**GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY EDUCATION RELIEF FUND GRANT PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2021 ALLOCATION**

Submitted for: Information.

Summary: This informational item will update the Board on the allocation of the Fiscal Year 2021 Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund Grant Program.

Action Requested: None.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**NEW GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY EDUCATION RELIEF FUND GRANT PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2021 ALLOCATION**

At the September 15, 2020 Board meeting, the Executive Director was authorized to allocate the Fiscal Year 2021 Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Grant and to:

1) *Determine eligibility of postsecondary institutions, evaluate and rank application proposals, and select recipient institutions pursuant to Section 18002 of Division B of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Public Law No. 116-136 (March 27, 2020);*
2) *Distribute awards to institutions of higher education; and*
3) *Provide the Board with the list of institutions selected for funding at the next Board meeting.*

This grant initiative is a component of the federal CARES Act designed to provide support to education entities, including institutions of higher education, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The State of Illinois was awarded $108M in GEER funds. The Office of the Governor allocated $48M of these monies to higher education, including $3M the Illinois Board of Higher Education set aside for a competitive grant program.

The purpose of the GEER Fund competitive grant program is to provide financial assistance to institutions of higher education in recruiting and retaining postsecondary students who are most at risk of not continuing their college education, including students of color, first-generation, rural, and Pell-eligible students. Applicants eligible for the GEER Fund competitive grant program were public and independent non-profit, four-year Illinois institutions of higher education accredited through the Higher Learning Commission. Applicants for the GEER Fund grant program were required to submit proposals describing how they would use the monies to mitigate barriers to initial or ongoing enrollment of the identified student populations, provide evidence of the efficacy of these plans, and their approaches to monitor outcomes.

A staff committee from the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) reviewed 42 applications from Illinois institutions using the scoring rubric published in the request for proposals. All applicants were notified on or about October 15, 2020 of the determination regarding their respective proposals.

Nine applications were funded at 91.3% of the requested amount for the grant period which will end September 30, 2021. Each institution has signed a grant agreement with the IBHE with four deliverable periods to report to the IBHE regarding grant activities and expenditures. Across these proposals, there are evidence-based efforts to recruit and retain first-generation, low-income, underrepresented, and rural students and support their progress toward degree completion by closing digital equity gaps; providing targeted, academic and social/emotional supports through peer mentoring and other innovative initiatives; and ensuring students have basic needs met. Following is a summary of the recipients.

- Eastern Illinois University

  - Amount: $41,693
  - Close digital equity gaps through equipment for checkout (laptops, webcams, microphones, etc.).
  - Create active learning classroom and design lab in the residence hall to increase access to equipment, training, and other support services for students.
- Eureka College
  - Amount: $165,424
  - Close digital equity gaps by providing laptops to 40 low-income students, developing two laptop kiosks with additional 20 devices for checkout, and serving approximately 200 students; purchase interactive learning technology to enable an estimated 250 students o attend classes remotely in real-time.
  - Retain 25 additional first-generation students by expanding successful first-generation peer mentoring program by hiring an additional five peer mentors who are also first-generation and providing mentors a scholarship.
  - Replenish campus supply shelters with basic food and necessities, serving 200 students.
  - Enhance financial and career literacy program for an estimated 500 students through an additional counselor/coach and the development of an online personal finance and budgeting course.
- Governors State University
  - Amount: $456,286
  - Retain 30 first-time, full-time students through an English Language Learners (ELL) cohort that will include intensive language instruction delivered virtually, a "mastering college" course, and other cohort supports.
  - Support 160 conditionally admitted students through a math intervention initiative, including corequisite math course, designed to promote competency attainment and more timely progression to degree.
  - Close digital equity gaps by providing all 30 ELL students and up to 10 math students with a laptop.
- Lewis University
  - Amount: $446,891
  - Close digital equity gap by purchase an additional 100 laptops, 100 hotspots, and 200 noise-reducing headsets.
  - Retain first-generation students through "First Gen Flyers" program through intentionally coordinated social and cultural networks, mentoring, and other supports.
  - Recruit and retain low-income students through "Flyers Rise" program through intentionally coordinated social and cultural networks, mentoring, and career support.
  - Serve 240 students with "Academic Flight Support Teams" organized as 30 teams comprised of eight students each; includes faculty and peer mentors and a voucher to the bookstore.
  - Provide up to 5,000 hours of childcare support to students with childcare assistance needs.

- Lincoln College
  - Amount: $375,948
  - Close digital equity gaps through a pilot laptop loaner program for 150 students who do not have their own equipment; increase access to computer lab for all students through expanded schedule that accommodates learner needs and social distancing; update internet wiring in university facilities to be used for quarantine housing; technology training program.
  - Provide academic support through supplemental instruction.
- National Louis University
  - Amount: $444,094
  - Close digital equity gaps through hotspot lending program for 500 students and noise cancelling headphones for 750 students.
  - Expand the mobile food pantry program to service 1,400 students.
  - Provide estimated 350 students targeted financial assistance for rent, utilities, childcare, and other basic needs through the COVID-19 Relief Fund.
  - Pilot a telehealth program to support medical and behavioral health services over the phone to an estimated 1,000 students.
- Northern Illinois University
  - Amount: $456,286
  - Provide academic support through peer mentors for an estimated 100 students who were not able to complete coursework in Spring 2020 that is foundational to subsequent coursework in their programs of study or 500 students overall who need to complete foundational coursework in Academic Year 2020-21.
  - Close digital equity gaps through a laptop lending program for 385 students and financial supports for an estimated 430 students to acquire internet access at home.
  - Address basic needs through "Protect the Pack" financial grants for up to 250 students at $400 per week who have loss of income due to the pandemic; provide COVID-19 testing financial support for students with financial need.
- Northeastern Illinois University
  - Amount: $456,286
  - Support student retention by creating a One Stop Shop on campus for all student services and an accompanying comprehensive communication strategy that provides targeted, accessible messaging to students via a phone application and website.
  - Support student retention and degree completion through a career development program that ensures low-income students can access internships, micro-internships, and service learning projects to enhance their academic experience and position them for employment opportunities.
- Saint Xavier University
  - Amount: $157,093
  - Support the retention of students through in-class peer academic support in writing-intensive first-year courses; supplemental learning instruction; and expanding access to the campus learning center via virtual tutoring with math and bilingual writing specialists.
  - Close digital equity gaps through a laptop and headset loaner program and the purchase of specialized software for students in art and design and communication programs.
  - Across both initiatives, serve an estimated 1, 905 students.