Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund: Funding for New Jersey’s Public Institutions of Higher Education amid COVID-19 Pandemic

On April 14, 2020, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced that nearly $3 billion would be made available to governors to ensure education continues for students of all ages impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund, authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, is a flexible emergency block grant designed to allow governors to decide how best to meet the needs of students, schools, postsecondary institutions and other education-related organizations in their states.

Governor Phil Murphy has decided to make the entire $68.8 million pool of GEER funds available to public institutions of higher education for grants to help ensure continued educational services for students amid the unprecedented public health emergency through the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE).

What can the funds be used for?

There is flexibility in how the funds are used, including for costs incurred due to the pandemic. Generally institutions of higher education can use the GEER funds to support students and faculty for continuity of operations during the period of disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This could include costs to cover salary of faculty and staff, maintain student services, or otherwise continue institutional operations. GEER funds may be used to cover the costs of expenditures incurred on or after March 13, 2020, when a national emergency was declared.

When and how can my institution apply?

An application is now available for public institutions of higher education to detail the financial hardships experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the application, institutions must also submit a financial impact statement, which should reflect the period from March 13, 2020 to May 30, 2020.

How will funds be distributed?

OSHE will make this funding available through emergency assistance grants to institutions based on an OSHE-developed allocation formula that considers – among other things – institutional expenses incurred as a result of the pandemic.

Will the funds need to be spent by a certain deadline?

GEER funds must be spent within one year of receipt.

Who can I contact for more information?

Please feel free to email OSHE@oshe.nj.gov if you have any questions.