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Río Hondo College Provides \$830,400 in Grants for Students Whose Studies Have Been Disrupted by COVID-19

WHITTIER – Río Hondo College has awarded \$830,400 in grants to 2,120 students as part of a federal act designed to assist those whose studies have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The grants are funded by \$3.1 million in federal CARES Act funding received by the College for direct student grants. The money is divided between a Río Cares Student Relief Fund and an Emergency Grant program. An additional program is providing support for students in the federal Work Study program.

“We are immensely grateful to the federal government for providing this tool to assist our students, whose lives have been thrown into turmoil by the COVID-19 pandemic,” Río Hondo College Superintendent/President Dr. Arturo Reyes said. “Many of them have lost jobs, face food insecurity, housing issues and the need to care for other family members – all while trying to pursue their education. These grants will provide support at a critical time.”

Río Cares Student Relief Fund grants include \$300 each for 1,148 students enrolled in at least six units and \$500 each for 972 students enrolled in 12 or more units. Students who filed a 2019-2020 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) automatically received their grants. Students who have not yet filed the 2019-2020 FAFSA may do so until June 15.

The College estimates 3,267 additional students may be eligible for the grants. Funds will be available through June 30, 2021, or until the funds are depleted.

Emergency Grants are being made available to assist students who are struggling with expenses or unforeseen financial challenges, such as housing, food, childcare, transportation, medical bills or educational supplies.

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Río Hondo College, located in Whittier, California, is committed to the success of its diverse students and communities by providing dynamic educational opportunities and resources that lead to degrees, certificates, transfer, career and technical pathways, basic skills proficiency, and lifelong learning. For information on the College or its programs, please call 562-692-0921 or visit www.riohondo.edu.

These grants were made available to students from 9 a.m. May 13 through 11:59 p.m. May 15. The College anticipates it will provide more than 500 students with Emergency Grants of \$300 to \$500 for a total of \$200,000. The grants will be distributed by June 19.

Students may qualify for either a Río Cares Relief Fund grant or an Emergency Grant if they file a FAFSA, qualify for federal financial aid, are enrolled in 6 units (\$300) or 12 units or more (\$500), have a \$0 expected family contribution, meet satisfactory academic progress requirements and, if male, are registered with the Selective Service System.

In addition, the College is providing payments for the rest of the academic year for federal Work Study students who had to cease working because of the pandemic. So far, 85 Río Hondo College students have received \$52,000.

Río Hondo is committed to providing assistance as quickly as possible to students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Río Hondo has made available a variety of financial and non-financial resources. Information can be found at www.riohondo.edu/student-health-services/coronavirus/#students.

Río Hondo College is working to support all students during this time. For questions, please e-mail covidgrants@riohondo.edu or call the Financial Aid office at (562) 463-3370.

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