

STUDENT-READY RELIEF

Using HEERF to Fund Equitable Student Success

ABOUT FINANCIAL AID OUTREACH

Students and their families are often confused by the financial aid system that supports college affordability. This is in part because financial aid communications often contain complex and overwhelming amounts of information and largely rely on email to reach students. By contrast, focused and student-friendly communications that are sent through multiple channels are more likely to effectively inform students about their financial aid options. **Institutions that do effective financial aid outreach are more student-ready because they guide students to the financial resources they need to enroll in and succeed in college.**

FINANCIAL AID OUTREACH

IN THE PANDEMIC

An important, but often overlooked, feature of federal aid is the opportunity to receive an adjusted aid package if circumstances change after the student files the FAFSA. During the pandemic, many students or family members were unemployed, furloughed, or laid off, making it even more important for students to understand this opportunity. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) requires institutions to conduct direct outreach specifically about this feature, but could also provide an opportunity to revamp student financial aid communications overall.

EQUITABLE DESIGN

Use these tactics to design an equitable and effective student-centered financial communications outreach:

- Design asset-based messaging around what students need to do, nudging them toward effective action, rather than trying to explain minute details of the financial aid program
- Leverage multiple communications channels, including social media, text messages, and campus platforms to create personalized, conversational and culturally-responsive communications to students
- Ensure communication channels are two-way (e.g., text messages) or provide a “one-click” option for students to receive direct support and assistance.



HOW HEERF CAN HELP

Use HEERF to fund these activities:

- Invest in an external evaluation of financial aid communications to identify opportunities to streamline content and remove jargon
- Secure on- and off-campus marketing opportunities to spread clear messages about financial aid in the era of COVID
- Add financial aid staff to facilitate two-way or one-click advising capability

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>