Am I eligible to apply for the Emergency Aid program?

Students graduating in 2020 from the following Chicago Public Schools are eligible to apply for emergency aid:

- Chicago Vocational Career Academy
- Percy Julian High School
- Thomas Kelly College Preparatory
- North-Grand High School
- George Washington High School

Personnel from these high schools have provided student rosters to Scholarship America to verify graduation. You must be enrolled in a full-time and half-time (*Half-time enrollment includes at least one or more courses with a minimum of 6 credit hours or equivalent*) undergraduate study at an eligible accredited two- or four-year college or university or vocational school at the time of application. As part of the application process, you will be asked to upload a copy of your class schedule. See the "HAVE THESE ITEMS ON HAND BEFORE YOU START" section for additional information.

I am an undocumented student. May I still apply for Catalyst Emergency Aid?

Yes, there are no citizenship requirements that are part of eligibility or the application process.

What expenses are eligible for emergency aid?

Catalyst Emergency Aid covers unexpected financial emergencies that potentially impact your ability to stay enrolled in college or emergency expenses incurred due to COVID-19 response and loss of employment. Specific areas of funding include:

- Housing/Rent/Utilities
- Medical/Dental
- Childcare
- Transportation/Car Repair (not gas or insurance)
- Food/Groceries
- Technology/Computer/Wi-Fi

Books, tuition, and fees, and required course materials; study aboard travel or non-essential transportation, and extra spending money not associated with a specific expense are **not** eligible for reimbursement through the Catalyst Emergency Fund.

If my application is approved, how will I receive the payment?

Grants will be made payable directly to you via JP Morgan Chase's Corporate Quick Pay. If your request is approved, you will receive an email with additional instructions. If we are unable to send you an electronic payment, we can send a paper check via mail.

What do I do if I am not sure if I am eligible for emergency aid?

For more information about emergency grants, including application statuses, contact us:

Email: catalystsea@scholarshipamerica.org

What do I need to do to apply?

Review the eligible expenses above. If you have one or more financial emergencies included in the list, gather the information included under "HAVE THESE ITEMS ON HAND BEFORE YOU START" before you begin the application. This will help ensure your application is reviewed and processed quickly. Once you have gathered all the documents or information needed to show your estimated need, click on the orange/red "Apply Now" button below.

I graduated from high school in June 2020 and just started college. What should I enter for the question about my current grade level?

Please enter 1st year undergraduate/Freshman.

What is the grant maximum?

The maximum grant funding per year per student is $1,500. Requests for food and groceries up to $500 can be approved.

If you find yourself having multiple and recurring emergency aid needs, we encourage you to contact the student services team at your college or university.

Additionally, we have partnered with the Crisis Text Line (Text HOME to 741741) should you find yourself in a crisis situation right now.

You may also contact FindHelp.org for free and reduced cost social services, food pantries, tax services and temporary shelter.

How soon can I receive the grant?

Decisions for all applications are made within one business day. Approved requests will be paid within three business days. Note: Processing times may take longer during surges and in cases where we are missing documentation, payment info, or electronic payment is not available.

What is the deadline to submit my emergency aid request?

Emergency aid funds will be available throughout the academic year. Deadlines for emergency aid support for spring semester 2021 are June 16, 2021. Emergency aid applications will reopen for Fall 2021 in August.

Note that funds are available on a first-come, first served basis.

Is the grant taxable?

Grants may be considered taxable income. Work with a tax professional to determine if your grant is taxable. If you don't have a tax advisor, you may be able to get free tax prep help through the IRS here.