" for her required clinical rotations.
  4. Some examples of how schools in California used the institutional HEERF dollars.
    - Cal Poly Pomona used HEERF funds for purposes such as PPE (\$319,000), faculty training and course conversion (\$1.8 million), emergency pay (\$493,000), and refunds (\$10 million); "Campus Administrators Promote New Budget Initiatives in Annual Budget Meeting" *Poly Post* November 9, 2021 Joshua Hernandez



Dear Members of California's Congressional Delegation,

On behalf of the California Association of Financial Aid Administrators (CASFAA) which represents 1,130 financial aid professionals working in California to support students and families across the state as they pursue postsecondary education, we extend gratitude to each of you for the support you have shown our state's higher education sector over the last 18 months as we navigated the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. We write today to specifically express our sincere appreciation for the federal relief funding provided to California colleges and universities through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), and to share the tremendous impact that this funding has had on postsecondary students and institutions across the state since the onset of the pandemic.

Colleges and universities in California received a total of \$10,071,415,256 from the three rounds of funding approved by Congress since March 2020, including \$4,132,945,977 that was allocated specifically for emergency grants that went directly to students. 500 institutions in California received HEERF grants, and the funds received have been critical to each of these institutions and the students they serve.

The emergency grants provided through the HEERF student portion have served as a critical lifeline to California's students throughout the pandemic, many of whom experienced unemployment and financial hardships over the last 18 months. In some cases, especially for many low-income students, the emergency HEERF grants made the difference in a student being able to continue their enrollment, helping to cover unexpected expenses and make up for lost income. Although our institutions have heard countless anecdotes of how this funding has helped students weather these challenging times, here are just a few examples of how the emergency grants have impacted students in California throughout the pandemic:

- Foothill-De Anza Community College (Los Altos Hills, California) established a Mental Wellness Ambassador program aimed at promoting mental health services, reducing stigma surrounding mental health disorders, creating community, and fostering an inclusive and non-judgmental campus culture, using previous rounds of relief funding
- San Joaquin Delta College (HSI in Stockton, California) has already earmarked \$6.2 million of their ARP allocation to provide direct grants to over 4,100 students that have shown the highest need for financial support.
- Mt. San Antonio college student Prinezz Sangco, 23, spent the pandemic working full time while attending college, but even with that income, she said, she often struggled to pay those bills. She said she felt relief when she received two separate emergency grants of \$700 and \$400, which she put toward rent.
- Heather, a single mother and student at Sierra College's satellite campus in rural Nevada County, was able to continue her studies by using HEERF 3 funds for books and to service her car.
- The University of San Francisco provided HEERF funds to nearly one-third of their student population. Students in our nursing program were especially thankful for the funds as some of them have been on the frontlines throughout the pandemic.

Beyond providing direct support to students across the state, HEERF dollars have also played a critical role in ensuring California colleges and universities have sufficient resources to cover pandemic-related expenses and the costs of safely reopening. Because of the flexibility provided by Congress, schools were able to use their institutional funds to meet the unique needs of their students and campus community. Here are just a few examples of how California institutions relied on this critically important funding throughout the pandemic:

- Cal Poly Pomona used HEERF funds for purposes such as PPE (\$319,000), faculty training and course conversion (\$1.8 million), emergency pay (\$493,000), and refunds (\$10 million)

As demonstrated in the examples above, the relief funding provided to California's postsecondary students and institutions through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) has made a demonstrable impact in protecting higher education access and opportunity in our state. We are sincerely grateful to Congress for providing students and institutions with this much-needed lifeline, without which the unprecedented challenges brought by the pandemic would have been incredibly difficult to overcome.

We thank you for your support of higher education in California and invite you to contact CASFAA should you have questions or would like to learn more about how the federal relief funds have benefited colleges, universities, and students in our state.

Sincerely,