

## CARES Act FAQ

### **What is the CARES/Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund provided by the federal government?**

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by Congress and signed into law to provide economic relief from COVID-19. One section of the CARES Act established the Higher Education Emergency Relief fund and sent money to schools to use for emergency financial aid grants to students for expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the pandemic.

### **When will CARES/Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds be available?**

UOTP applied for funding from the federal CARES Act and, once we receive that funding from the U.S. Department of Education, we will begin accepting applications and award grants to students based on their financial need. Recipients will be notified via a message to their UOTP email account by the Student Retention Services Department.

### **What do I do to obtain CARES/Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds?**

Students must complete the UOTP CARES application form and return it to [studentservices@potomac.edu](mailto:studentservices@potomac.edu) by May 29, 2020. Applications received after this date may be considered pending fund availability.

### **Who is eligible for the CARES/Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds?**

Students who meet basic eligibility criteria for federal financial aid and who have the greatest financial need can be considered for these funds. The Office of Student Financial Services will use Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) data to determine your eligibility. If you are eligible to file a FAFSA but have not yet filed for 2019-20, please file a FAFSA at [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov). If you need assistance, please contact Student Finance at [financialaid@potomac.edu](mailto:financialaid@potomac.edu).

Under U.S. Department of Education rules for the CARES Act, funds can be awarded to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students pursuing degree programs and enrolled at the UOTP.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Education does not allow these funds to be used for international students, undocumented students, non-matriculated students or students enrolled in distance-only degree programs. However, we encourage our international students to inquire about other relief funds UOTP may award.

### **What is a UOTP CARES ACT Relief Grant?**

The CARES Act directed universities to prioritize students whose family income is in the low- to low-middle income categories and UOTP wants to provide economic relief



quickly to students who may have experienced additional expenses and/or a loss of income in spring quarter due to COVID-19. We have used the CARES Act emergency aid funds to provide a relief grant based on your status reported on your FAFSA.

These funds are meant to help students pay expenses for technology, health care, child care, course materials, rent, food moving or other expenses incurred this semester. If you have yet to experience financial stress due to COVID-19, these funds can help with unanticipated expenses or income loss that may occur throughout the semester and into future semesters depending on available funds.

### **Why didn't I receive a UOTP CARES Act Relief Grant?**

Under U.S. Department of Education rules for the program, students who are not eligible for federal financial aid programs are not eligible for federal CARES grants. However, UOTP may be able to help you with grants or aid from other institutional funds. These funds are limited, but we encourage you to apply. We will review your request and determine if we can offer assistance.

If you are eligible for federal aid, but did not receive the UOTP CARES Act Relief standard grant described above, you can notify our office for a review of your situation by submitting a request for Emergency aid.

In general, you probably didn't receive a standard relief grant because you may not have appeared to meet the criteria of greatest financial need. However, we know that many families' income is in flux or there may be additional expenses associated due to the pandemic. We need to hear from you in order to determine if we can offer you funds too. **Please file the emergency aid request to help with your immediate needs and consider filing a request for change in income or expenses for other financial aid funds for longer term and future needs.** Find more information about various funding options at <https://potomac.edu/tuition-financial-aid/financial-aid/>.

### **What emergency relief funds are available for international students?**

Unfortunately, under U.S. Department of Education rules for the program, international students are not eligible for the federal CARES funds. International students who need emergency aid assistance are encouraged to file a request. Please note that these funds are limited and generally awarded to help with living expenses.

### **Will there be CARES funds for 2020-21?**

At this time, we are working with the current CARES Act emergency aid and monitoring federal and state economic conditions, as well as the prospects for additional federal emergency funding for higher education institutions and students. We will continue to make emergency aid grants from UOTP emergency funds as they are available. The College will update these FAQ as conditions change on the use of these funds.