

## USC Palmetto College CARES Act FAQs

- **What is the CARES Act: Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund provided by the Federal Government?**

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides economic relief to students who incurred expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus. This includes eligible expenses under a student's cost of attendance such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and childcare.

- **Who is eligible for the CARES Act: 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 Financial Aid Office will use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) data to determine your eligibility.

Based on guidance provided by the Department of Education, students must meet the following eligibility parameters to qualify for CARES Act funds:

- Be eligible to participate in programs under **Section 484 in Title IV** of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. (e.g., be eligible to receive federal financial aid funds such as the Pell Grant, TEACH Grant, Direct Loans, etc.). [Title IV eligibility requirements](#)
  - Be a degree-seeking student enrolled for the Spring 2020 term
  - Not enrolled in an exclusively online program on or prior to March 13 2020
  - Meet [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#) requirements
- **Why didn't I receive a 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.

- You were enrolled in an exclusively online program on or prior to March 13, 2020 when the proclamation was issued declaring a national emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Education does not allow these funds to be used for international students, undocumented students, or non-matriculated students.

- **Is a Student Who Is Simultaneously Enrolled in High School and College Eligible for Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds?**

Only students who meet the Title IV general student eligibility criteria under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), may receive CARES Act Funds. Therefore, students who are simultaneously enrolled in high school and college are not eligible.

- **How will I receive the CARES Act Relief Grant money?**

CARES Grants will be processed by the Bursar's office. Funds will be direct deposited into the bank accounts of students.

- **Can I use this money to pay off my USC balance?**

Yes. USC is not authorized to apply CARES Act funds toward any outstanding balances that may still be owed by students. However, once the funds are received as a refund, students may choose to use the funds to pay off their outstanding account balances.

- **Can USC just apply the funds to my account balance with my approval or permission?**

No. Federal regulations stipulate that all CARES Act funds must be disbursed directly to the student and may not be applied toward outstanding balances. To use these funds to pay off an outstanding balance with USC, a student must make a payment to his/her account through the Bursar's Office.