

Dear NSU Students:

As a result of the Coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic, the United States Congress passed and the President signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act on March 27. It includes funding allocations made to colleges and universities across the country. On April 9, the Department of Education issued the first guidance on CARES Act funding which instructed us how to apply for our funding. Later, on April 21, the Department of Education held an informational call and provided additional information, further guidance on the Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students.

Below is the guidance provided by the Department of Education:

CARES Act funds are available to **all currently enrolled, degree-seeking undergraduate and graduate students both full- and part-time who meet the following criteria as set forth by federal guidelines:**

- Only students who are or could be eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965
- Students who have incurred expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus that have affected their cost of attendance (COA) and
- Students who are **currently enrolled** in the Spring semester at Northwestern State University and were **not enrolled exclusively in all online programs** prior to the COVID-19 emergency.

In other words, recipients must be eligible to participate in federal financial aid programs and must have expenses related to the disruption of campus operations because of COVID-19. The funds are designed to help students continue their academic progress and alleviate financial hardships that may have incurred during this crisis. Some of the hardships many of our students have incurred include food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child-care.

Funds will be allocated to all eligible students based on the number of hours enrolled and need as determined by federal Pell grant eligibility. Non-Pell grant eligible student award amounts range from \$118.00 for students enrolled in 1-credit hour to \$534.00 for those enrolled in 21 credit hours or more. Pell Grant eligible student award amounts range from \$130.00 for students enrolled in 1-credit hour to a maximum of \$786.00 for those enrolled in 21 credit hours or more.

Process for receiving CARES Act funds:

1. You must meet the eligibility requirements listed on the NSU CARES Act webpage, www.nsula.edu/caresact.
2. You must have a completed 2019-20 FAFSA on file with NSU. ***
3. You must complete the Certification form on your MyNSU account. Only students who meet the eligibility requirements to receive CARES Act funding and have a completed 2019-20 FAFSA on file will receive a link to a certification form on their MyNSU account. These students must complete the certification by May 25. Agreeing to the certification on MyNSU, certifies that you incurred school related expenses related to coronavirus. Your certification allows NSU to automatically make awards to eligible students based on existing information on file at the University.

Once you complete the self-certification process on your MyNSU account, your funds will be posted on your student account and paid in the form of a direct deposit (if set up) or a paper check by US mail to

your student address on file with the university. NSU plans to process payments beginning May 14 and continue every Thursday until May 28.

*** Students who have not completed a 2019-20 FAFSA and are eligible to complete one must do so by June 1, 2020 to meet this requirement. Beginning June 15, eligibility for funding will be evaluated and students who meet criteria will be notified for additional processes that must be completed.

We have created a CARES Act webpage, www.nsula.edu/caresact, with information, eligibility requirements and frequently asked questions. Please send any questions about the NSU Cares Act student grants to CARESAct@nsula.edu.

We have worked to ensure that we are following federal guidelines and to make the process as quick and simple as possible to our students.

Sincerely,

Chris Maggio
President