



The Hope Center Calls on Congress to Immediately Invest in #RealCollege Students with Additional Emergency Aid Funding

Sara Goldrick-Rab and Carrie R. Welton

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Educational opportunity, central to the American Dream, is in jeopardy at a time when 65% of jobs require some form of college education. College enrollment is in free fall thanks to the pandemic and a weakened economy, and students' futures are at risk. That's why today, along with 105 partners and allies, we urged Congress to make a substantial investment in emergency grant aid to students in the next stimulus.

The \$6 billion for emergency aid provided by the CARES Act helped address housing and food insecurity along with technology challenges, keeping students in school. Colleges and universities responded quickly and responsibly, mobilizing to distribute the aid responsibly. But those dollars have not gone far enough especially as the pandemic rages on.

We cannot afford to leave students without resources to make ends meet. A Hope Center [#RealCollege survey](#) completed at the pandemic's onset revealed that three in five students were food and/or housing insecure. Two-thirds of students who'd previously been employed were experiencing reduced wages and even total job loss. Emergency aid is an effective, flexible, and efficient way to address those challenges and [keep students focused on learning](#).

Congress must immediately and [thoughtfully deploy](#) emergency aid to students whose odds of completion are most increased by support. This includes implementing an [allocation formula](#) that values the education of part-time students equitably and ensuring students who attend all of their classes online are eligible for emergency aid. A FAFSA should not be required to make a student eligible. Research indicates that reliance on FAFSA metrics contributes to basic needs insecurity among students estranged from family, including LGBTQ students, homeless students, and former foster youth. Applicants should also be referred to public benefits programs for which they may be eligible in order to ensure long term support beyond the pandemic.

Emergency aid is an essential tool for renewing the country's economic life. Most of today's college students are on their own when it comes to paying bills— without this assistance, they will end up in debt without degrees. A second investment in emergency grants for students will bring us one step closer to ensuring equitable opportunities for all students.