



Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students Grant Program Report

April 15, 2020

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The Minnesota Office of Higher Education is a cabinet-level state agency providing students with financial aid programs and information to help them gain access to postsecondary education. The agency also serves as the state's clearinghouse for data, research and analysis on postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, finance and trends.

The Minnesota State Grant Program is the largest financial aid program administered by the Office of Higher Education, awarding more than \$207 million in need-based grants to Minnesota residents attending accredited institutions in Minnesota. The agency oversees tuition reciprocity programs, a student loan program, Minnesota's 529 College Savings Plan, licensing and early college awareness programs for youth.

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Executive Summary

The Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students (EAPS) Grant Program was created by the 2017 Minnesota legislature, effective July 1, 2017. Minnesota 2017 Session Laws, Chapter 89, Subd. 29 directed the Commissioner of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) to establish a grant program for postsecondary institutions in Minnesota to “allocate grant funds on a matching basis to schools with a demonstrable homeless population...to meet immediate student needs that could result in a student not completing the term or their program, including, but not limited to: emergency housing, food, and transportation.” One hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars per year of the biennium was allocated to fund the program.

This report includes information on the development of the EAPS grant program, fiscal year 2018 and 2019 program results, a complete list of FY 2020 funded programs, and next steps to further support students experiencing food and housing insecurity.

Key takeaways are:

- In academic year 2018-2019, \$350,000 was allocated to eleven colleges and universities to create or add funding to existing emergency grant programs.
- By July 31, 2019, a total of 1,039 students applied and 644 students received emergency funds to address emergency needs.
- Student grants ranged from \$50 to \$1,000, with an average award of \$585.
- Housing/rental assistance is the most prominent emergency students face; students received 324 awards in the 2018-2019 academic year to supplement rent and mortgage costs. The second most common emergency reported by low-income students is automobile expenses (206 awards granted for this issue).
- The average age of recipients is 28.4, and 66% of recipients claimed they were independent students on their FAFSA; this implies that many recipients are adult learners/returning students.
- The average grade point average of recipients is 2.62 with an average of 39 credits accumulated, suggesting satisfactory academic progress.
- 73% of recipients are first generation students, 84% are considered low income, and 61% are students of color. These students typically face the greatest barriers to college graduation.
- 72% of grant recipients identified as female, drastically outnumbering males and non-binary recipients.
- Over half (64%) of recipients are caring for at least one dependent (an average of 1.76), and 18% of recipients are homeless.

Introduction

The 2017 Minnesota legislature created the Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students (EAPS) Grant Program, effective July 1, 2017. [Minnesota 2017 Session Laws, Chapter 89, Subd. 29¹](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2017/0/89/) directed the Commissioner of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) to establish a grant program for postsecondary institutions in Minnesota to “allocate grant funds on a matching basis to schools with a demonstrable homeless population” to meet immediate student needs with the potential to impact the student’s ability to continue and complete their education, including, but not limited to: emergency housing, food, and transportation. The Legislature appropriated \$175,000 per year to fund the program for the 2018-2019 biennium. **Appendix A** provides a copy of the state appropriation language.

In fiscal year (FY) 2018, a total of 16 postsecondary institutions submitted proposals with requests totaling \$586,374. A review committee selected six institutions for funding and OHE granted \$175,000 to these institutions. The funding period aligns with academic year 2018-2019.

In FY 2019, a total of nine postsecondary institutions submitted proposals with requests totaling \$329,579. A review committee selected five institutions for funding and OHE granted \$175,000 to these institutions. The funding period for the five FY 2019 institutions ran concurrent with the FY 2018 grantees – academic year 2018-2019.

In FY 2020, OHE awarded \$296,000 to postsecondary institutions in Minnesota. A total of 20 institutions applied for EAPS funding with requests totaling \$807,364. Most institutions requested \$43,000, the maximum per institution funding available to fund their emergency grant program. A review committee selected 14 institutions. Institutions will be administering funds during the current academic year, 2019-2020.

The following report describes the development of the EAPS grant program, summarizes FY 2018 and FY 2019 program results, provides readers a complete list of FY 2020 funded programs, and outlines recommended next steps for the program.

¹ <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2017/0/89/>

College Student Homelessness

Many students from lower-income backgrounds lack the financial support or family resources to both pay for college expenses and support themselves while attending college. Some have additional roles as parents and caregivers, working to support family members while in school. Students that fit this profile are sometimes forced to choose between college attendance and tending to basic needs such as food, housing, or transportation, especially when unexpected expenses arise.

In a recent basic needs survey of 43,000 college students across the country, 36% of students reported experiencing food insecurity within the 30 days preceding the survey, and 36% of all respondents experienced housing insecurity within the last year, with 9% homeless within the last year². Despite Minnesota's robust economy and high quality of living, student food insecurity and homelessness mirror the national survey results. According to a 2015 survey of students at 17 Minnesota institutions, 15.8% of students experience a food shortage and lack money to buy food. One urban community college estimates that approximately 10% of its students experience at least temporary homelessness³.

Minnesota ranks second in educational attainment in the nation, yet continues to experience some of the largest economic disparities that impact educational attainment, among other needs, for racial/ethnic minorities and low-income populations in the state. The ratio of homeless vs. housed Minnesotans exceeds that of almost all other Midwest states, reaching 1.39% of the population (second only to Illinois at 1.95%)⁴. Furthermore, out of 7,668 homeless individuals in the state of Minnesota, 889 are unaccompanied young adults (ages 18-24) – more than 10% of the total homeless population in the state. In a statewide basic needs survey conducted by the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, in which eight Minnesota colleges in universities collected responses from 3,460 undergraduate students, 52% of students self-identified as housing insecure and 18% identified as homeless.⁵ While Minnesota housing insecurity among students is on par with the national average, homelessness among these students exceeds the national average by one percentage point. This is significant because, while it seems to follow national patterns, higher rates of homelessness are usually accounted for in states with warm weather climates; very few states that experience long and severe winters exceed the national average.

The *McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001* requires all elementary and middle schools to track and provide resources for students who are homeless in their district. Using the McKinney-Vento system, 16,550 students enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade in Minnesota currently experience homelessness or housing insecurity. Academic outcomes for these students and students from lower-income families drastically fall behind peers from middle and high-income households. For example, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price lunch and took the ACT in 2017 averaged a composite score of 18.51 in Minnesota, while those who were not eligible for free/reduced-price lunch averaged a composite score of 22.82. Among the

² Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., Schneider, J., Hernandez, A., & Cady, C. [Still Hungry and Homeless in College](https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Wisconsin-HOPE-Lab-Still-Hungry-and-Homeless.pdf) (https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Wisconsin-HOPE-Lab-Still-Hungry-and-Homeless.pdf) Wisconsin HOPE Lab. (2018)

³ MinnPost (Producer), & Beelman, S., Kostchocka, A., Kovar, D., Serrin, B. (Directors). (2013). *No place to call home: Homeless at MCTC*. United States: YouTube.

⁴ Retrieved from: <https://www.usich.gov/homelessness-statistics/mn/>

⁵ Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University. [2018 #RealCollege Survey Report: Participating Colleges in Minnesota](#). (2019).

Minnesota high school graduating class of 2017, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price lunch enrolled in college within two years at rates 22 percentage points lower than their peers who did not qualify for free/reduced-price lunch. Furthermore, a study of 1,500 public and nonprofit universities across the country found that 51% of Pell Grant recipients (low-income students) graduate college within six years, while their peers graduate at the rate of 65% during that timeframe⁶.

These findings suggest that issues pertaining to poverty, including temporary or long-term food and housing insecurity, pose barriers to postsecondary attendance, persistence and completion -- all of which can aid in building pathways out of poverty.

The EAPS grant program aims to act as an intervention to keep low-income students in college amidst unforeseen financial challenges that occur throughout their academic career by providing a grant of up to \$1,000 to help students overcome financial barriers for college attendance. These financial barriers are usually one-time expenses (such as a security deposit on an apartment, a high utility bill, medical expenses, food, gas, car repair, etc.) that may not be substantial for those who are financially secure, but can completely derail a lower-income student and potentially cause the student to drop out.

⁶ Nichols, A. H. (2015). The Pell Partnership: Ensuring a shared responsibility for low-income student success. *The Education Trust*, September 2015.

Grant Program Development

The EAPS Grant Program was introduced during the 2017 Minnesota legislative session. The Office of Higher Education packaged the proposed program as part of a larger agenda to address basic needs insecurity among college students and families. This agenda included both short-term and long-term goals in order to make information about college accessible and relevant to students and families experiencing basic needs insecurities or homelessness.

While many states are working across agencies and organizations to address basic needs insecurities, Minnesota is the second state in the nation to appropriate money for an emergency assistance grant program for college students. Prior to EAPS, most individual colleges and universities provided emergency grants or loans to their students using either foundation support, excess department funds, or regional or national grant programs such as the Ascendium Philanthropy (formerly the Great Lakes Foundation)'s [DASH Grant program](#)⁷, and Scholarship America's [Dreamkeepers](#)⁸ program.

Interagency Council on Homelessness

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education joined the Interagency Council on Homelessness, spearheaded by Cathy ten Brooke in 2016, along with the following agencies/offices:

- Department of Education
- Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Department of Public Safety
- Department of Health
- Department of Human Rights
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Minnesota Housing
- Department of Transportation
- Office of the Governor
- The Metropolitan Council

Together, along with philanthropy and community leaders, the Interagency Council on Homelessness created *Heading Home Together: Minnesota's 2018-2020 Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*. This report serves as a collaborative, working document to fill service gaps and identify resources within the state that could prevent and end homelessness in Minnesota. The EAPS Program was a direct result of the strategic work of this Council

⁷ <https://www.ascendiumphilanthropy.org/community/strategy/scaling/dash-emergency-grant>

⁸ <https://scholarshipamerica.org/news-events/dreams-to-success/>

and the [Heading Home report](#)⁹; the development of the EAPS Program sought to name and directly address issues that impact the academic success of lower-income college students in the state.

Program Development

The EAPS service delivery model is based on established emergency assistance grant programs, such as Ascendium Philanthropy's Dash Grant, the State of Wisconsin's Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students Grant Program, and various private and institutional grant programs offered at Minnesota colleges and universities. All of these programs utilize a similar delivery system for selecting and disbursing funds to students:

- the student applies for the grant from their college or university based on an emergency unmet need in their personal life;
- the student's financial status is verified;
- a committee comprised of staff and faculty review and evaluate the application;
- the committee determines, based on financial need, severity of the emergency, and student circumstance, if they will be selected for an award (up to \$1,000) or denied; and
- if the student is selected for an award, funds are either deposited into the student's account or paid directly to the third party vendor (i.e. a leasing office/landlord).

After consulting with institutions that currently utilize this model, it was determined that this was an effective process for both institutions and students. OHE used this model as the basis for EAPS, but awarded postsecondary institutions some flexibility within the model in order for it to best serve the institution and their students.

The program model was brought to several community stakeholders and experts for feedback. This included:

- 1) The McKinney Vento Coordinator for Saint Paul Public Schools,
- 2) The Minnesota Office of Higher Education's Financial Aid Administrators Advisory Committee,
- 3) The Minnesota Office of Higher Education's Student Advisory Committee,
- 4) The Vice President of Academic Affairs at Century College,
- 5) Staff at Minnesota Housing and Finance Agency,
- 6) A Planning and Evaluation Specialist for Ramsey County,
- 7) A St. Thomas Dougherty Family School faculty member,
- 8) A University of Minnesota faculty member/researcher,
- 9) Sara Goldrick-Rab, author of *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream* (2016), and
- 10) Students at the Humphrey School for Public Affairs.

Through this process of obtaining feedback, it became apparent that values surrounding the program were as important as the actual program model. Guiding principles were created, which include:

- Trust students;
- Be timely;
- Create a network of support for students;
- Evaluate student proposals free from bias or discrimination;

⁹ https://mn.gov/dhs/assets/minnesota-action-plan-18-20_tcm1053-328234.pdf

- Provide follow-up to students and track outcomes;
- Leverage available resources, both within the college or university and the community;
- Incorporate dedicated staff across departments into the service model; and
- Fit into the larger institutional mission of equity and student success.

These principles ensure that no matter what the program looks like or how it operates from institution to institution, that there is a common understanding of essential components of the project and the foundation on which it operates. FY 2020 Request for Proposals and Timeline

The current grant cycle, FY 2020, request for proposals (RFP) timeline was as follows:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| March 29, 2019 | Request for Proposals available to applicants |
| May 1, 2019 | Technical Assistance Session for interested applicants |
| May 17, 2019 | Deadline for receipt of Intent to Submit forms |
| June 7, 2019 | <u>Deadline for receipt of proposal</u> |
| July 15, 2019 | Notification of recommended grant awards |
| August 1, 2019 | Project period starts with date of contract encumbrance |

August 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021 project period

A copy of the FY 2020 RFP can be found in **Appendix B**.

Proposal Evaluation

In order to review and evaluate proposals, committees were formed of community stakeholders and content experts, including: financial aid officers, students, private non-profit university staff and faculty, nontraditional financial aid consultants, a representative from Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system office, homelessness researchers, and a McKinney Vento coordinator. The review committees were asked to evaluate proposals based on the following criteria, using a 100-point scale:

1) Demonstrated Project Need

Examples:

- The proposal clearly demonstrates gaps in services/support for lower-income students on campus or in the region.
- Documentation is provided that shows the prevalence of students experiencing homelessness within the postsecondary institution or in the region.

2) Plan of Operation

Examples:

- The project design includes clear and specific information about how EAPS will be implemented at the institution and how implementation will meet student need.
- The project design includes a system or process for addressing underlying, chronic issues that students who seek this intervention may be experiencing in addition to their immediate emergency.

3) Quality of Personnel and Adequacy of Resources

Examples:

- Staff size, time commitment, and responsibilities are clearly defined and appropriate for the project.

- Institutional commitment to resources up to or beyond 25% of total award is clearly identified.

4) Budget and Cost Effectiveness

Examples:

- The budget is clear, concise, and justified by the budget narrative.
- The budget is cost effective and reflective of EAPS program requirements, objectives, and outcomes.

5) Evaluation plan

Examples:

- The institution submitted a thorough and realistic outline to evaluate the EAPS program at their institution. The plan includes an evaluation of program implementation as well as an evaluation of student outcomes.
- The evaluation plan informs continuous improvement for service delivery.

A full copy of the proposal evaluation form can be found in **Appendix E**.

Fiscal Year 2020 Funded Programs

The FY 2020 EAPS RFP was launched on March 29, 2019. Twenty postsecondary institutions applied for a total of \$807,364. A full list of applications and amounts are listed in Appendix F.

Out of the 20 proposals, 14 postsecondary institutions across various sectors were selected to be funded; \$296,000 was allocated. The sectors represented were: one private nonprofit university, nine two-year community colleges within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, three public 4-year institutions within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, and one tribal college. Below you will find project summaries for the 14 proposals that were funded in FY 2020.

Project Summaries

M State Emergency Needs Fund, Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State), receives \$20,000 - Detroit Lakes, MN

M State serves more than 8,000 students in credit courses each year in Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls, Moorhead, Wadena, and online. M State was featured in a 2016 MinnPost article about food insecurity on college campuses. The article revealed that up to 33.5% of students on the Moorhead campus, 24% of students on the Detroit Lakes campus, 30% of students on the Fergus Falls campus, and 26% of students on the Wadena campus had concerns about not having enough money to buy food. In response to this article, M State hired two College Social Workers to assist in reducing food insecurities on its campuses and to work with students on removing other barriers to basic needs that they may be facing. The Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students (EAPS) grant will support the continuation of an emergency assistance fund that will support M State's work in addressing basic needs insecurities on their campuses. Pell-eligible students may apply for up to \$1,000 per student per academic year. The funds may be used towards transportation, housing, healthcare, childcare, food, etc.

Contact: Kayla Simon, 218-846-3687, kayla.simon@minnesota.edu

Emergency Funds for Student Success, Saint Paul College – A Community and Technical College, receives \$20,000 - Saint Paul, MN

Saint Paul College is a two-year community and technical college in the Minnesota State system with a 108-year tradition serving the diverse communities of the Saint Paul and Minneapolis metropolitan areas. The highly diverse population includes 65% students of color, with 89% of newly enrolled full-time students receiving financial aid and/or scholarships. Additionally, 77.7% of students who apply for need-based financial aid are Pell-eligible. In order to support their students, Saint Paul College has a number of emergency assistance funds housed in their foundation, Friends of Saint Paul College. Each fund is separate, with different rules and target demographics, and there is not one comprehensive system for applying. Given the variation in process across the emergency funds, a committee was formed to improve the emergency fund process both for students and for the staff who implement the programs. The result of those conversations is development of the universal emergency fund application and a more robust online presence for emergency funds. The EAPS grant will not only expand Saint Paul College's existing emergency funds, but will also assist in streamlining the process to make it easier and more accessible to more students.

Contact: Michael Gerold, 651-846-1327, michael.gerold@saintpaul.edu

Oshki Manidoo Emergency Aid Program: Emergency Assistance for Red Lake Nation College Students, Red Lake Nation College, receives \$15,000 - Red Lake, MN

Red Lake Nation College is located on the Red Lake Indian Reservation in the lakes and forest region of Minnesota. The needs on Red Lake Indian Reservation, a rare closed reservation, are diverse and complex and differ in some ways from the needs of other rural areas. The median household income on the Red Lake Indian Reservation is \$31,910; household income for Red Lake Nation College students is considerably lower, with a mean of \$11,393 in 2016. Over 90% of Red Lake Nation College students have income levels that result in zero expected family contribution on the FAFSA. High poverty and unemployment rates on the reservation mean that low-income housing is in great demand. And, while low-income housing comprises the bulk of the reservation's housing, new construction has not been able to keep up with need. Consequently, doubling-up has become the norm. Food insecurity is also a pervasive issue on the Red Lake Indian Reservation, which was designated a food desert area in 2010. There is only one grocery store on the reservation which has basic food supplies but does not offer a range of fresh produce, and at least one-third of the residents live at least ten miles from this food source. The EAPS grant will be multi-faceted in its support of Red Lake Nation College. Funds will provide:

1. a coordinator for emergency assistance, the VP for Student Success at the college;
2. emergency assistance funding to be granted to students; and
3. supplies to create a food shelf on campus to address Red Lake Nation College's food shortage issues and provide healthy food for students.

Contact: Shieleen Omen, 218-679-1002, shieleen.omen@rlnc.education

Katie's Emergency Help, St. Catherine University, receives \$30,000 - Saint Paul, MN

St. Catherine University (St. Kate's) is home to the largest college for women in the country, with 2,392 baccalaureate-seeking undergraduates enrolled. Of these students, one half are low-income, with family earnings that are the lowest among Minnesota's 17 private colleges. A 2018 student survey indicated that 28% of these students have a personal history of food insecurity, with 20% of respondents reporting that they have experienced a food shortage in the last 12 months. In the same survey, 1% of students of respondents identified as having experienced homelessness, and 12% reported lacking a safe, secure place to call home at some point in the previous year. EAPS funds will be used to assist this population through small grants (up to \$1000) to students experiencing an unforeseen financial emergency. The grant funds will partially employ a social worker who will build relationships with students seeking this intervention and will refer them to appropriate and accessible services. St. Kate's emergency assistance program will supplement a number of services available to students on their campus, including a student-run food shelf, financial counseling, and a robust student-parent center.

Contact: Joan Demeules, 651-690-7870, jmdemeules@stkate.edu

Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students Program, Century College, receives \$20,000 - White Bear Lake, MN

Century College is a metro-area community college that serves students who primarily reside in low-income neighborhoods in Saint Paul and North Saint Paul. Century College has a large population of students at risk of homelessness or housing insecurity. A 2018 student survey indicated that that 18% of respondents have had experience with homelessness, and 60% of respondents have had experience with moderate or severe food insecurity within the past year. The entirety of the EAPS grant award will go towards providing these students with

emergency assistance grants of up to \$1,000. Thirteen staff will support the program, including four counselors, the Director of TRIO Student Support Services, the Director of Financial Aid, and the Director of Access Services, among others. The emergency assistance grant program will be added to Century College's extensive services that support low-income students, first generation students, LGBTQ students, and students of color reach their academic goals.

Contact: Kristin Hageman, 651-773-1780, kristin.hageman@century.edu

Pine Technical and Community College Emergency Student Support, Pine Technical and Community College, receives \$20,000 - Pine City, MN

Pine Technical and Community College primarily serves four low-income counties within Minnesota: Mille Lacs, Chisago, Pine, and Isanti. Approximately 65% of their student population is considered low-income, with the majority of students being first-generation and living in communities of concentrated poverty. Seventy-five percent of enrolled students qualify for the federal Pell grant or Minnesota State grants. Additionally, 80% of independent degree-seeking students at Pine Technical and Community College identified through their 2017 FAFSA application that they currently support at least one child. The entirety of the EAPS award will allow Pine Technical and Community College to expand an existing emergency assistance grant program, which has provided many students with financial support in 2017 and 2018. Pine Technical and Community College will provide support staff to connect students to campus and community resources that will supplement the EAPS financial intervention.

Contact: Kierstan Peck, 320-629-5180, kierstan.peck@pine.edu

Normandale Cares Student Emergency Assistance Program, Normandale Community College, receives \$36,000 - Bloomington, MN

Normandale Community College (Normandale) is the largest community college in the Minnesota State system, serving almost 15,000 students a year. Two-thirds of degree-seeking students identify as low-income, first generation, and/or students of color. Forty-four percent (7,245) of newly enrolled students were eligible for the federal Pell grant in fall 2017. During that semester, Normandale began partnering with two nonprofit agencies-- Oasis for Youth and Streetworks-- to provide resources to students who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. In November 2017 alone, they served 88 students experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. In addition to these services, Normandale has provided a food pantry for their students for the past five years. During the 2016-2017 academic year, the food pantry served 560 unduplicated students who visited 5,445 times. Normandale's EAPS award will go toward expanding their Random Acts of Kindness program, an existing emergency assistance grant program within their institution. This expansion will allow students to request funds more than once in their academic career, increase the maximum award to students, and alter the financial requirements to be considered eligible for the program. All EAPS funds will go toward student grants, with the institution providing four support staff as a match.

Contact: Matt Traxler, 952-358-8962, matt.traxler@normandale.edu

South Central LifeSaver Program, South Central College, receives \$20,000 - North Mankato, MN

South Central College (SCC) is a comprehensive community and technical college that is part of the Minnesota State system offering courses at campuses in Faribault and North Mankato, as well as online. The college is a committed regional partner that works with employers, non-profits, and the community helping individuals and

organizations compete statewide, nationally, and globally. SCC has a very diverse, rural population: 23% being students of color, 22% identifying themselves as first generation, and underrepresented students making up more than 50% of the student body. Nearly half (41%) of students are Pell eligible. A recent student support survey was conducted at SCC through the Student Affairs and Student Life departments to understand the non-academic needs of students. Data from the survey indicated that 67% of students struggle to find or maintain secure housing, and 15% of students experienced a form of homelessness within the past 12 months. Based on the survey results, a new Community Resource Center was created on campus to help provide wrap-around services to students who are seeking college and community resources to meet their basic needs. In addition, two new support positions, a community garden, and a food pantry were created. A small portion of the EAPS funds will support a professional social worker, while the majority will be used to expand their emergency assistance fund and provide services to students.

Contact: Judy Endres, (507) 389-7351, judy.endres@southcentral.edu

Emergency Grant, Minnesota State University, Mankato, receives \$25,000 - Mankato, MN

Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU) is the largest state university in the Minnesota State System and serves over 13,000 undergraduate students each year. One of MSU's strategic goals is to increase access and completion for underrepresented students. The focus on achieving that goal has resulted in the largest increase in underrepresented students enrolling at MSU in its 150-year history, increasing enrollment by 150% in five years. Financial Services data from the past five spring semesters shows that between 34% and 39% of undergraduate students at MSU are classified each year as Pell Grant-eligible. MSU was successful in obtaining start-up funding from the Great Lakes Foundation to develop an emergency grant program in fall 2018. Within the two-year grant period, they received 620 student inquiries, processed 375 applications, and awarded funding to 336 students, for a total amount exceeding \$320,000 to resolve student emergencies. Preliminary data shows that those students who received emergency funding through the Great Lakes Foundation grant had a 92% fall to spring retention rate and an 88% fall to fall retention rate. These are both higher than the average student body retention rate of 78% and reflect a 20-point increase in retention for recipients when compared to other Pell-eligible students. MSU will build on the successes of the now sun-setted Great Lakes Foundation Grant by using EAPS-awarded funds to continue their emergency grant program.

Contact: Carolyn Nelson, 507-389-5889, carolyn.nelson@mnsu.edu

METRO STATE SUPPORTS: Emergency Assistance for Students, Metropolitan State University, receives \$20,000 - Saint Paul, MN

Metropolitan State University (Metro State) currently enrolls approximately 11,500 students, many of which are underserved by traditional higher education institutions. With a focus on degree completion with adult students, Metro State is the most diverse four-year university in the Minnesota State System. Forty-three percent of Metro State's students identify as students of color, and 60% of students will be the first in their families to earn a degree. The average age of students is 32. Many have delayed entry into college or have returned after a break, are enrolled part-time or full-time with a mix of online and face-to-face courses, do not have family financial contributions, and/or are parents and work full time. In addition to the barriers that come with these demographics, many have also experienced a number of additional difficulties such as alcohol or chemical abuse, mental health issues, have a criminal background, or have other significant family obligations. Twenty-four percent of students responding to the 2019 #RealCollege survey indicated that they have experienced homelessness within the past year. In order to best serve these students, Metro State will expand their current

emergency grant program and provide mental health services and additional avenues for support through community partnerships.

Contact: Maya Sullivan, 651-793-1508, maya.sullivan@metrostate.edu

Students Support Fund (SSF) Program, Central Lakes College, receives \$15,000 - Brainerd, MN

Central Lakes College, a community and technical college in Brainerd and Staples, Minnesota, is an open enrollment institution offering associates degrees in both liberal education and occupational curricula. In fall 2018, enrollment of students was over 3,020 with 80% of these students residing in seven largely rural surrounding counties in North Central Minnesota. Included in these counties is the Mille Lacs and Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Indian Reservations. Forty-four percent of all students enrolled meet the federal definition for low-income eligibility. Sixty-four percent of students are considered both low-income and first generation college students. In addition, 57% of students met at least one criteria for housing insecurity, which is higher than the regional and national average. Central Lakes College has established procedures to help students who need financial assistance, which they will leverage in order to implement the SSF Program on campus. All funds will support the SSF Program; Central Lakes College will provide support services in kind so that students on both campuses are well supported.

Contact: Emily Bruflat, 218-855-8038, emily.bruflat@clc.mn.edu

Helping Overcome barriers to Promote Excellence (HOPE) Grant, St. Cloud Technical and Community College, receives \$15,000 - St. Cloud, MN

St. Cloud Technical and Community College (SCTCC) is a mid-sized two-year college located in Central Minnesota that typically serves around 6,300 students each fiscal year. Since becoming a comprehensive college in 2010, SCTCC has seen its enrollment double. SCTCC primarily serves students from six Minnesota counties: Stearns, Morrison, Benton, Sherburne, Wright, and Mille Lacs. The median income for St. Cloud is estimated at \$44,485, with 39% of its population having a household income of less than \$35,000. Educational attainment is an area of need for the community; only 34% of the population has some college experience or an Associate's degree. Another 34% has a high school diploma/GED or lower. SCTCC's student body is more diverse than the surrounding area, with 20% of enrollees identifying as "something other than white." Meanwhile, homelessness in the region is becoming a serious concern. According to the Institute for Community Alliances, homelessness in the St. Cloud area has been on the rise with a 102% increase of the sheltered homeless population and a 201% increase in the unsheltered homeless population from 2007 to 2017. St. Cloud has also seen an increase of 28% in the number of homeless youth between the ages of 18 and 24. SCTCC will add the HOPE Grant to their existing services that cater to students in need, such as their Benefits Access Program and Random Acts of Kindness emergency grant program, which is more restrictive than what is allowable under the EAPS grant. The funds will go towards supporting student success at SCTCC through providing moderately-sized emergency grants to students with an unforeseeable financial emergency.

Contact: Kerby Plante, 320-308-5920, kplante@sctcc.edu

SUSTAIN: Supporting University Students to Alleviate Insecurity Now, St. Cloud State University, receives \$20,000 - St. Cloud, MN

St. Cloud State University (SCSU) is located in the City of St. Cloud, which has a poverty rate of 23.3%, 10 percentage points higher than the national average. In fall 2018, SCSU had 10,686 enrolled students, 32.8% of which are Pell Grant eligible, 19% students of color, and 12% international students who have been found to be

particularly vulnerable to basic needs insecurity. In spring 2019, SCSU administered a basic needs assessment to their student body in order to shed light on the lived experiences of the students on their campus. Thirty-nine percent of survey respondents experienced housing insecurity; and nearly 14% of respondents experienced homelessness within the prior year. Students who lacked housing resources often also lacked resources for food. Twenty-seven percent of respondents were both food and housing insecure in the past year. SCSU just finished a two-year \$420,000 DASH Grant from the Great Lakes Foundation which assisted many students persist despite financial emergencies that arose. This led to a retention rate of about 85%. More than 40% of the grant was spent for students facing housing insecurity. SCSU staff and faculty are making a collaborative effort to meet the basic needs of students through various programs, including the continuation of the SUSTAIN emergency grant program with state funding.

Contact: Dr. Sheila Moriarty, (320) 308-2127, smmoriarty@stcloudstate.edu

Assistance to Achieve Grant, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, receives \$20,000 - Minneapolis, MN

Minneapolis College is a two-year urban community college located in the heart of downtown Minneapolis that currently serves over 12,000 students of diverse backgrounds. Fifty-five percent of the campus community are considered students of color, 40% are low-income and Pell Grant eligible, and 27% are the first in their families to attend college. Over half of students enrolled are in Career and Technical Education tracks. Aside from student demographics, a 2019 study from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education shows that Minneapolis College is the number one college choice for students experiencing homelessness prior to high school graduation. Through the EAPS grant, Minneapolis College will support students experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, and other financial emergencies and connect them to resources that can help improve their overall quality of life.

Contact: Jalex Lor, 612-659-6490, jalex.lor@minneapolis.edu

Academic Year 2018-2019 Outcomes

Both FY 2018 and FY 2019 grant cycles ran concurrently in academic year 2018-2019 and ended in June 2019. In July 2019, all colleges and universities that received funding were required to submit: 1) a final narrative report that discusses student outcomes in addition to successes and challenges of establishing and implementing this program; 2) a demographic data spreadsheet that shows de-identified student-level data on students who received an emergency grant; and 3) a financial invoice for State reimbursement.

Through this information, OHE is able to summarize first year outcomes of the grant program and its successes. Eleven institutions were awarded funding during academic year 2018-2019; all projects were implemented, funds effectively reached students in need, and all funds were expended. A list of institutions, the amount of their award, and the institution type are listed in **Table 1**, below.

Table 1. Colleges and Universities that Received EAPS Funding in the 2018-2019 Academic Year

| Institution | Award | Institution Type |
|---|----------|-------------------------------------|
| Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State) | \$40,000 | Rural, Public State College, 2 year |
| Red Lake Nation College | \$28,000 | Rural, Tribal College, 2 year |
| Saint Paul College | \$35,000 | Metro, Public State College, 2 year |
| Riverland Community College | \$36,000 | Rural, Public State College, 2 year |
| South Central Community College | \$36,000 | Rural, Public State College, 2 year |
| St. Catherine University | \$30,000 | Metro, Private Nonprofit, 4 year |
| Century College | \$37,500 | Metro, Public State College, 2 year |
| Inver Hills Community College | \$30,000 | Metro, Public State College, 2 year |
| Normandale Community College | \$37,500 | Metro, Public State College, 2 year |
| Pine Technical and Community College | \$20,000 | Rural, Public State College, 2 year |
| White Earth Community College | \$20,000 | Rural, Tribal College, 2 year |

By July 31, 2019, a total of 1,039 students applied and 644 students received emergency funds, for a total of \$350,000 granted to students to address emergency needs. Student grants ranged from \$50 to \$1,000, with an average award of \$585.

Housing and other Emergency Needs

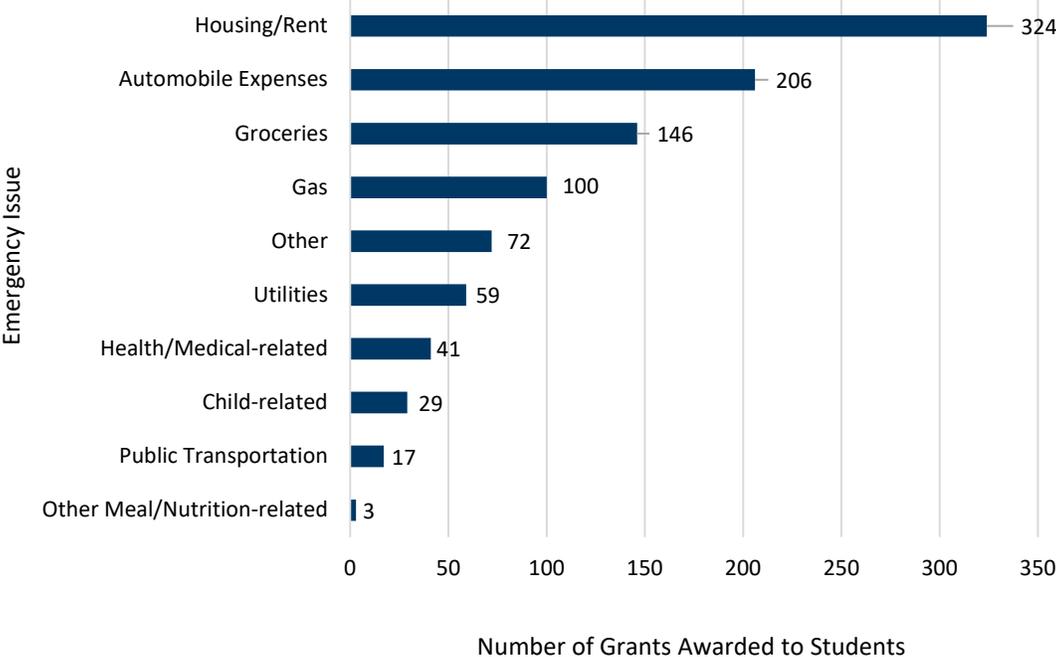
The overwhelming student need, based on emergency grants awarded, is housing and rent assistance. Students received 324 awards in the 2018-2019 academic year to supplement rent and mortgage costs, by far the most common emergency issue reported by low-income students, with automobile expenses the second most common issue with 206 awards. Examining rent and housing costs in Minneapolis, the largest city in Minnesota, can help illustrate the issue at hand. In 2019, the average rent in Minneapolis was \$1,594/month for an average apartment

size of 790 square feet. This is a 3% year-to-year increase in Minneapolis rent cost and is 1.1% above the national median (\$1,474/month). Furthermore, housing availability for low-income families is on the decline. Just 17% of all apartments in Minneapolis have an average monthly rent of \$501-\$1,000/month, while 47% of apartments have a monthly cost of \$1,501 and above. Meanwhile, the median household income in Minneapolis was \$60,789 for all households, and approximately \$45,000 for households of color. This is below the national median household income of \$63,179 and overall state median of \$68,388.

While housing in Minneapolis is the most expensive in the state, rural Minnesotans are also struggling with rent increases and a lack of affordable housing options in their region. As stated in a 2017 report by Wilder Research, *Homelessness and Near-Homelessness on Six Minnesota American Indian Reservations*, 69% of survey respondents lived in overcrowded or severely overcrowded spaces compared to 1% of the national average households experiencing overcrowding and 17% of American Indian households across the board.

A complete list of grants awarded per emergency issue can be found in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Number of Grants Awarded per Emergency Issue, 2018-2019 Academic Year



Characteristics of Students who received an Emergency Grant

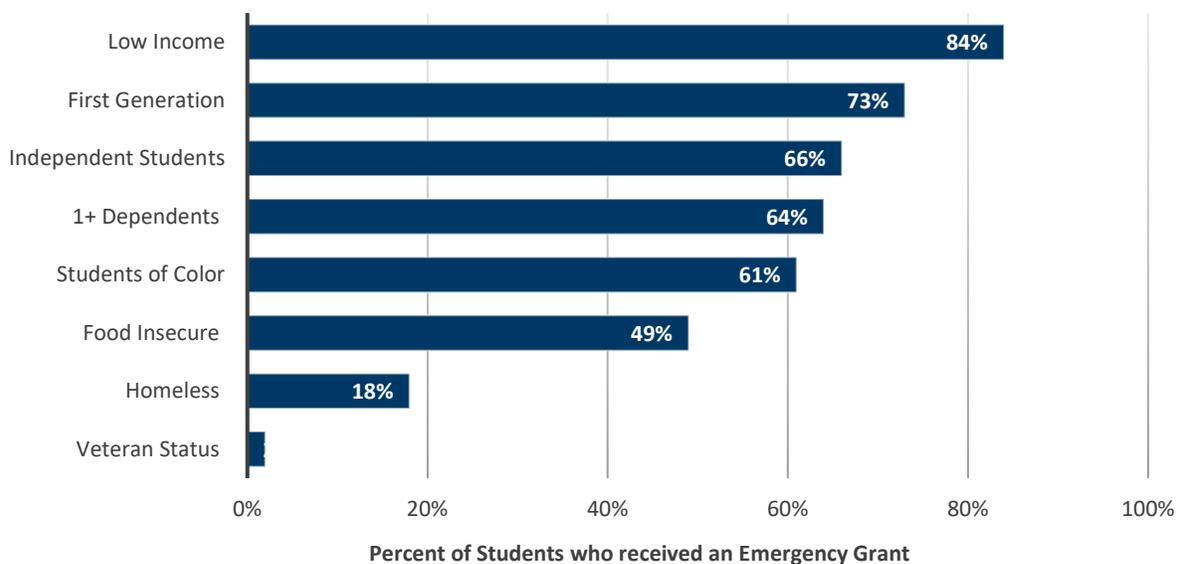
By summarizing de-identified student data that the colleges and universities submit with their final report, we can analyze trends among students who received emergency grants in academic year 2018-2019. Notable characteristics of students who received emergency grants include:

- The average age of recipients is 28.4, and 66% of recipients were independent students according to their FAFSA; this implies that many recipients met one or more of the following: over age 25, had dependents, are married, were homeless, wards of the court, are former foster care youth, or had enlisted in the military.

- The average grade point average of recipients is 2.62 with an average of 39 credits accumulated, suggesting satisfactory academic progress.
- 73% of recipients are first generation students, 84% self-identified as low income, 61% are students of color – these students typically face the greatest barriers to college graduation.
- 72% of grant recipients identified as female, drastically outnumbering males and non-binary recipients,
- Over half (64%) of recipients are caring for at least one dependent, often children (an average of 1.76).
- 18% of recipients reported being homeless.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of students who fall into one or more of the demographic categories listed above. Veterans represent the smallest percentage of students, while almost all students are low income and first generation in their families to attend college.

Figure 2. Demographics of Students who received an Emergency Grant, 2018-2019



Personal and Academic Impact of Emergency Grants

In addition to the quantitative data collected by the colleges and universities, some EAPS recipients were able to capture qualitative student feedback on their programs. Examples include:

“This has been very helpful and took away much stress. I had really bad tires that needed to be replaced. Now I can afford books and supplies as a direct result of the grant. Thank you!”

“It was able to help me not have to find a second job to fund my emergency so I could focus on school.”

“It was a tremendous relief to receive this emergency assistance, definitely lessened the feeling of drown.”

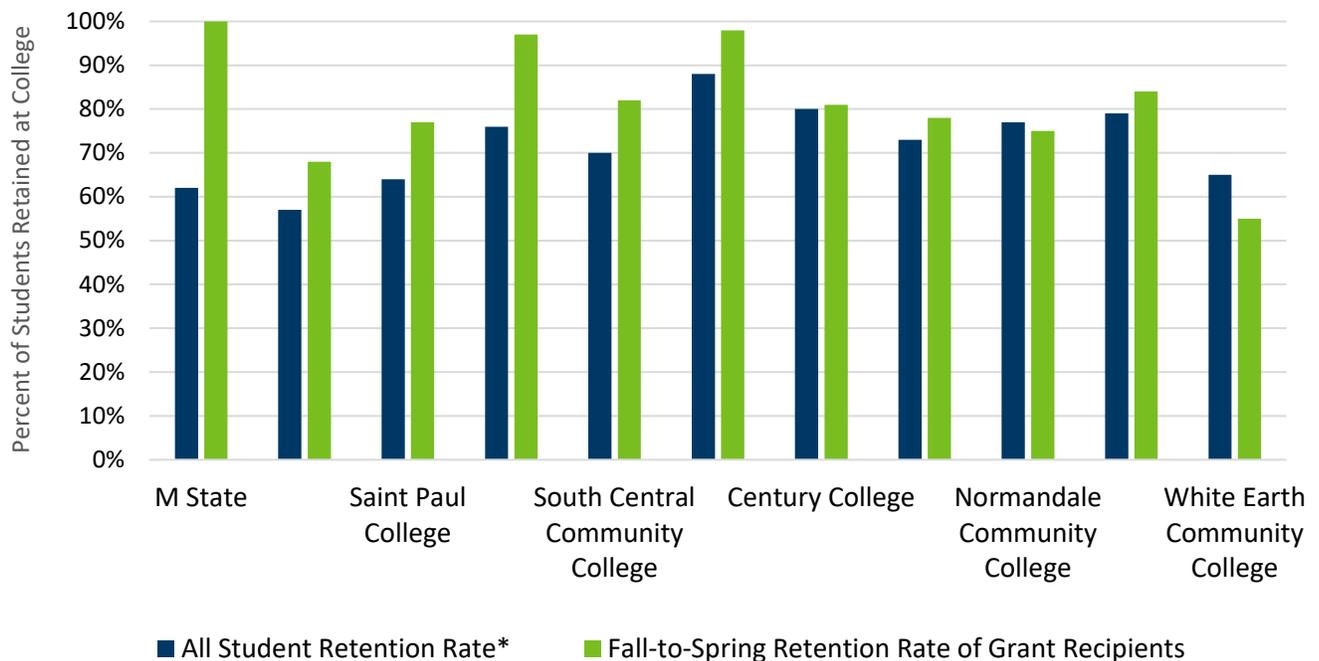
“This meant a lot to me. When I received my bills from the hospital I started crying and did not know what to do. I almost dropped out of classes then because I didn’t think I could do both. I was so relieved when the school was able to help out. It felt like the school cared about me and that I had support from them throughout my school career.”

“Receiving these funds allowed me to complete my final semester of nursing school. After a back injury I was unable to work as much as needed to pay for basic living costs. These funds allowed me to complete the nursing program. I cannot say thank you enough.”

Through extensive follow up and advising, colleges were also able to understand how the emergency grants impacted the students’ lives. Of the students who both received a grant and participated in a follow-up survey/advising, 84% said that their emergency was completely resolved due to the grant. The remaining students were either dealing with persistent, chronic issues that the grant would not resolve or the maximum award that the student received did not cover the full cost of their emergency issue. Furthermore, 93% of respondents said that they were likely to continue with their college education due to receiving an emergency grant.

All colleges and universities submitted retention data for students who received an emergency grant, as well as the all student retention rate of their institution. With that in mind, the fall-to-spring retention rates of students who received one grant surpasses the overall retention rate at all institutions with the exception of White Earth Community College. This is significant because those who received an emergency grant are among the highest need students on campus; to outperform overall student retention from fall to spring is a positive win for the colleges in sustaining this population of students on their campus. See **Figure 3** for a detailed graph of this information.

Figure 3. Comparative Retention Rates of All Student Population vs. Grant Recipient Retention Rate Fall-to-Spring Semester, 2018-2019



Future Recommendations

Based on the issues highlighted during in this report, additional steps are needed to adequately address the problem of homelessness and food insecurity among college students across Minnesota. While this is not an exhaustive list of steps to take to end poverty among this population, the following recommendations bolster efforts already in place that significantly impact student needs.

Increase Funding to Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students Grant Program

While most colleges and universities have a student population that could benefit from emergency assistance, the EAPS grant program is competitive in order to allocate the limited amount of money invested by the legislature to institutions that are dedicated to the work of supporting low-income students and also have the infrastructure to do so. Even so, the total amount allocated for this program is far lower than the need of students. Based on potential student eligibility and the results of the 2019 Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice report on Minnesota's student housing and food insecurity, we know that there are potentially thousands of students who are considered food or housing insecure and one emergency away from dropping out of college. A \$350,000 biennial appropriation supported almost 700 students with emergency funding and connected more than 300 additional students to services and caring staff.

The results of this report support a recommendation for increasing the investment in the EAPS Program. Such an increase follows the actions of other states with similar programs. California, for example, recently announced a \$500 million investment in emergency grants, and Washington followed suit shortly after and announced a \$1.5 million appropriation for the same program. These figures do not include other state appropriations that may also address student food and housing insecurity issues.

In order to address student needs in Minnesota, funding for the EAPS grant will need to at least double to meet the demonstrated demand. Based on institution applications, an appropriation of \$1 million is needed to double the number of institutions served, and provide the higher funding maximum per institution required to meet demand. Under this program, colleges and universities provide student services such as counselors, social workers, or other staff who can implement and deliver the program in a sensitive and student-centered manner. Within that partnership, the model is scalable and can potentially serve three times more students as compared to the 2018-2019 academic year.

Increase Funding to State Grant Program

Financing a college education can be a difficult, scary, and expensive process for students. The current financial aid model expects students and families to contribute financially, often impacting their ability to live in poverty while enrolled. Unexpected costs such as car repairs or medical bills are not included in the student's expected cost of attendance and can present immense hardships for students on tight incomes. Increasing affordability via increased financial aid for students is a needed first step in helping students mitigate these unexpected expenses.

Additional investments in the State Grant program or Pell Grant would increase grants for Minnesota students and help alleviate the financial burden of attending college. Increases in need-based grants — grants targeted toward students with financial need — provide additional funding for students to help pay for the cost of college and positively impact the likelihood of persistence and completion.

There are several ways to increase grants for students. One possibility is to advocate in Congress for increases to the federal Pell Grant. Additionally, amending State Grant eligibility and award levels in state law can increase grant funding for the students most at risk of dropping out when facing emergency expenses. Recommended changes to the State Grant program include:

- Increasing the living and miscellaneous expense allowance from its current level (106% of the poverty guideline) to 125% of the poverty guideline. This change would increase the average award for full-time students by roughly \$750 a year.
- Lowering the assigned student responsibility (ASR) from 50% also increases grants for students. Each percentage point reduction in the ASR costs the state roughly \$12 million annually, while increasing the average award for full-time students by roughly \$175 a year.
- Another approach to increasing affordability for students and families would be reducing the amount that students and families are expected to pay from earnings and savings by reducing the assigned family responsibility (AFR).

Supporting any of the above initiatives will help lower-income students afford college and reduce the potential that an unexpected emergency forces them to delay enrollment or drop out of college.

Emergency Housing and Hotel Voucher Pilot

Since homelessness/housing insecurity is the top issue low-income college students face today, colleges and universities should move from *acknowledging* that it is an issue on campus to *preparing* for homelessness on their campus. Based on housing costs and availability in Minnesota, housing issues likely impact many students who live paycheck-to-paycheck or are juggling college, caretaking, and work.

One way that colleges can respond to emergency housing issues is by reserving housing on campus for students who experience a short term housing emergency. Students can request to reserve the space and stay for a set duration (anywhere from overnight to a week) at no cost to the student for a set number of times (i.e. once per year), determined by the college. This works best for colleges and universities that have on-campus housing such as dormitories, family housing, or apartments. While the college may incur costs to reserve on-campus housing, this strategy allows colleges to leverage resources already on campus.

For colleges and universities that do not have or have limited on campus housing, creating a hotel voucher program may be more convenient for both the school and the student. Hotel voucher programs are established by intentional partnerships between the college and nearby hotels, especially those in metropolitan or resort areas that experience high vacancy during off-seasons. When a student needs emergency short-term housing, the college will notify their hotel partner and purchase a vacant room at a low, contracted rate. This would be a terrific option for colleges with established community partnerships, or those that are interested in utilizing community resources to support their students in need. Much like emergency grant programs, it also helps sustain local economies by keeping funding within the community.

The state would benefit from trying one or both options – emergency on-campus housing and emergency hotel vouchers – as pilot programs to determine their viability, the level of investment required, and their impact on preventing and ending homelessness among college students. It would especially important to determine how both programs work in a metropolitan and rural context. A pilot program would encourage colleges to try varying options and determine what best meets the needs of students.

Benefits Outreach and Support Services on Campuses

In order for programs like EAPS to function and be scalable on campuses, colleges must have adequate supports in place, both infrastructure and people. Many colleges and universities who secured funding through EAPS had social workers on campus to help assist with identifying students, case management, and follow up/evaluation. Social workers and support staff are crucial for case management that may be necessary when working with a vulnerable population. Finding sustainable ways to employ social workers and support staff on every campus could drastically increase the number of students served by meeting their basic needs.

Social workers can invite community resources onto campus ensuring that students are aware of and enroll in public benefits for which they are eligible. Some of these benefits include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, SNAP Education & Training), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and unemployment benefits. Benefits providers can work with social workers, navigators, and workforce counselors to help students enroll in and be aware of opportunities that otherwise require a level of social capital to access.

In addition to these services, colleges and universities should consider establishing food pantries, thrift/free stores, student-parent centers, adult learning centers, childcare centers, and other physical spaces that provide guidance, support, or resources for students who are at risk of dropping out of college due to financial circumstances.

Support EBT use on College Campuses

For students who are on SNAP, SNAP E&T, and/or WIC, the inability to buy food on campus can be a barrier to utilizing these benefits. Federal rules indicate that electronics benefits transfer (EBT) cards can only be used at grocery stores with a specific percentage of fresh food, and cannot be used for hot food. Based on these regulations, most colleges and universities that have food for purchase on campus do not qualify to accept EBT funds. Thus some students may go hungry when they show up for a day of classes.

Washington is one state that has committed to working through this barrier for students experiencing food insecurity. The 2019 legislature mandated the Washington Department of Health request a federal waiver from the United States Department of Agriculture for their state college system to allow campuses to accept EBT funds in their stores and restaurants. The Minnesota Department of Health has shown interest in requesting the same waiver so that students can use their electronic benefits to purchase food on campuses. Until such waives are in place, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education urges colleges and universities to re-think how they are selling food and what food options/vendors they are bringing onto campus. Adding significant fresh food options to convenience stores in place of grab-and-go snacks and candy can potentially allow for EBT use upon re-evaluation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Conclusion

Minnesota is known nationally for the support systems we have in place for students and families who live in poverty. Various sectors – industry, education, labor, non-governmental organizations, agriculture, and faith-based organizations, for example -- have for decades worked together to support Minnesota families and provide a place for them to thrive regardless of race, class, immigration status, ability, gender, etc. With this in mind, we have a long way to go before students can focus on obtaining a college credential without the looming fear of facing hunger and homelessness for themselves and their families. No one should have to make the difficult choice of furthering their education or buying enough groceries to last through the week to feed their family. By prioritizing basic needs, we are creating a support system that can help students persist through college despite a lack of financial stability and multi-generational poverty.

Appendix A: State Appropriation Language

Subd. 29. **Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students** (\$175,000 each year of the biennium)

- (a) This appropriation is for the Office of Higher Education to allocate grant funds on a matching basis to schools with a demonstrable homeless student population.
- (b) This appropriation shall be used to meet immediate student needs that could result in a student not completing the term or their program including, but not limited to, emergency housing, food, and transportation. Emergency assistance does not impact the amount of state financial aid received.
- (c) The commissioner shall determine the application process and grant amounts.

Appendix B: Abridged Copy of FY 2020 Request for Proposals



OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55108
651-642-0567 or 1-800-657-3866

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS GRANT PROGRAM

S.F. No. 943
90th Session of the Minnesota State Legislature

DEADLINES:

Intent to Submit Form – May 17, 2019
Grant Proposal – June 7, 2019– 4:30 p.m.
Early submissions are encouraged.

PROJECT FUNDING PERIOD:

Grant Award – August 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Alternative Format:

Upon request, the Request for Proposals can be made available in an alternative format by contacting Alaina DeSalvo, Minnesota Office of Higher Education, 1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55108, phone (651) 259-3988, fax (651) 642-0675. TTY users should contact the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 and request assistance in contacting the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS GRANT PROGRAM

March 29, 2019

Minnesota Office of Higher Education

I. OVERVIEW

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) is currently accepting proposals to improve retention and completion for college students experiencing food/housing insecurity or other unforeseen financial crises. Grants will be awarded to Minnesota postsecondary institutions to support the creation or continuance of emergency assistance programs within that college or university (2017 Minnesota Session Laws, Chapter 89, subd. 29). Through the Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students (EAPS) grant program, OHE will allocate grant funds on a matching basis to Minnesota colleges and universities to meet immediate student needs including, but not limited to: emergency housing, food, and transportation. The primary goal of the program is to act as a crisis intervention for students who lack resources and experience an unforeseen emergency that may impact their college attendance. The broad, over-arching objective is to eliminate immediate barriers that could result in a low-income student not completing their term or program due to issues related to poverty, while increasing students' resiliency and self-efficacy as individuals.

The purpose of the Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit proposals from colleges and universities; conduct a fair and extensive evaluation based on criteria listed herein; and select the proposals able to show the most potential to: 1) improve the short-term outcomes for students experiencing homelessness and food insecurity, 2) demonstrate the capacity to holistically assist and refer students who seek assistance, and 3) take a community approach to support students who are experiencing an unforeseen financial emergency.

One-hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars will be provided each year of the 2019-2020 biennium to support EAPS. See Appendix A for the state appropriation language from the 2017 legislature. The maximum allowable request per institution is \$43,000; a 25% match (monetary or in-kind) is required of all grantees

II. PROJECT PERIOD

This is a two-year grant cycle. Projects will be funded from August 1, 2019 through June 30, 2021. This means that there will not be a fiscal year (FY) 2021 competition; applicants who are chosen to receive an award in FY 2020 will be renewed for an additional award in FY 2021.

The Office of Higher Education will hold a competitive RFP process at the start of each new legislative biennium in order to allocate funds to eligible colleges and universities. All applicants, whether they are selected or not for FY 2020 funding, are encouraged to reapply for funding during the FY 2022 grant cycle.

III. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

According to state law, institutions eligible for EAPS-grant funding include Minnesota postsecondary institutions with a demonstrable homeless population. The State of Minnesota defines “homeless” as any individual, unaccompanied youth or family that is without a permanent place to live that is fit for human habitation. By this definition, students who are doubling-up (staying with a friend or family member, i.e. “crashing” or “couch-surfing”) are considered homeless.

Colleges or universities can demonstrate that they serve students experiencing homelessness by submitting one of the following items:

- Recently-conducted research on the prevalence of student homelessness on their campus;
- Limited data collected as a part of other social service programs on campus (i.e. collecting participant information at a campus food shelf or student-parent center); or
- Summative reports that demonstrate the prevalence of homelessness among the population served.

If a college or university has not conducted any quantitative research around housing insecurity within their institution, OHE may consider their proposal if the institution submits a written commitment to conducting research on the prevalence of student homelessness on their campus within one calendar year. EAPS funds may not be used to support this research.

IV. PROJECT PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

Many students from lower-income backgrounds lack the financial support or family resources to meet unexpected expenses while attending college. In addition, students with children or who are supporting other family members, while working twenty or more hours/week while in school, often must choose between college attendance and tending to basic needs such as food, housing, or transportation. According to a 2015 survey of students at 17 Minnesota institutions, 15.8% of students experienced a food shortage and lacked money to buy food. One Minnesota institution estimates that approximately 10% of their students experience at least temporary homelessness. In a recent study of community college students across the country, two-thirds of students reported to experience food insecurity, one-half reported to experience housing insecurity, and 14% of community college students reported to be homeless, using the most conservative definition of homelessness.

Despite being the second most educated state in the nation, Minnesota continues to experience some of the largest economic disparities that impact educational attainment, among other needs, for racial/ethnic minorities and low-income populations in the state. For example, among the Minnesota high school graduating class of 2014, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price lunch enrolled in college within two years at rates 22 percentage points lower than their peers who did not qualify for free/reduced-price lunch. Furthermore, a study of 1,500 public and nonprofit universities across the country found that 51% of Pell Grant recipients (low-income students) graduate college within six years, while their peers graduate at the rate of 65% during that timeframe.

These findings suggest that temporary or long-term food and housing insecurity pose barriers to postsecondary attendance, persistence and completion, which can aid in building pathways out of poverty. The EAPS grant program aims to act as an intervention to keep low-income students in college amidst unforeseen financial challenges that occur throughout their academic career. Support provided to students through EAPS-supported emergency grant programs is meant to provide “just-in-time funds” to overcome a personal financial crisis, so that students no longer have to choose between paying an unexpectedly large bill and staying in college.

V. PROJECT COMPONENTS AND ELIGIBLE SERVICES

EAPS will provide funds to create or supplement an emergency grant program within postsecondary institutions. **The following program components are recommended, with room for customization based on varied regional or individual student needs.**

Model EAPS-funded programs will:

Trust Students: Regardless of what parameters are set around eligibility and accountability, granting money to students requires a significant amount of trust. Grantee institutions will need to actively listen to and validate the experiences of students who pursue this intervention. Students who are systemically disadvantaged and choose to seek assistance from your institution are also being challenged to display a level of trust that may be perceived as a risk. Trust in students and their autonomy is essential in building student trust in the institution.

Be Timely: Financial crises can derail a students' future in a matter of days. A key component to the Emergency Grant Program is creating a process that works quickly and efficiently, so there is not a disruption in the students' learning or academic progress. This may mean thinking creatively to streamline inter-departmental processes that may normally require more time.

Create a Network of Support: Creating a network of support for students in need is one of the most important goals of this grant program. Financial assistance is just one aspect of retention. The intention of this grant program is to provide last-resort support to students who are experiencing a financial crisis; it will not solve the students' underlying situation or needs. Grantees will have a plan in place to support students beyond this financial assistance to help improve their underlying situation and/or create plans that support the students' resilience and persistence in college. This may mean collaborating with social service agencies, nonprofits, school districts, or other community-based programs in addition to services already offered within the college.

Be Free from Bias or Discrimination: Grantees must create a team to work on the EAPS grant that demonstrates cultural competency and are dedicated to students' rights to be treated fairly and humanely without discrimination of race, sex, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, etc. Grant decisions must be fair and free from bias or discrimination. Staff must also be dedicated to preserving the dignity of students who pursue this intervention.

Track Outcomes/Provide Follow-up: Grantees must include methods for data collection and evaluation into their program. Grantees will be asked to report to OHE on outcomes twice per year. Additionally, grantees must have a plan for follow-up with students who receive grant funds. This is a critical aspect of the project design; institutions must request information/status updates from students post-award in order to evaluate whether or not the intervention was successful.

Leverage Available Resources: EAPS grantees must match the total award amount by at least 25%. By contributing resources to administering the EAPS grant, institutions will leverage resources available to them to most efficiently impact student success on their campus. Grantees are also encouraged to leverage community resources and research in order to provide a robust program to students.

Incorporate Dedicated Staff Across Departments: Grantees must create centralized systems of administration to oversee and implement the EAPS grant. This means that dedicated staff will work as a team to create and

implement streamlined processes for accommodating student needs. Staff must be committed to working across departments, be passionate about issues of student retention and success, and have the capacity to work on the EAPS program.

Fit into Larger Mission of Equity and Student Success: Grantees are committed to equity and student success within their institutions, and are proactive in addressing barriers for low-income students. The EAPS grant fits appropriately into their larger vision for equity on their campus.

An EAPS Grant Administration Model

Please note the following requirements: 1) Payments must not exceed \$1000 per student. 2) Institutions must set a limit on the number of times one student may receive the funds in a given period. 3) All contact with students related to this program must be documented. 4) EAPS funds cannot go towards a students' college tuition, fees, or books.

The following processes are **suggested** for program-delivery. If your program differs from what is suggested here, please outline your proposed model in detail in your proposal.

Identify Students with a Financial Emergency

Students will most likely approach a faculty member, academic advisor, or other staff (i.e. LGBTQ center director or student-parent center director) when a crisis first occurs. Grantees must have a plan in place to create a student-centered, proactive “front line” to identify and refer students for an emergency assistance grant. This “front line” cannot be centralized into one role; multiple supportive staff across departments must be able to refer students to this program when there is potential for these funds to benefit them. The student is referred to the office where the grant is administered. While this office is determined by the institution, examples include academic affairs, the office of equity and diversity, and counseling services, as these offices may be best equipped to counsel the student through a crisis. Ideally, students will be walked or “handed off” to the appropriate office where they can receive services.

Application Process

Once the student is referred, they will visit the office in which the grant is administered to discuss the issue at hand. Through a discussion on the students' issue and the grant application/award process, the counselor will assess the student for program eligibility and begin to collect information for potential referrals that could be helpful for the student. Sometimes, there will be a clear case for a student to proceed in the process. Often, it may take a deeper look at the student's situation to determine if there is indeed an unforeseen financial event involved, and if/how the event is tied to chronic issues. If there is a long-term issue of poverty that prevents the student from sustainably staying in college, that does not qualify them for the grant in itself.

In order to create a less burdensome process for students, college staff are encouraged to walk students through the application question by question and even fill out the application on behalf of the student as they disclose information, if possible.

Determine Student Eligibility

Each college and university receiving the EAPS grant will determine their own standards for financial eligibility based on demonstrated need, using FAFSA/Minnesota State Grant data. Financial eligibility may differ from region to region based on local context and student demographics. For example, one institution may choose to use Expected Financial Contribution (EFC) and unmet need to determine student eligibility, while another may use Pell Grant eligibility. The eligibility standards that are decided by the institution must be followed consistently, unless there are significant extenuating circumstances.

An example of an “extenuating circumstance” might be: the institution makes an exception for a student who cannot request aid from family due to abusive behavior or fear of retribution (where the student is in effect living independently) when those concerns are clearly stated. While the program is intended to address issues of poverty among college students, it is encouraged that institutions use their own discretion (based on specific context) in order to award the funds to students equitably.

Application Review

Once student eligibility is determined, the students’ application will be reviewed by a committee. This committee will determine whether or not the student request is granted, based on standards set by the individual institution (i.e. a judgment made based on the students’ financial need, specific circumstance, and likelihood of dropout). It is recommended that the committee is cross-departmental and includes 2-3 staff/faculty, but the committee structure may differ by institution depending on available staff time and resources.

Notify Student

Students must be notified that they are approved for an emergency grant. Next steps and clear expectations must be outlined in the notification. If the student was not recommended for the emergency grant, a notification must be sent to them explaining the decision made in addition to referrals and resources that may help alleviate the situation.

Payment

Payments will come from the college’s business office. Eligible forms of “payment” include: 1) a check written directly to the student, 2) a check written to a third party vendor, 3) electronic transfer into a student account*, or 4) a gift card/pre-paid credit card. Other forms of payment may be accepted with prior approval from OHE. Payments must be made within 3-4 business days of the application’s submission.

*EAPS funds cannot go towards tuition or books. If a college or university decides to award EAPS funds using student accounts, they must submit a plan in their proposal to ensure that the funds are not used toward tuition or books.

Follow-up

The office that administers the emergency grant must follow up with the student at least once within 10 days, and then again within 45 days. Follow-up should include a comprehensive referral to campus and community resources in addition to ensuring the student received their payment. A key aspect of this follow-up is to collect information around whether or not this intervention was successful and alleviated the immediate barrier to

college attendance. A student satisfaction survey is included in Appendix G, which includes evaluative questions around the impact of the grant program.

If a student was not chosen to receive an emergency grant, the office must still follow up with them within 5 days of submitting the application. This would be a good time to refer the student to other programs within your institution or in the community, if those referrals have not already been made.

VI. REPORTING

The Office of Higher Education will require EAPS grantees to submit interim and final reports. Report templates will be provided when the grantee is notified of their award. Grantees will be asked to track and report on basic information on all students who apply for EAPS funding. In addition, OHE will request qualitative information from grantees that focuses on program implementation and the overall experience of administering the program.

VII. INTENT TO SUBMIT PROPOSAL FORM

All applicants must submit an Intent to Submit Form in order for their proposal to be considered. The Office of Higher Education (OHE) will use this form to plan for proposal review. This form (**Appendix B**) must be submitted by **May 17, 2019**.

VIII. PROPOSAL FORMAT

Applicants are required to use the format that follows. The presentation may be tailored to suit the style of the author, but each of the following components must be identified and addressed in the order shown.

1. **Proposal Cover Sheet** affixed to the top of the document. See Appendix C.
2. **Abstract** summarizing the content of the proposal. See Appendix D.
3. **Table of Contents** with pagination.
4. **Program Narrative** not to exceed twelve (12) numbered, double spaced pages. This excludes the cover sheet, abstract, table of contents, budget, budget narrative, and staff vitae. Use a 12-point font. The narrative should describe the proposed program in the context of the selection criteria. The Program Narrative must include the following sections:

a. **Demonstrated Need/Demonstrated Homelessness**

Use this section to demonstrate the need for EAPS within your institution. This can be achieved by illustrating the landscape of the campus's region, reporting on low-income student enrollment, and/or featuring student stories, among others. Describe services already offered within your institution that support low-income students. Describe collaborations or existing relationships within your institution or the larger community that would lend to this initiative. Be sure to include regional context or specific student needs that are unique to your institution, if applicable. If it is anticipated that EAPS funds will provide housing support to students, please include median rental prices within your region.

It is mandatory that grantees be able to show prevalence of homelessness among the students they serve in order to be eligible for this grant. Refer to Section III for more information. Data/reports may be included as an appendix item.

b. Plan of Operation

Describe your institution's project design and plan for implementing the emergency assistance grant program. If you already have an emergency assistance grant program at your institution, describe the existing program in this section and explain how it differs from the proposed plan outlined in this RFP. Be sure to reference points outlined in Section V. If your emergency grant program must differ in any way from what is outlined in Section V, use this section to propose those changes. Make sure that the plan of operation is detailed, realistic, and grounded in your institution's mission and values. Discuss potential collaborations within the community that will help drive or supplement this initiative. Describe the financial standard for eligibility you will use at your institution, the marketing plan, and the student application, notification, payment, and follow-up processes, as well as the standards that will be used for application review.

c. Evaluation Plan

Institutions must create and provide an outline of their own evaluation plan. Key evaluation questions include: 1) Was the student's crisis resolved due to this intervention (i.e. the students' rent was paid)? 2) Did the student complete the semester or term? 3) Were potential or ongoing barriers to the students' degree completion identified as a result of this intervention? 4) Has the student received referrals to other relevant services as a result of this program? 5) Does the student feel more confident in their college attendance/participation as a result of this intervention.

d. Adequacy of Resources, Quality of Personnel

Describe institutional resources currently available to support the emergency assistance grant program. Describe how the institution will sustain the EAPS grant model. Describe the role of the proposed project staff and their time commitment to the project. Describe how your institution will provide the 25% match requirement. Provide an abbreviated staff vitae documenting related experiences and expertise of key staff. Each abbreviated vitae is not to exceed two single-spaced pages and is to be attached as an appendix.

e. Budget, Budget Narrative, and Cost Effectiveness

See Appendix E for the budget form. In addition to the budget form, include a detailed budget narrative. The budget narrative must thoroughly describe each line item and provide justification for the expenditure.

5. **Appendices** (as required and necessary). Appendices should be clearly labeled, paginated, and identified in the Table of Contents.

- a. **Staff Vitae or Resume.** Include an abbreviated vitae or resume for staff who will be focused on this program.
- b. **Letters of Support.** These are mandatory and are to be included in the appendix and should document endorsement for proposed activities. Letters of support are to be written and signed by senior leadership. Other letters of support may include a community organization or social service agency endorsement, and/or other organizations/institutions/individuals that support this initiative.
- c. **Sample Student Application.** If not using OHE's emergency assistance grant application template, attach a copy of the application your institution will be using. See Appendix F for template.

- d. **Sample Follow-Up Student Survey.** If not using OHE's follow-up student survey, attach a copy of the survey or questions that you will administer to students who have received EAPS funds. See Appendix G for template.

IX. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation of proposals will be based on the following criteria:

1. *Need for the Project* (30): Extent to which the project:
 - Demonstrates the prevalence of homelessness on their campus (mandatory).
 - Demonstrates a commitment to researching the prevalence of food and housing insecurity on their campus, and/or retention patterns of low-income students.
 - Documents existing commitment to supporting low-income students on campus through community collaborations, emergency assistance programs, or other initiatives.
2. *Quality of Project Design and Management* (45 points): Extent to which:
 - The proposal documents how grant program implementation will meet student needs.
 - The proposal clearly specifies an achievable plan for grant program implementation.
 - Staff size, time commitment, and responsibilities are clearly defined and are appropriate for the project.
 - Commitment to cross-departmental collaboration is demonstrated.
 - Collaboration with internal (college) and external (community) resources are integrated into the project plan.
 - The plan for determining student eligibility, application review, and payment is well documented and achievable.
 - The institution outlines a plan for marketing/outreach that is targeted and reduces stigma around this intervention.
 - The values listed in V. PROJECT COMPONENTS AND ELIGIBLE SERVICES are addressed and demonstrated through the project plan and intent.
3. *Quality of Personnel and Adequacy of Resources* (10 points): Extent to which:
 - The qualifications, training, and experience of key personnel are appropriate for their assignments.
 - Institutional resources are adequate to meet project's goals and objectives.
 - Institutional commitment of resources up to or beyond 25% of the total award is clearly identified.
 - Letters of Support are included in the proposal and demonstrate commitment to the proposed work.
4. *Quality of Budget* (5 points): Extent to which:
 - The budget is cost effective and reflective of EAPS requirements, objectives, and outcomes.
5. *Quality of Evaluation Plan* (10 points): Extent to which:
 - There is a stated plan for addressing the five measures listed in **VII. Proposal Format, 4. Program Narrative, c. evaluation plan.**
 - The goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes to be achieved are clearly specified and measurable.
 - The proposed evaluation plan informs continuous improvement for service delivery.

X. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DURING PROPOSAL SOLICITATION

For technical assistance during the proposal development process, contact the Office of Higher Education's Competitive Grants Administrator, Alaina DeSalvo, at alaina.desalvo@state.mn.us. All questions should be submitted in writing.

A Technical Assistance Webinar for interested applicants will be held on **May 1, 2019, 10:00 am – 11:30 pm**. For more information and to register for the webinar, please e-mail Kelly Gibson at kelly.gibson@state.mn.us.

XI. GRANT SELECTION PROCESS

Upon receipt by the Office of Higher Education, proposals will be reviewed to determine if all required materials are included and if the proposal responds to program requirements. Incomplete, late, and/or proposals not responding to submission guidelines will not be judged.

Qualifying proposals will be reviewed and recommendations made by a grant selection committee composed of stakeholders chosen by the Office of Higher Education.

XII. GRANT ADMINISTRATION REGULATIONS

Administrative guidelines will be sent to grantees which will outline details on the grant award process, applicable regulations, monitoring expectations, fiscal procedures, reporting requirements, and more. Administrative guidelines will be sent to grantees upon contract execution.

XIII. GRANT CLOSE-OUT, SUSPENSION, AND TERMINATION

Close-out: Each grant shall be closed out as promptly as feasible after expiration or termination. In closing out the grant, the following shall be observed:

1. Upon request, OHE shall promptly pay the grant recipient for any allowable reimbursable costs not covered by previous payments.
2. The grant recipient shall immediately refund the OHE any unobligated balance of cash advanced to the grant recipient.
3. The grant recipient shall submit all financial, performance, evaluation and other reports required by the terms of the grant.
4. The close-out of a grant does not affect the retention period for State and/or Federal rights of access to grant records.

Suspension: When a grant recipient has materially failed to comply with the terms of a grant, the OHE may, upon reasonable notice to the grant recipient, suspend the grant in whole or in part. The notice of suspension will state the reason(s) for the suspension, any corrective action required of the grant recipient, and the effective date.

Termination: OHE may terminate any grant in whole, or in part, at any time before the date of expiration whenever OHE determines that the grant recipient has materially failed to comply with the terms of the grant. OHE shall promptly notify the grant recipient in writing of the termination and the reason(s) for the termination, together with the effective date.

The grant recipient may terminate the grant in whole or in part upon written notification to OHE, setting forth the reasons for such termination, the effective date and, in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated.

XIV. FINANCIAL REVIEW PROCESS

All postsecondary institutions that are also Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must undergo a financial review prior to receiving a grant award made of \$25,000 and higher. In order to comply with the [Policy on the Financial Review of Nongovernmental Organizations](#)¹⁰, please submit one of the following documents with your application, based on the following criteria:

- Grant applicants with annual income of under \$50,000, or who have not been in existence long enough to have a completed IRS Form 990 or audit should submit their most recent board-reviewed financial statements.
- Grant applicants with total annual revenue of \$50,000 or more and less than \$750,000 should submit their most recent IRS Form 990.
- Grant applicants with total annual revenue of over \$750,000 should submit their most recent certified financial audit.

XV. TIMELINE FOR PROPOSALS, AWARDS, AND FUNDED PROJECTS

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| March, 2019 | Request for Proposals available to applicants |
| May 1, 2019 (10:00 am) | Technical Assistance webinar for interested applicants |
| May 17, 2019 | Deadline for receipt of Intent to Submit forms |
| June 7, 2019 | <u>Deadline for receipt of proposal</u> |
| July 15, 2019 | Notification of recommended grant awards |
| August 1, 2019 | Project period starts with date of contract encumbrance |

Provide **one scanned/e-mailed copy and four hard copies** of the complete proposal, stapled in the upper left corner. Do not place proposals in binders or covers. Hand deliver or mail the hard copies to:

Alaina DeSalvo, Competitive Grants Administrator
Minnesota Office of Higher Education
1450 Energy Park Drive, Suite 350
St. Paul, MN 55108-5227

Proposals sent by U.S. mail should be postmarked by the date of the deadline. The applicant is responsible for making sure the proposals arrive on time.

¹⁰ https://mn.gov/admin/assets/08%2006%20grants%20policy%20revision%20Dec%202016%20final_tcm36-265656.pdf

Note for hand-delivered proposals: Directions to the Office of Higher Education can be found at: <http://www.oh.e.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=1847>. Use of the building entrance on the north (by the flag poles) is required.

All proposals must arrive by 4:30pm on June 7, 2019.

All proposals will be acknowledged upon receipt. Each late or ineligible applicant will be notified that their proposal will not be considered.

XVI. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

We will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per [Minn. Stat. § 16B.98](#)¹¹ and [Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making](#)¹². Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to OHE due to competing duties or loyalties; and/or
- A grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued including, but not limited to, disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

XVII. PUBLIC DATA

Per [Minn. Stat. § 13.599](#)¹³,

- Names and addresses of grant applicants will be public data once proposal responses are opened.
- All remaining data in proposal responses (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [§13.37](#)¹⁴) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).
- All data created or maintained by OHE as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in § 13.37) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).

XVIII. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND NON-DISCRIMINATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership

¹¹ <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/16B.98>

¹² http://www.mn.gov/admin/images/grants_policy_08-01.pdf

¹³ <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/13.599>

¹⁴ <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/13.37>

or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. [Minn. Stat. § 363A.02](#)¹⁵. The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.

- B. The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Minnesota Rules, part [5000.3500](#)¹⁶.
- C. The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

XIX. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS AND OTHER RESOURCES FOR APPLICANTS

Continuum of Care (CoC): Regional programs that promote community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. These programs:

- Provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers and State and local governments to quickly re-house homeless individuals and families to minimize trauma and dislocation,
- Promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs, and
- Optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

CoCs coordinate annual PIT Counts, in addition to steering committees comprised of local stakeholders with the mission of ending homelessness.

Emergency Assistance Grant Program: A program within a postsecondary institution that grants money to students experiencing an emergency in their personal life, often to ensure that basic needs are being met, with the long-term goal of student retention. Institutions do not require the student to commit to repaying or contributing anything in return for the grant.

Food insecurity: The USDA lists two categories of “food insecurity”:

- Low food security – reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake.
- Very low food security – Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake. Characteristics of households/individuals with very low food security include:
 - Worry about food running out
 - Food bought for a given period did not last throughout that period

¹⁵ <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/363A.02>

¹⁶ <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/5000.3500/>

- Could not afford balanced meals
- Cut size of meals or skipped meals
- Ate less than they felt appropriate during their last meal
- Hungry but did not eat
- Lost weight
- Did not eat for an entire day

Homelessness (federal definition): The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has four categories of homeless definitions for eligibility for different types of programs. Eligibility for Supportive Housing, the broadest category, uses the following two definitions:

- An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
 - An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
 - An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low income individuals); or
 - An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.
- Any individual or family who:
 - Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence;
 - Has no other residence; and/or
 - Lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, and faith based or other social networks to obtain other permanent housing.

Homelessness (state definition): A household lacking a fixed, adequate nighttime residence (includes doubled-up).

Housing insecurity/instability: Using the Minnesota definition of "Households at Significant Risk of Long-Term Homelessness): Includes (a) households that are homeless or recently homeless with members who have been previously homeless for extended periods of time and are faced with a situation or set of circumstances likely to cause the household to become homeless in the near future, and (b) previously homeless persons who will be discharged from correctional, medical, mental health or treatment centers who lack sufficient resources to pay for housing and do not have a permanent place to live.

Point-in-Time Count (PIT Count): A count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. HUD requires that regions within every U.S. state conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are

sheltered in an emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. Each count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally, directed by the local Continuum of Care.

Unforeseen Emergency: A sudden, unanticipated event that results in economic, emotional, or physical distress and disrupts daily life.

Other Resources

Point-in-Time Count Dashboard (federal homelessness data by MN region): <https://www.icalliances.org/point-in-time-data>

Wilder Research’s “Homeless in Minnesota: Summary of the Findings from the 2105 Minnesota Homeless Study”: <http://mnhomeless.org/minnesota-homeless-study/reports-and-fact-sheets/2015/2015-homelessness-in-minnesota-summ-11-16.pdf>

Wilder Research’s “Homelessness and Near-Homelessness on Six Minnesota American Indian Reservations: Findings from the 2015 Study”: <http://mnhomeless.org/minnesota-homeless-study/reports-and-fact-sheets/2015/2015-homeless-reservations-3-17.pdf>

The Great Lakes Foundation’s 2012-2015 Emergency Grant: Closing Report and Best Practices. (2016).

Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., Schneider, J., Hernandez, A., & Cady, C. Still Hungry and Homeless in College. Wisconsin HOPE Lab. (2018).

Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., & Hernandez, A. Hungry and Homeless in College: Results from a National Study of Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education. Wisconsin HOPE Lab. (2017).

Kruger, K., Parnell, A., & Wesaw, A. Landscape Analysis of Emergency Aid Programs. National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Inc. (2016).

**Appendix C: Sample of Student
Application for Emergency
Assistance**

It is recommended that each college or university collect the following information.

1. STUDENT PROFILE

- First & Last Name:
- Primary Email:
- Secondary Email:
- Student ID#:
- Date of Birth:
- Gender: (intentionally left blank):
- Address:
- Address (line 2):
- City:
- State:
- Zipcode:
- Primary Phone:
- Marital Status – Circle the option that best fits you:

- Single
- Married
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Living with Domestic Partner

- Race/Ethnicity (circle one or more):

- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Black/African American
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- White/Caucasian
- Other

- Your current employment status (circle one):

- Full-time
- Part-time
- Occasional/Seasonal
- Not employed

- Are you a U.S. veteran (circle one): YES NO

2. ACCESS TO HOUSING AND CHILDCARE

- Number of Dependents – Include yourself:
- Were you in foster care at the time you turned 18 (circle one): YES NO
- Are you currently living in a shelter (circle one): YES NO

- Are you currently living with a friend of family member (circle one): YES NO
- If yes, are you considered their dependent?
- If yes, how long have you been living with them?
- Are you currently without stable housing (circle one): YES NO
- Do you currently feel safe at home (circle one): YES NO
- If relevant, do you currently have access to childcare that allows you to attend college? YES NO NOT RELEVANT

3. ACCESS TO FOOD

- Are you currently enrolled in and receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (circle one): YES NO
- For these statements, please tell me whether the statement was often true, sometimes true, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months—that is, since last (name of current month).
- “The food that (I/we) bought just didn’t last, and (I/we) didn’t have money to get more.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?
 - Often true
 - Sometimes true
 - Never true
 - Don’t know
- “(I/we) couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?
 - Often true
 - Sometimes true
 - Never true
 - Don’t know
- In the last 12 months, since last (name of current month), did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don’t know
- [IF YES ABOVE] How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?
 - Almost every month
 - Some months but not every month
 - Only 1 or 2 months
 - Don’t know
- In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Don’t know

- In the last 12 months, were you every hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?
 Yes
 No
 Don't know

4. TRANSPORTATION

- Do you have a way of consistently getting to and from your classes (circle one): YES NO
- Have you missed more than 1 class so far this semester because you did not have a way of getting to class (circle one): YES NO

5. GRANT ADVERTISING

- How did you learn about this Emergency Grant Program? (circle one):
 Financial Aid Office
 Student Services office
 Instructor/Counselor/Staff Member
 Web site
 Classmate
 Poster or flier
 Email promotion
 Press release/Newspaper/Media
 Other
- Name of instructor or staff member (if selected above):
- If you selected "Other" above, please briefly explain where you learned about this Emergency Grant Program:
- Have you ever applied for an Emergency Assistance Grant at this institution (circle one): YES NO
- Have you ever received an Emergency Assistance Grant at this institution (circle one): YES NO

6. STUDENT AID APPLICATION

- a) Amount Requested:
 Students may request up to \$1000 up to twice at a given institution.
- b) Category (check one):
 Housing/Rent
 Automobile Expenses
 Gas
 Public Transportation
 Groceries
 Other Meal/Nutrition-related
 Utilities
 Child-related
 Health/Medical-related
 Other*

*If other, describe:



By signing this document, I commit to using the emergency assistance grant award for its intended purposes, outlined in this application. I will not use the emergency assistance grant award to pay for tuition or books. I also agree for college staff and/or staff from the MN Office of Higher Education to contact me to follow up on my progress after the application is submitted. I verify that all information provided in this application is true and verifiable.

[STUDENT SIGNATURE] _____ [DATE] _____

Financial Aid Office

___ This student meets the financial standard of eligibility

___ This student does NOT meet the financial standard of eligibility

Application Review Committee

Committee Signatures Student Approved? (Y/N)

FINAL DECISION: _____

Financial Aid Office Review

[Staff Name: _____]

1. Has the student completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for this academic year (circle one): YES NO
2. Is the student currently receiving or eligible to receive a Pell Grant (circle one): YES NO
3. Is the student currently receiving any other type of aid or scholarship (circle one): YES NO
4. If yes, please list them
5. Annual Household Income – What is the students’ current annual household income (circle one):
Less than \$10,000
\$10,000-\$19,999
\$20,000-\$29,999
\$30,000-\$39,999
\$40,000-\$49,999
\$50,000-\$59,999
\$60,000-\$69,999
\$70,000-\$79,999
\$80,000-\$89,999
\$90,000-\$100,000
\$100,000 or more
6. Have either of the students’ parents earned a Bachelor’s degree (circle one): YES NO
7. Number of years student has attended this college (circle one): 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6+
8. Enrollment status (circle one): Full-time Student | Part-time Student

- 9. Credits earned to date:
- 10. Credits in current term:
- 11. Degree being sought (circle one):

- Certificate
- Diploma
- Associate
- Bachelors
- Masters
- Ph.D.
- Non-degree seeking
- Other

- 12. Program of study/major:
- 13. Anticipated date of graduation at this college:
- 14. Cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale:
- 15. Check one:

This student meets the financial standard of eligibility

This student does NOT meet the financial standard of eligibility

[Signature] _____ [Date] _____

Appendix D: Follow-Up Student Survey Template

1. Before receiving emergency grant funds, how likely was it that you would have left or taken a break from attending this college?
 EXTREMELY LIKELY VERY LIKELY LIKELY NOT LIKELY NOT AT ALL LIKELY
2. After receiving emergency grant funds, how likely is it that you will leave or take a break from attending this college...
 Within the next week? EXTREMELY LIKELY VERY LIKELY LIKELY NOT LIKELY NOT AT ALL LIKELY
 Within the next 4 weeks? EXTREMELY LIKELY VERY LIKELY LIKELY NOT LIKELY NOT AT ALL LIKELY
 Within the next year? EXTREMELY LIKELY VERY LIKELY LIKELY NOT LIKELY NOT AT ALL LIKELY
3. On a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being the lowest level of satisfaction and 10 being the highest level of satisfaction, how satisfied are you with the emergency grant process?
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comments: _____

4. Which statement best reflects the current status of the emergency that you listed on your emergency grant application (circle one or more)?
 My emergency is completely resolved
 My emergency is somewhat resolved
 My emergency is ongoing and will require more time to resolve
 My emergency is ongoing and will require more financial assistance to resolve
 My emergency is not resolved at all
 My emergency will never be resolved
5. Did someone at the college help find you resources (other than emergency funds) to help you address your emergency (circle one): YES NO
6. If yes, have you accessed or attempted to access any of the resources that were given to you by the staff member to help address your emergency (circle one):
 I accessed additional resources
 I attempted but was not able to access additional resources
 I did not attempt to access additional resources

Is there anything you would like to add?:

Appendix E: Proposal Evaluation Form

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS GRANT PROGRAM

**MINNESOTA OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
PROPOSAL REVIEW FORM
FISCAL YEAR 2020**

Proposal No.:

Funding Requested:

Institution:

Title:

Reviewer's ID Number _____ Total Score ____ /100

Recommendation: (Check one)

Highly Recommended () Recommended () Not Recommended ()

1. DEMONSTRATED PROJECT NEED (30 Total Points)

| Rubric | Comments | Points |
|---|----------|--------|
| 1. The proposal clearly demonstrates gaps in support for lower-income students on campus or in the region (max 7 points) | | |
| 2. Documentation is provided that shows the prevalence of students experiencing homelessness within the postsecondary institution or in the region (max 5 points) | | |
| 3. The proposal provides background information on needs that are specific to the local community, campus community, or target student population (max 10 points) | | |
| 4. The institution demonstrates a commitment to researching the prevalence of food and housing insecurity on their campus, and/or retention patterns of low-income students (max 4 points) | | |
| 5. The proposal documents existing commitment to supporting low-income students on campus through community collaborations, emergency assistance programs, or other initiatives. (max 4 points) | | |
| TOTAL POINTS | | |

2. PLAN OF OPERATION (45 Total Points)

| Rubric | Comments | Points |
|---|----------|--------|
| 1. The project design includes clear and specific information about how EAPS will be implemented at the institution and how implementation will meet student need (max 10 points) | | |
| 2. The Plan of Operation is detailed, realistic, and grounded in the institutions' mission and values (max 4 points) | | |
| 3. The institution commits to collaborate with both internal (within the college/cross-departmental) and external (within the community) resources in order to support students (max 7 points) | | |
| 4. The process for administering funds to students is student-centered: it trusts students, minimizes the students' burden in the process, and provides support to the whole student while respecting the dignity of students who seek this intervention (max 5 points) | | |
| 5. The Plan of Operation aligns with the stated values of the EAPS program (max 4 points) | | |
| 6. The project design includes a system or process for addressing underlying, chronic issues that students who seek this intervention may be experiencing in addition to their immediate emergency (max 4 points) | | |
| 7. The plan for determining student eligibility, application review, and payment is well documented and achievable (max 6 points) | | |
| 8. The institution outlines a plan for marketing/outreach that is targeted and reduces stigma around this intervention (max 5 points) | | |
| TOTAL POINTS | | |

3. QUALITY OF PERSONNEL AND RESOURCE ADEQUACY (10 Total Points)

| Rubric | Comments | Points |
|---|----------|--------|
| 1. Staff size, time commitment, and responsibilities are clearly defined and appropriate for the project (max 4 points) | | |
| 2. Institutional resources are adequate to meet project's goals and objectives (max 3 points) | | |
| 3. Institutional commitment to resources up to or beyond 25% of total award is clearly identified (max 1 point) | | |
| 4. Letters of support are included in the proposal and demonstrate commitment to the proposed work (max 2 points) | | |
| TOTAL POINTS | | |

4. BUDGET AND COST EFFECTIVENESS (5 Total Points)

| Rubric | Comments | Points |
|--|----------|--------|
| 1. The budget is clear, concise, and justified by the budget narrative (max 3 points) | | |
| 2. The budget is cost effective and reflective of EAPS program requirements, project objectives, and outcomes (max 2 points) | | |
| TOTAL POINTS | | |

5. EVALUATION PLAN (10 Total Points)

| Rubric | Comments | Points |
|--|----------|--------|
| 1. The institution submitted a thorough and realistic outline to evaluate the EAPS program at their institution. Plan includes an evaluation of program implementation as well as an evaluation of student outcomes (max 3 points) | | |

| Rubric | Comments | Points |
|---|----------|--------|
| 2. The Evaluation Plan includes key research questions such as, 1) Was the student's crisis resolved due to this intervention? 2) Did the student complete their semester or term? 3) Were potential or ongoing barriers to the students' degree completion identified as a result of this intervention? 4) Has the student received referrals to other relevant services as a result of this program? 5) Does the student feel more confident in their college attendance/participation as a result of this intervention? (max 2 points) | | |
| 3. The Evaluation Plan describes ways to systematically measure and respond to the research/evaluation questions listed by the institution (max 3 points) | | |
| 4. The proposed evaluation plan informs continuous improvement for service delivery (max 2 points) | | |
| TOTAL POINTS | | |

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Proposals Strengths

Proposal Weaknesses

If funding is recommended, are there conditions to be met prior to funding? What are they? (Use additional pages, if necessary).

**Appendix F: FY 2020 Proposals
Received**

Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students Grant Program
Minnesota Office of Higher Education
Fiscal Year 2020

| Proposal # | Title and Applicant | Amount Requested |
|-------------------|---|-------------------------|
| EAPS-01 | Central Lakes College Nick Heisserer <i>Student Support Fund (SFF) Program</i> | \$32,000 |
| EAPS-02 | Invcr Hills Community College Kari Rusch-Curl <i>Acts of Kindness: Emergency Grants for Students in Need</i> | \$40,000 |
| EAPS-03 | South Central College Judy Endres <i>South Central College LifeSaver Program</i> | \$43,000 |
| EAPS-04 | Minneapolis Community and Technical College Jalex Lor <i>Assistance to Achieve Grant</i> | \$43,000 |
| EAPS-05 | St. Catherine University Joan Demeules <i>Katies Emergency Grant</i> | \$43,000 |
| EAPS-06 | Minnesota State University, Mankato Carolyn Nelson <i>Emergency Grant</i> | \$43,000 |
| EAPS-07 | Saint Paul College – A Community and Technical College Michael Gerold <i>Emergency Funds for Student Success</i> | \$43,000 |
| EAPS-08 | Mesabi Range College Shelly McCauley Jugovich <i>Emergency Assistance Grant – “Zenith” – The Point in the Sky that is Directly Overhead</i> | \$43,000 |
| EAPS-09 | Augsburg University Ann Garvey <i>Auggie Basics Emergency Grants</i> | \$41,000 |
| EAPS-10 | Riverland Community College Chelsea Anderson <i>Emergency Assistance Grant Program</i> | \$43,000 |
| EAPS-11 | Century College Kristin Hageman <i>Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students Program</i> | \$42,400 |
| EAPS-12 | St. Cloud Technical and Community College Kerby Plante <i>Helping Overcome Barrier to Promote Excellence (HOPE) Grant</i> | \$43,000 |

| Proposal # | Title and Applicant | Amount Requested |
|-------------------|--|-------------------------|
| EAPS-13 | Hamline University Javier Gutierrez <i>Hamline Emergency Grant</i> | \$43,000 |
| EAPS-14 | Normandale Community College Matt Traxler <i>Normandale Care Emergency Assistance Program</i> | \$43,000 |
| EAPS-15 | Pine Technical and Community College Kierstan Peck <i>Pine Technical and Community College Emergency Assistance for Postsecondary Students</i> | \$20,000 |
| EAPS-16 | White Earth Tribal and Community College Jen McDougall <i>WETCC Emergency Assistance</i> | \$43,000 |
| EAPS-17 | St. Cloud State University Sheila Moriarty <i>SUSTAIN: Supporting University Students to Alleviate Insecurity Now</i> | \$42,964 |
| EAPS-18 | Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State) Kayla Simon <i>M State Emergency Needs Fund</i> | \$40,000 |
| EAPS-19 | Red Lake Nation College Shieleen Omen <i>Oshki Manidoo Emergency Aid Program</i> | \$33,000 |
| EAPS-20 | Metropolitan State University Maya Sullivan <i>METRO STATE SUPPORTS: Emergency Assistance for Students</i> | \$43,000 |
| | TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED | \$807,000 |



OFFICE OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

2020