

# The Federal Update for January 21, 2022

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Re: Federal Update

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## Legislation and Guidance

### ED Announces New Support for Community College Students

At a press conference Thursday, Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona and First Lady Jill Biden announced a new program intended to help reduce barriers to higher education that have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Funding for the program comes from the American Rescue Plan (ARP), passed by Congress in March of last year. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) says it plans to use $198 million to help colleges meet basic needs like housing and food security and connect students to existing federal benefits like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Funding will be prioritized to institutions that have the greatest need among students, including community colleges and rural institutions which have experienced declines in enrollment since the beginning of the pandemic. ED officials said that applications will be available next week, and institutions will be asked to outline how they would use funds for evidence-based practices to monitor and suppress the Coronavirus, strategies for addressing students’ basic needs, support for continued enrollment and re-enrollment, institutional debt forgiveness, and expansion of “programs that lead to in-demand jobs.”

ED also says it will send a “Dear Colleague” letter to institutions of higher education telling them that they can use the information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to communicate with students about other public benefit programs for which they may be eligible.

Finally, ED issued new guidance on how colleges can use funding under the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) to support “basic needs” like childcare and food. Among the suggestions mentioned are creating childcare subsidies, expanding campus-based food pantries, creating textbook “vouchers,” and offering free or discounted parking. The guidance also suggests that institutions can use HEERF funds to pay for staff or contractors tasked with connecting students to other existing State, local, or federal benefits.

The [updated HEERF guidance](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/heerf-support-basic-needs-final.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=) is here.

Author: JCM

### OMB Releases Second Addendum to 2021 Compliance Supplement

The Office of Management and Budget has released a second addendum to the 2021 Compliance Supplement, which addresses certain COVID-19 stimulus programs at the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation. The first addendum, which covered compliance requirements for COVID-19 stimulus programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education, was published in December.

Programs covered in the second addendum include pandemic-EBT grants, which provide funding for EBT for families whose children would have received free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs if not for school closures, as well as child care funding programs and other assistance for low-income families through HHS and HUD.

[Both compliance supplement addenda are available here](https://www.cfo.gov/2021-addendum-1and2/).

Author: KSC

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