

# STUDENT-READY RELIEF

## Using HEERF to Fund Equitable Student Success

### ABOUT DEBT FORGIVENESS

When students fall behind on their tuition payments, their academic progression can suffer profound consequences. It is common practice for colleges to prevent students from registering for courses in a future term until the outstanding balance is paid off. Institutions will also refuse to release transcripts for students with outstanding balances, making it nearly impossible for them to continue their education at another institution or even validate the coursework they completed. Forgiving those debts allows students to stay enrolled and progress to graduation. **Institutions that forgive students' institutional debt are more student-ready because they prioritize student persistence and prevent disruptions in enrollment due to financial holds.**

### IN THE PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause severe, widespread economic hardship that affects college students and their families. Many are still far from recovering from these hardships, and their education is at a standstill until they can pay off balances from pandemic-affected academic terms. Within certain constraints, the HEERF funding dedicated to student relief can be used to forgive previous bursar balances, which is a powerful strategy for getting students back on their academic path.

### EQUITABLE DESIGN

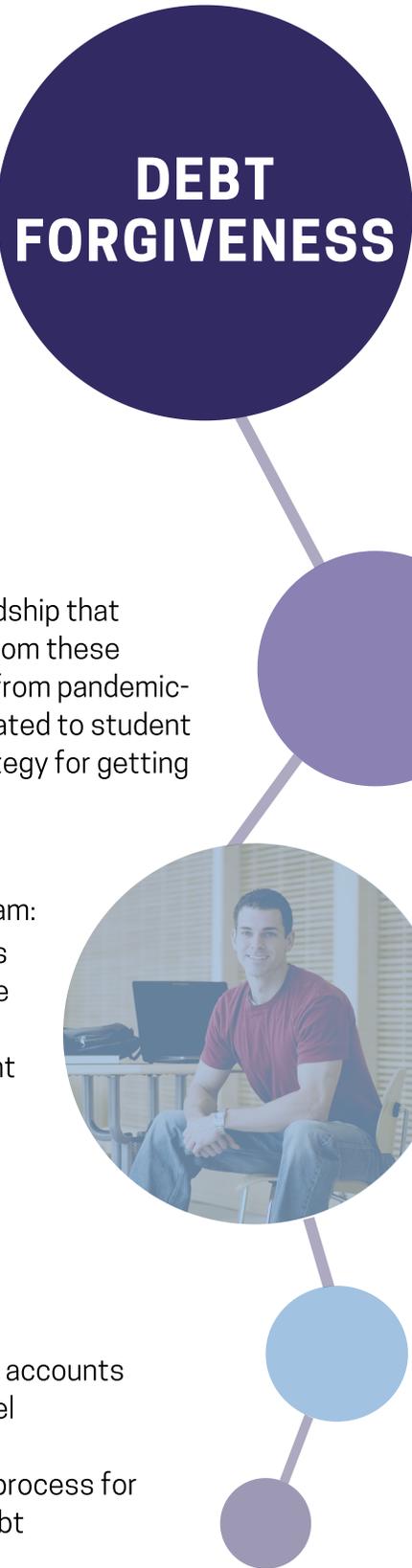
Use these tactics to design an equitable and effective debt forgiveness program:

- Proactively, uniformly, and systematically initiate the debt forgiveness process, reaching out to students through multiple channels about the opportunity
- Streamline the process and paperwork necessary for students to grant consent (if necessary), receive debt forgiveness, and register for courses for the following term
- Avoid setting limits on the amount of debt that can be forgiven, as pandemic-related hardships vary from student to student

### HOW HEERF CAN HELP

Use HEERF to fund these activities:

- Create a debt forgiveness fund that can directly credit student bursar accounts
- Add internal or external capacity to develop and deploy a cross-channel communications strategy and related collateral
- Add internal or external capacity to design and operate a streamlined process for debt forgiveness that also tracks return on investment, comparing debt forgiveness offered against tuition received in future terms



DEBT FORGIVENESS

### ABOUT STUDENT-READY STRATEGIES

Student-Ready Strategies (SRS) is a woman-owned consulting and technical assistance organization that believes every student can succeed and supports transformative efforts to ensure they do. Learn more at <http://studentreadystrategies.com>