

# Project Success Emergency Aid Toolkit

Recommendations and resources for higher education professionals to create, implement, and promote emergency aid programs





# What's Inside

- ▷ Background
- ▷ Research on Student Financial Need
- ▷ Developing Emergency Aid Programs
- ▷ How to Promote Emergency Aid Programs
- ▷ We're Here for You: How Trellis Can Help
- ▷ Sample Campaign Templates

# Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrust students, their support networks, and institutions of higher education toward a financial crisis. In response, the President signed the CARES Act into law, which provides institutions of higher education with \$14 billion in support and allocates funding to create emergency aid programs for students.





Given the immediacy of challenges presented by COVID-19 and the availability of CARES Act funding, many institutions are moving quickly to develop emergency aid programs on their campuses.



Yet, institutions of higher education may lack clear guidance given the ambiguity surrounding funding and timing. To support the higher education community, this toolkit provides information relevant to establishing and promoting emergency aid programs, providing students with the immediate assistance they need.



# Research Regarding Student Need



**61% of public two-year students**

**57% of all four-year students**

reported having trouble getting \$500 in cash or credit to meet an unexpected need within the next month



**53% of all two-year students**

**51% of all four-year students**

agreed or strongly agreed that they worry about being able to pay their monthly expenses

**73% of all two-year students**

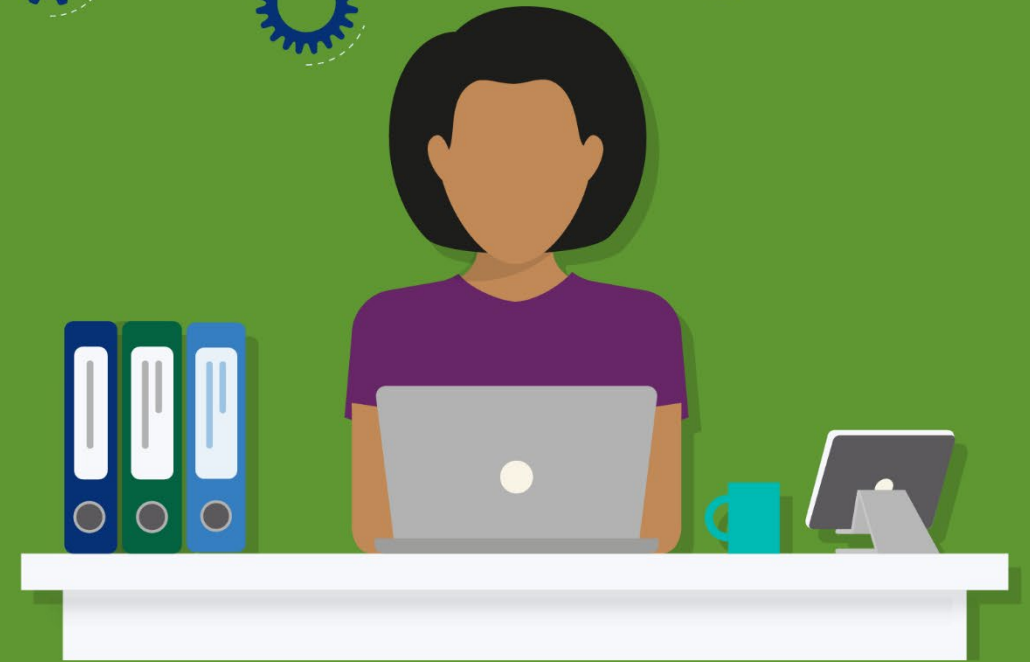
**66% of all four-year students**

ran out of money at least once within the last 12 months





# Developing Emergency Aid Programs



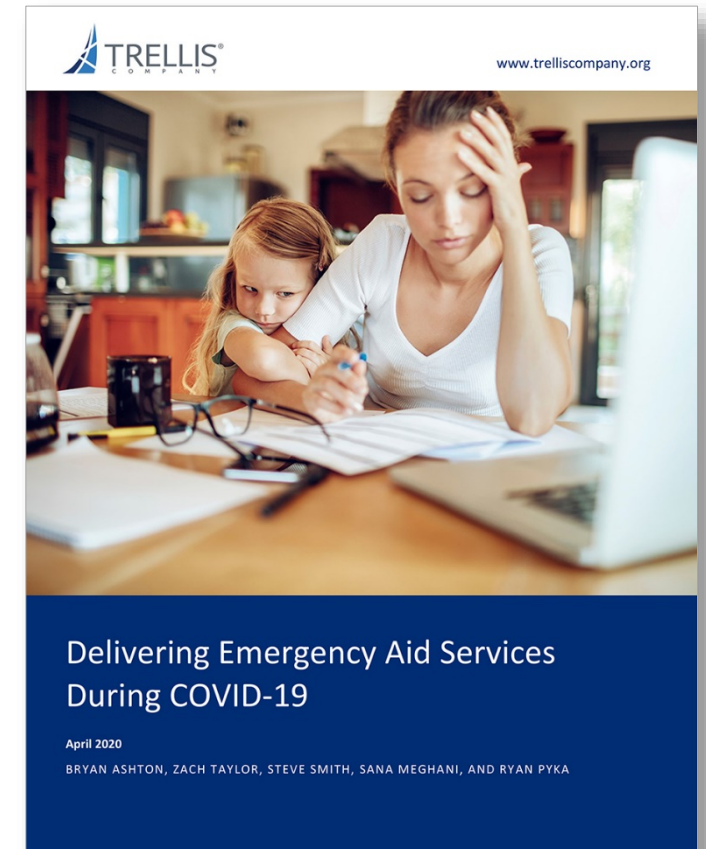
# 2020 Emergency Aid Report



This report highlights:

- ▶ Common Practices for Starting an Emergency Aid Program
- ▶ Challenges of Starting and Administering Emergency Aid Programs
- ▶ Relevant Resources
- ▶ Suggestions for Further Reading

Download the [report](#)



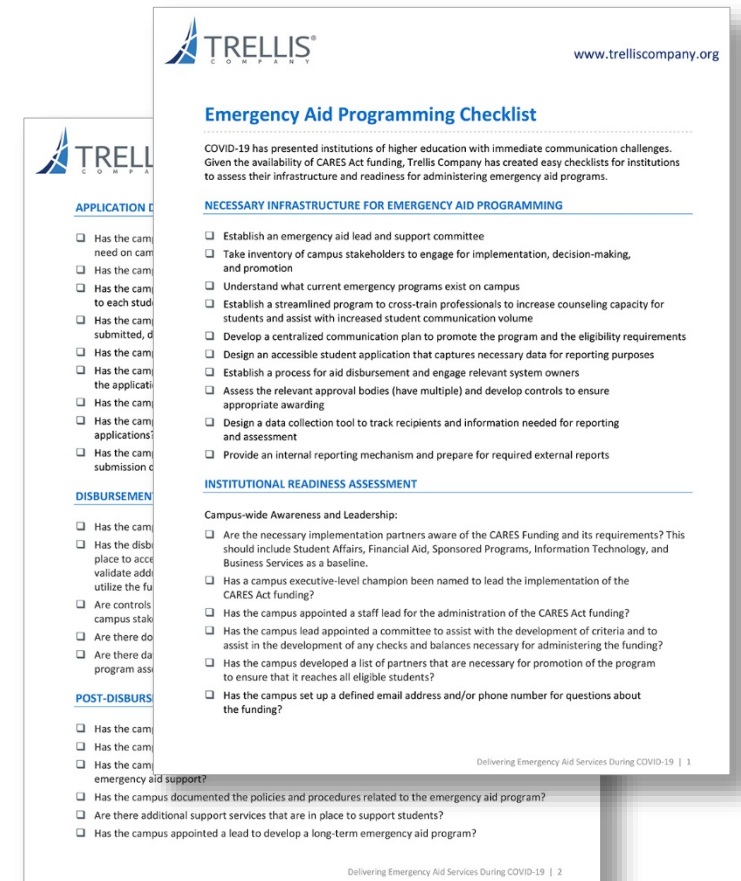
# 2020 Emergency Aid Checklist



The toolkit includes easy checklists for institutions to assess their infrastructure and readiness for administering emergency aid programs. Topics include:

- ▶ Necessary Infrastructure For Emergency Aid Programming
- ▶ Institutional Readiness Assessment
- ▶ Application Development
- ▶ Disbursement
- ▶ Post Disbursement

Download the [checklist](#)








# Recommendations for Student Emergency Aid Application Accessibility

It is critical that students can easily access and submit emergency aid applications. To quickly distribute emergency aid funds, use the recommendations in the guide when creating student emergency aid applications.

Download the [guide](#)

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## Recommendations for Student Emergency Aid Application Accessibility

It is critical that students can easily access and submit emergency aid applications. Below are recommendations for creating student emergency aid applications to quickly distribute emergency aid funds:

- If possible, use a fillable form embedded in a webpage. These applications can be filled out on any device (phone, tablet, computer) and do not need to be printed, filled out, scanned, and returned to the school. Additionally, students may not have access to a printer or a desktop/laptop computer at this time and may rely on phones/tablets.
- Students may not have Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF reader technology on their phones, tablets, or computers. As a result, schools should consider free fillable form technologies that allow applications to be completed in an Internet browser, such as Google Chrome, Firefox, or Safari.
- If you are unable to host an application on your webpage (the best choice), consider using Google Forms. Google Forms is a free technology that allows students to fill out forms. Google Forms can be added into emails and completed by students within their browser. More information can be found [here](#).
- If you are using a PDF, be sure to compress the PDF and remove images if possible. Images and lots of fonts will make the PDF larger and harder to download on slow internet connections. You can compress PDFs to make them smaller for free [here](#).
- Below are examples of high-quality online applications that do not require students to download files or have software such as Microsoft Word or Adobe.
  - [Alamo Colleges District](#)
  - [Fort Valley State University](#)
  - [Georgia State University](#)
  - [Xavier University](#)



# Sample Emergency Grant Application

Institutions can use this sample application, but professionals should also be aware of the needs of their own student population. Collaboration is key when creating an application, as the application should be simple and student focused. You know your students, and the application should reflect that knowledge and understanding. Connect with your students to understand their needs and create an application that responds to these needs. This strategy will likely increase student engagement with the application and your ability to provide emergency aid quickly.

Download the [sample application](#)

Emergency Grant Application \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT INFORMATION**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL INFORMATION**

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Current School: \_\_\_\_\_  
Request Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Requested Amount: \_\_\_\_\_  
Category of Aid: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Utilities  Rent/Housing  Medical/Dental  Vehicle Expenses  Gas  Public Transportation Pass  Childcare  Food  Other

The information requested below will not be considered in the evaluation of your application.

Gender:  Male  Female  
Marital Status:  Divorced  Living with domestic partner  Married  Separated  Single  Widowed  
Number of dependents: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ethnicity:  Hispanic or Latino  Not Hispanic or Latino  
Race (Mark one or more races to indicate what you consider yourself to be):  
 American Indian or Alaskan Native  Asian  Black or African American  
 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  White  
English as a second language:  Yes  No  
Did either of your parents complete an associate's degree or higher?  Yes  No  
Veterans:  Yes  No Foster child:  Yes  No

PRINT FULL NAME HERE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY**

Award decision date: \_\_\_\_\_ Fully paid date: \_\_\_\_\_ Directed to services? (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
Term: Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Total requested amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Category of aid: (U/R/M/V/G/P/C/J/F/O/I) \_\_\_\_\_  
Total awarded: \_\_\_\_\_ Total denied: \_\_\_\_\_ Total paid: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reenrollment date: (enrolled/graduated/transferred/not enrolled) \_\_\_\_\_



# Promoting Emergency Aid Programs





# What Students Need to Know

- ▶ How to apply and where to find the application
- ▶ How to document their qualified expenses
- ▶ Who to contact and how if they have questions
- ▶ What other forms of emergency aid are available
- ▶ When to expect a decision on their application
- ▶ That they do not need to repay these emergency grants. These grants can be explained as a free “unrestricted grant” and that a student’s financial standing with the school will not change as a result of applying for and receiving a grant.
- ▶ How you will follow up with them after they apply



# What You Can Do

- ▶ **Keep messaging simple and short.**

When students feel stressed, they may have shorter attention spans and be less likely to pick up on key details.

- ▶ **Do not communicate a culture of scarcity.**

Assure students that emergency aid is available to them and their institution will support them.

- ▶ **Develop the capacity to communicate with students before, during, and after the application and emergency aid disbursement process.**

Students will have anxiety about applying for emergency aid, and consistent communication with students will ensure them that you will support them through the process.

# We're Here for You: How Trellis Can Help



- ▶ As a Project Success school, Trellis Company will continue to support you across numerous platforms to ensure that emergency aid gets to your students when and how they need it.
- ▶ Our support services include:
  - **Text message campaigns** to promote student emergency aid programs and alert students about how to apply and contact you for assistance.
  - **Mail campaigns** informing students how to apply and what types of aid may be available if students successfully submit an application.
  - **Call campaigns** to connect with students directly, assuring them that their school is there and ready to provide support and encouragement.
  - **Financial wellness coaching** through one-on-one appointments and other support services through iGrad. Both ways can help students manage their money and guide them through this emergency.

# Sample E-mail Campaign



## SAMPLE EMAIL 1: ONLINE APPLICATION

Subject Line: Apply for Emergency Aid Funding

(alt: "Do You Need Emergency Funding? Apply Now!", "Emergency Aid Funding Now Available," "Student Emergency Aid Funds," "Application for Emergency Funding.")

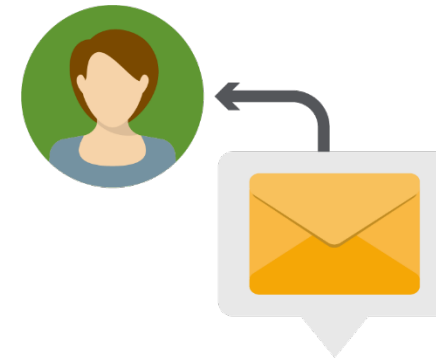
Greetings <student name>,

This is <point of contact or office> from <institution>, and we wanted to let you know that we have COVID-19 emergency financial assistance available for students. If you have experienced a financial problem due to the disruption of campus operations as a result of coronavirus, you can submit an emergency aid application. You can submit the application <here>.

We cannot guarantee that you will receive the full amount of emergency aid that you apply for. However, if you have any questions, please contact <point of contact> at <email, phone>.

Thank you, stay safe, and we hope to hear from you soon!

<Signature line>



# Sample E-mail Campaign



## SAMPLE EMAIL 2: PDF/WORD/FILE APPLICATION

Subject Line: Apply for Emergency Aid Funding

(alt: "Do You Need Emergency Funding? Apply Now!," "Emergency Aid Funding Now Available," "Student Emergency Aid Funds," "Application for Emergency Funding.")

Greetings <student name>,

This is <POC or office> from <institution>, and we wanted to let you know that we have COVID-19 financial assistance available to you. If you have experienced a financial problem due to COVID-19, you can submit an emergency aid application. The application is attached to this email. Or, you can find the application posted on our website <here>.

We cannot guarantee that you will receive the full amount of emergency aid that you apply for. However, if you have any questions, please contact <point of contact> at <email, phone>.

Thank you, stay safe, and we hope to hear from you soon!

<Signature line>

Download the [sample emails](#)

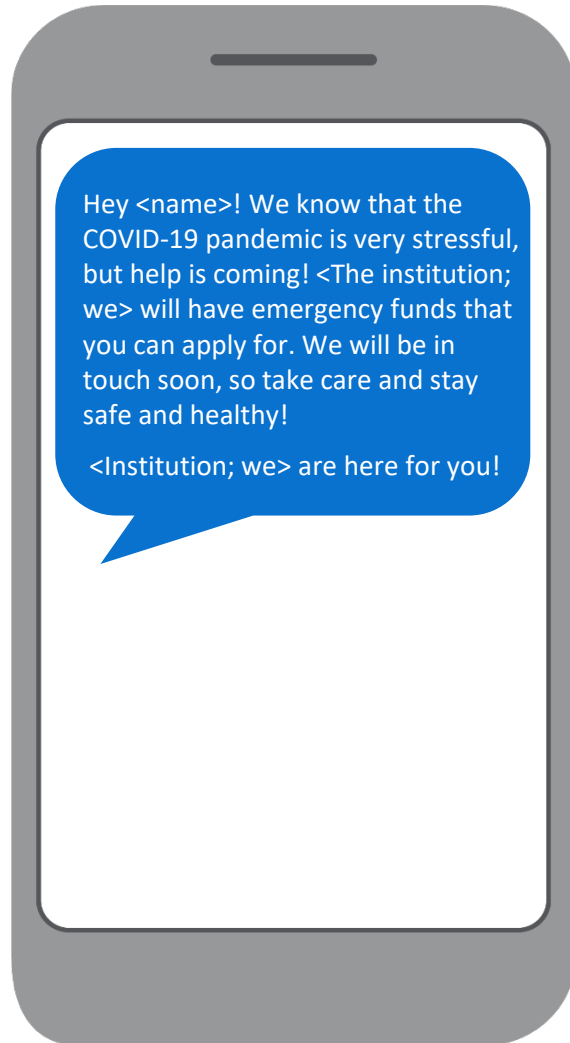




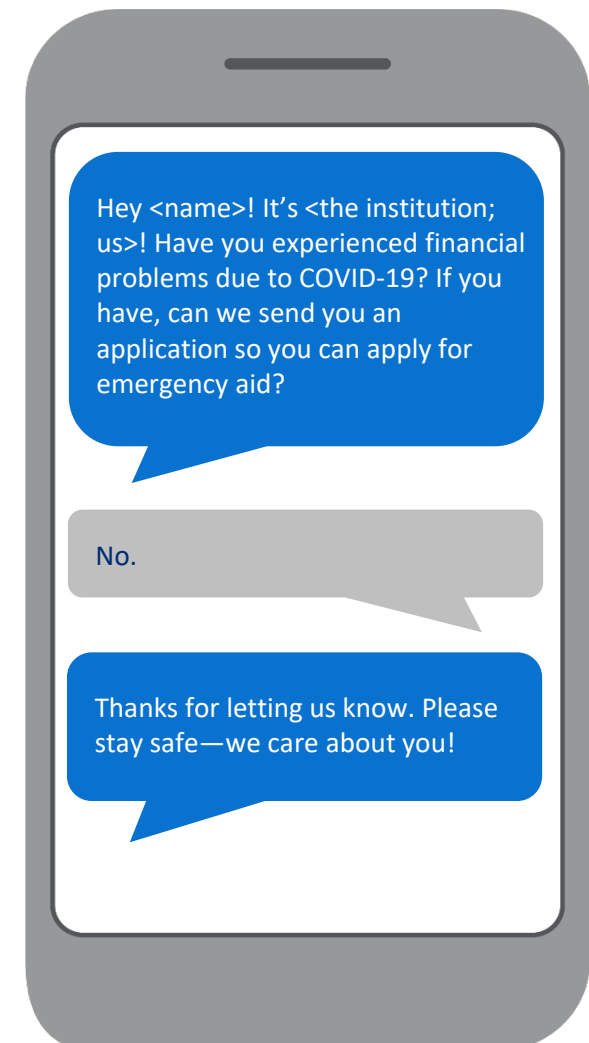
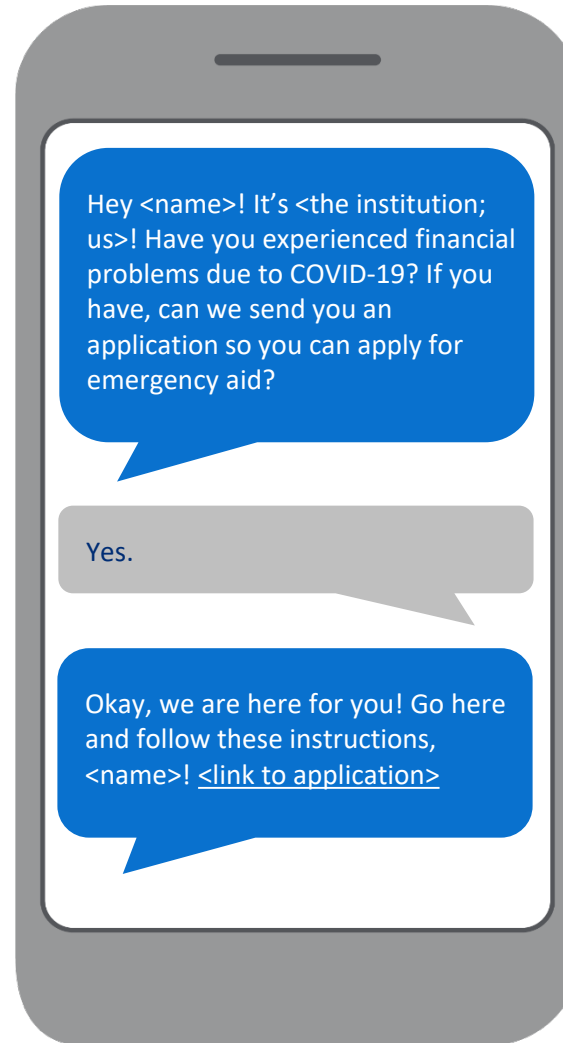
# Sample Text Campaign



## Introduction Text



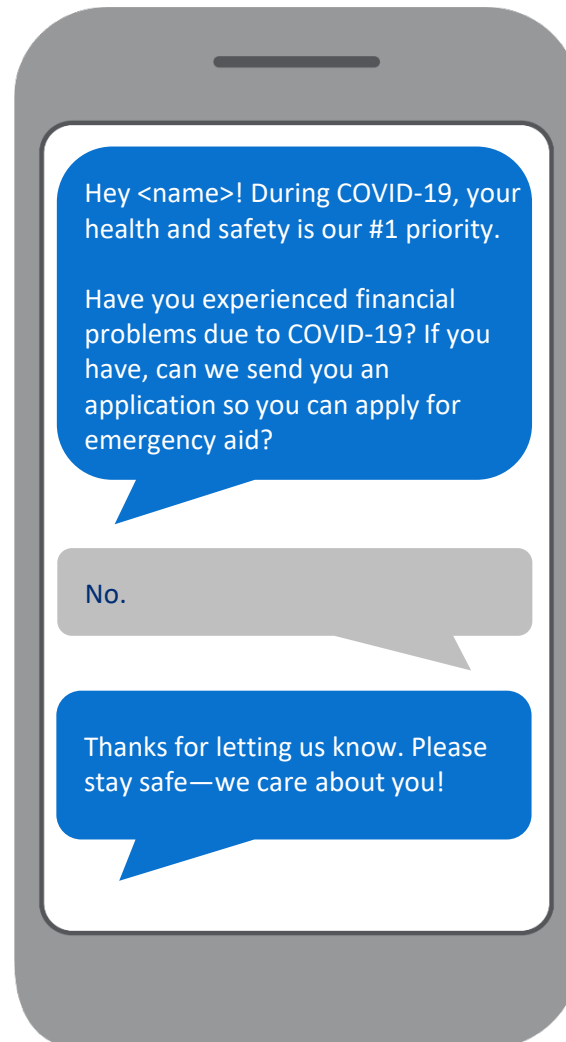
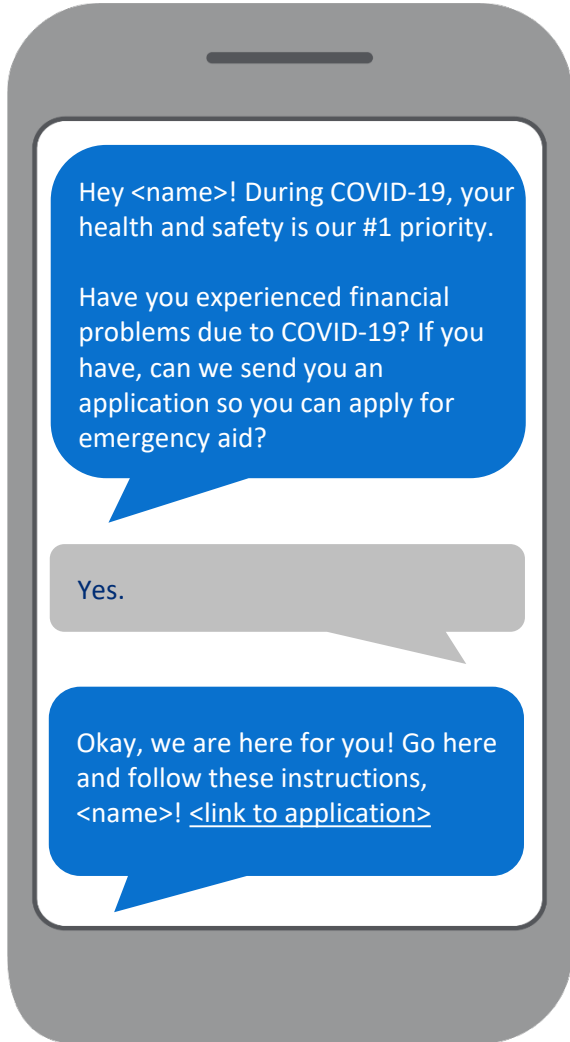
## Application Push



# Sample Text Campaign



## Follow-up



[Download the sample texts](#)



# Sample Call Campaign



Hello. This is <first name> from <institution>. Is <student name> available?

Good Morning/Afternoon <student name>. Given the financial stress caused by COVID-19, <the institution> has emergency aid funds available to students who have experienced disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus. This funding does not need to be paid back but you do need to complete an application to be considered.

Would you like to learn more about the Emergency Aid Program?

[Download the sample calls](#)



YES

(IF WEBPAGE APPLICATION)

Great! You can apply for emergency funding at <application link>. After you apply and have any questions, you can contact <point of contact> at <email address>. Please be aware that funding will be prioritized for the greatest needs so there will be an approval process. We hope this funding helps and please stay healthy and safe! Have a great day!

(IF EMAIL/PDF/WORD APPLICATION)

Okay, thank you for letting us know. You can apply for emergency funding by emailing <point of contact> at <email address>. We hope this funding helps and please stay healthy and safe! Have a great day!



NO

Okay, sounds good. If you do have questions or change your mind, contact <point of contact> at <email address>. Thank you and have a great day!





# Sample Social Media Campaign

Use social media to boost awareness that Emergency Aid is available for your students.

Sample EA Student Social Media Campaign		
Platform/Audience	Content	Notes/Questions
Platform: Facebook Audience: Currently enrolled students	We know that the COVID-19 pandemic is very stressful, but help is coming! We will have emergency funds that you can apply for.  Stay tuned for further updates coming soon. Remember, we are here for you! #<your institution's branded hashtag>	
Platform: Facebook Audience: Currently enrolled students	Have you experienced financial problems due to COVID-19? If so, you can submit an emergency aid application. To submit your application, visit <URL to application> #<your institution's branded hashtag>  If you have any questions, please contact us at: <provide contact info>	
Platform: Facebook Audience: Currently enrolled students	<institution name> Students! If you've been financially struggling due to COVID-19, we're here to help. You can now apply to receive emergency aid by visiting <URL to application> #<your institution's branded hashtag>  If you have any questions, please contact us at: <provide contact info>	
Platform: Twitter Audience: Currently enrolled students	We know that the COVID-19 pandemic is very stressful, but help is coming! We will have emergency funds that you can apply for. Follow us for more updates! Take care and stay safe and healthy! #<your institution's branded hashtag>	
Platform: Twitter Audience: Currently enrolled students	Given the financial stress caused by COVID-19, we now have emergency aid funds available to students who apply for them. This funding does not need to be paid back. Visit the following page to apply: #<your institution's branded hashtag>	



Facebook



Twitter



Instagram

Download the [social media posts](#)

Download the [graphics](#)

# Resources



**CARES Act Letter from the Secretary of the Department of Education (April 9, 2020)**

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/caresactgrantfundingcoverletterfinal.pdf>

**CARES Act Guide for How to Apply for Funding (April 9, 2020)**

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/guidancetoapplyforheerf.pdf>

**CARES Act and GRANTS.GOV Application Submission Guidelines and Tips (April 9, 2020)**

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/grantsgovsubmittipsheerf.pdf>

**CARES Act Formula and Emergency Aid Allocation Amounts (April 9, 2020)**

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/allocationsforsection18004a1ofcaresact.pdf>

**CARES Act Recipient Funding and Agreement (April 9, 2020)**

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/caresheerfcertificationandagreementfinalombapprovedforissuance.pdf>

**Trellis Company Webinar on Emergency Aid Services (April 7, 2020)**

Delivering Emergency Aid Services During COVID-19. <https://www.trelliscompany.org/portfolio-items/delivering-emergency-aid-services-during-covid-19/>

**NASPA Report on Emergency Aid Programs (2016)**

Kruger, K., Parnell, A., & Wesaw, A. (2016). *NASPA: Landscape analysis of emergency aid programs*. Retrieved from

[https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/Emergency\\_Aid\\_Report.pdf](https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/Emergency_Aid_Report.pdf)

**Wisconsin Hope Lab Report on Distributing Emergency Aid (2017)**

Goldrick-Rab, S., & Cady, C. (2017, September). *Distributing emergency aid to college students: Recommendations and sample distribution protocol*. Retrieved

from <https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/emergency-aid-distribution-sample-protocol.pdf>

**Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Report on Emergency Aid Programs (2018)**

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board [THECB]. (2018). *The Texas emergency aid report: Advocating for emergency aid programs in higher education*. Retrieved from

<http://www.60x30tx.com/media/1453/emergency-aid-report.pdf>

**The Hope Center Report on Distributing Emergency Aid (2020)**

Goldrick-Rab, S. (2020, April). *Beyond the food pantry: Guide to emergency aid distribution*.

Retrieved from [https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/BTFP\\_COVID19\\_EmergencyAid.pdf](https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/BTFP_COVID19_EmergencyAid.pdf)

For more information, visit the  
Emergency Aid Resources page at  
[www.trelliscompany.org/project-success-emergency-aid-resources-during-covid-19/](http://www.trelliscompany.org/project-success-emergency-aid-resources-during-covid-19/)

