



Merritt College

12500 Campus Drive | Oakland, Ca. 94619

Dear Merritt Community,

As part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the U.S. Department of Education has made funding available to institutions of higher education to provide direct financial aid relief to students and to offset the costs incurred by colleges and universities as they transition to the fully online learning environments made necessary by COVID-19.

Under the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), Merritt College has been allocated a total of **\$1,497,284**. In compliance with the college's signed Certification and Agreement with the Department of Education and under Section 18004(a)(1), no less than 50 percent of these funds, or **\$748,642**, will be used to provide direct Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students. Merritt College received an additional allocation for Minority Serving Institutions to be distributed based on student identified ethnic criteria.

Eligibility

At this time, Merritt College estimates nearly 1,183 students are eligible to receive automatic emergency aid funding under HEERF. To be eligible and in accordance with Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, students must:

- Complete the 2019-2020 FAFSA Application or the 2019-2020 California Dream Act Application for Merritt College;
- Enrolled in at least one on campus course for the Spring 2020 Semester as of March 10, 2020, this date coincides with the Peralta Community College District decision to move to remote and online programs and instruction due to COVID-19.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Education does not allow these funds to be distributed to students who were enrolled in online-only degree programs prior to March 10, 2020.

Per guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, Merritt College is utilizing FAFSA data on "Unmet Need" (the estimated cost of attendance minus a student's reported access to financial resource, per their FAFSA) to determine eligibility with regard to financial need.

Grant Amounts

Grant amounts for eligible students at Merritt College will range between \$150 and \$500 with initial awards based on students' enrollment status.

Disbursement

Eligible students may view their CARES Grant award status by logging into Passport, under 'Student Center,' in 'Financial Aid Summary.' Awards will be disbursed to the Student's BankMobile account. The total amount of funds will be disbursed through the end of July.

For additional questions, you may contact the Financial Aid Office at merfinaid@peralta.edu.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lilia Chavez

Dr. Lilia Chavez
Vice President of Student Services

Ernesto Nery

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Director of Financial Aid



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