

2021-23 Student Emergency Assistance Grant (SEAG) Program Questions and Answers

SBCTC considers answers in the forthcoming Questions and Answers document to be the only official source for answers related to this grant.

Q1) Can college foundations apply for and administer these funding?

A1) The WA Community and Technical Colleges are specifically named in RCW 28B.50.295 and are the only entities allowed to apply for and take possession of funds. College foundations may assist colleges with processing SEAG applications if done under an established contract or MOU.

Further clarification issued April 2021.

The AG's office has indicated that there could be legal risk associated with SEAG Program funding being transferred to a private foundation to be disbursed on behalf of the college, which is why SBCTC has not allowed college foundations to apply for and/or take possession of SEAG Program funds. Any college wishing to have their foundation involved in helping administer SEAG Program funds must include a copy of an MOU that details which parts of the SEAG process will be administered by the foundation and provide written confirmation of how the foundation intends to meet all SEAG Program Administration requirements outlined on page 7 of the program guidelines.

Q2) What kinds of attachments are allowed?

A2) Please make sure the following supporting documents are attached by the application due date:

- an initialed and signed Assurances document
- a completed 2021-23 SEAG Program Two-Year Budget Form
- a sample copy of your Emergency Assistance Request/Application Form (Appendix A of the SEAG Guidelines) and a sample copy of the form your college intends to use for Student Follow-up (Appendix B of the SEAG Guidelines).

Q3) I need to upload an updated version of a document to my grant application in OGMS. How can I delete the old, no longer relevant version of my attachment?

A3) You cannot delete attachments from OGMS. Simply upload your updated document and indicate that the file is new by including "updated" or "revised" in the filename.

Q4) When will the webinar be held for the 2021-2023 SEAG Program funding opportunity?

A4) The FY22-23 Student Emergency Assistance Grant (SEAG) Program Funding Webinar was held April 22, 2021. You can find the recording [here](#).

Q5) Why are tuition and fees excluded for eligible expenses?

A5) In an effort to: "Ensure that students' access to emergency aid funds will be as low barrier as possible and will not require the student to have to fill out the free application for federal student aid to receive emergency funds." tuition and fees are not included as eligible expenses for the 2021-23 SEAG Program funding opportunity.

Q6) The grant guidelines indicate that funds may be disbursed to students by gift card/pre-paid credit card. If awarded, will the SBCTC provide guidance/assistance with setting up

2021-23 Student Emergency Assistance Grant (SEAG) Program Questions and Answers

institutional processes to ensure compliance with state regulations, including regulations that prohibit the gifting of state resources?

- A6) Yes, SBCTC will provide guidance to colleges concerning the distribution of student emergency assistance grants including the use of pre-paid and other “low barrier” methods.
- Q7) If awarded, will colleges receive advance payment from SBCTC or will it be on a reimbursement basis?
- A7) Per the Funding section of the application guidelines, “Funding for approved applications will be allocated to colleges for each fiscal year. For FY22, funding becomes available July 1, 2021 and expires June 30, 2022. Funds do not extend beyond the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2022). Work with your college’s business office to access these funds. Funding for FY23 becomes available July 1, 2022 after the State Board confirms program requirements are met for FY22.”
- Q8) Can you clarify what is considered Administration costs that are allowable at no more than 10% of project cost? Does Case Management fall in to administration costs?
- A8) Administrative costs may include staff time for program oversight, administration of funding requirements (i.e. completing application materials and reports), monitoring budgets, supervision of staff and faculty involved in the SEAG Program and other associated expenses. Case Management would fall under “Direct Services” and be accounted for in the “Program Supports” section of the budget.
- Q9) To meet a 4 day turn around submitting a check request to the business office doesn’t seem practical. So, my idea is – I’m going to find a way to disburse the funds out of our department BUT I’m still working the details out. Can I answer these based on the plan?
- A9) We expect that some of the planned activities for implementing your SEAG Program may take some time to work out internally. Funds will be allocated July 1st. Please submit a plan for disbursement that your college will be able to implement by then and indicate if there are other forms of disbursement that your college will need time to implement.
- Q10) I’m working with a group for our college to put this grant together and I just saw there was a Technical Assistance webinar yesterday. Will a recording of that be made available or will there be another one?
- A10) Yes, the recording of the SEAG Program Technical Assistance webinar will be made available within 3-5 business days. You’ll be able to find the recording and other resources on the funding opportunity webpage: <https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/grants/student-emergency-assistance-grant-program.aspx>.
- Q11) If it is not a gift, does that mean it is an award and thus Financial Aid would be notified and it would be counted as part of their need (reducing their unmet need)?
- A11) You do need to consider the impacts to students’ financial aid and unmet need. Our understanding of FAFSA policy indicates that SEAG program funding should be considered as part of a student’s estimated financial assistance. This does not impact students who do not receive FAFSA, as students cannot be required to have completed the FAFSA in order to be

2021-23 Student Emergency Assistance Grant (SEAG) Program Questions and Answers

eligible for SEAG funding. Our policy team is currently working on potential solutions at the federal, state and institutional level.

Q12) We understand that colleges must be the applicant for SEAG. What role can college foundations play in the administration of the program and disbursement of funds?

A12) The legislation authorizes community and technical colleges to apply for the funds and administer the program. There is potential for colleges to seek help, however, we hope to see proposals committed to reviewing and modifying college processes and behaviors to meet the level of equitable and low barrier access this legislation intends. This is an opportunity for colleges to do a review and think about new ways to do this work to meet student needs. Proposals that integrate partnerships with foundations, for example, will be considered, but the intent is for colleges to change the way they do business to meet student needs. See question 1 for more information.

Q13) Are there suggested maximums for student requests?

A13) There are not. It was intentionally left open to colleges to decide. We are not sure how high of a request students may make for certain situations, hence this was left open. We want to leave that up to colleges to make criteria around this; it is going to depend on how much funding you receive for the program, so you'll want to take that into consideration as well. We will look at your prioritization of disbursement looks like, if you will have a limit, how much they can request, how often they can request, will you fund students more than once, and so on. We intended to leave this open for colleges to design the program that they feel their student population needs.

Q14) In response to question 6Aii, do we need to include additional data elements other than those identified in the minimum requirements?

A14) Our intention is to ensure that as we are developing, implementing, and evaluating these programs, we have enough information to tell our story to stakeholders and the legislature. Please consider what additional data elements you may be able to collect through the implementation of your program, and the support you provide to your students, so we're able to make sure we can tell the legislature what successes we've had, what challenges students continue to have, and what gaps still remain. Also consider what other information we need to include in this story, so in the future we are able to advocate for the resources needed to serve students better.

Q15) College PCards (I was told) can't be used to purchase gift cards, do you have a suggestion on how to issue these?

A15) If you are considering pre-paid cards, gas cards, etc. – how this process happens right now is not as important as identifying that you are considering doing so. We will work with all colleges to share best practices that are already in use across our system.

Q16) Could you re-state the part about leveraging with BFET?

2021-23 Student Emergency Assistance Grant (SEAG) Program Questions and Answers

- A16) When you're considering your plan to disburse these funds to students – how you're going to disburse, how you're going to track disbursements – there may be ways you disburse funds that are not recorded in a way that you can connect that disbursement to the student. In the example, if you can't connect the disbursement to the student, you are not able to bill for reimbursement for federal dollars; that was one scenario example. Leveraging funding sources is a broader conversation that involves bringing together all of the stakeholders that have a role in delivering supportive services through support programs – your financial aid folks, other stakeholders that may have insight into other opportunities, options, and impacts with disbursement decisions.
- Q17) If you do tie to the student, how would emergency funding be leveragable?
- A17) These are state dollars. This is a non-federal source that could be leveraged for BFET.
- Q18) Will it be 4 business days or calendar days to disburse?
- A18) Calendar days. When we are addressing student emergencies, the emergencies don't take a break for the weekend or holiday. Our intent is to address the emergency as quickly as possible.
- Q19) SEAG – staff who would be reviewing, notifying, disbursing the grant. Is that administration, or direct?
- A19) Staff time related directly to administering Student Emergency Assistance grants would be accounted for under Program Supports within the Direct Services budget category. Administration refers to costs associated with applying for, tracking and reporting activities related to this funding opportunity. Please see A8 for additional clarification.
- Q20) The SEAG Program Questions and Answers, Q18/A18 indicates that colleges must disburse funds within 4 calendar days. However, page 8 of the grant guidelines indicate: "Colleges must establish a disbursement process that ensures students will receive SEAG awards within a maximum of 4 business days of the submission of the application (a shorter timeframe is preferred and could be critical to addressing the emergency)." Can you clarify if it is 4 business days or 4 calendar days?
- A20) In the original "suggested" SEAG Program delivery model we wrote, "Colleges must establish a disbursement process that ensures students will receive SEAG awards within a maximum of 4 business days of the submission of the application (a shorter timeframe is preferred and could be critical to addressing the emergency)." Upon further consideration, we are recommending a disbursement timeframe of 4 calendar days as written in A18.
- Q21) The guidelines provide a sample application form and a sample follow-up survey. Neither of these instruments include all of the data elements listed in Appendix B, data collection. Is the intent that we will collect this information through personal interviews or some other vehicle, or should these be added to the application form. There is some concern that asking too many questions will be a barrier.

2021-23 Student Emergency Assistance Grant (SEAG) Program Questions and Answers

- A21) Your college will likely already have some of the data on file for students accessing the SEAG Program depending on your college application process, other programs, etc. With this in mind, we did not include those elements in the sample application. We recommend that your college design an application process that allows you to either link to existing student data or collect missing data elements. Ultimately, it will be up to the college to implement processes to collect the necessary student and program data, which will be used to report back to the legislature.
- Q22) The sample application form lists three narrative questions for students to answer. We are trying to marry this form with our United Way Benefits Hub emergency grant form, which simply says “anything else you’d like us to know.” This statement comes after the section where students check off what type of emergency they are experiencing. Is the SBCTC wanting more narrative from students, or could we go with just this simple question. Again, we’re trying to keep our application as simple as possible and also streamline processes with our Benefits Hub emergency grants program.
- A22) Please create an application form and process that will best provide low-barrier access to emergency assistance and indicate how the college will be leveraging these two programs to meet students’ needs.
- Q23) I am working on the application in OGMS right now and it reads “Only written request may be accepted for SEAG Program Funding. Please attached written request form your college would like to use in OGMS.” Does this mean I can attach the written form we will use in addition to our online app, or is this to say we can’t use an online form?
- A23) We support making your college’s application accessible on paper AND online as long as the applications match one another and you keep a record of all requests in a printable format. “Only written requests may be accepted...” is in reference to needing a written (or typed) record of the request that can be saved by the college. Spoken requests should not be accepted unless somehow converted into a written request. Colleges may want to consult with their Accessibility Services Department about additional ways to make these forms accessible including assisting students in completing their requests in writing or online.
- Q24) I was also wondering if there was a replay link to the webinar on the Student Emergency Assistance Grant Program application.
- A24) Yes, please see the [SEAG Program application webpage](#).
- Q25) Do the funds have to be processed by/through the Financial Aid Department? I recall that there were questions during the webinar that indicated that the funds must meet within the students "unmet need" which implies that the student would need to have applied for financial aid, correct? But then I asked, specifically about ABE/GED/ESOL and these students do not or in many cases would not have applied for financial aid, but they are eligible for SEAG funds per the webinar.

2021-23 Student Emergency Assistance Grant (SEAG) Program Questions and Answers

Additionally, our college has some emergency funds which we run/process via our Foundation Department. This process has worked for us for a few years now and the students usually have funds within a few days. Can we process the SEAG funds through our Foundation Department or the funds are to be processed via Financial Aid?

A25) The intention of [HB 1893](#), which established the SEAG Program, is to ensure students' access to emergency aid funds is low-barrier as possible. In alignment with legislative requirements, SEAG Program colleges **cannot** "require the student to fill out the free application for federal student aid to receive emergency funds." That being said, if the student has received FAFSA funding, the students' estimated financial assistance is subject to all applicable FAFSA policies and regulations.

SEAG Program funding is not required to be run through or managed by colleges' Financial Aid Departments. Some colleges run their SEAG Program funding through their Business Office and then work with their Financial Aid Departments to ensure all applicable FAFSA policies and regulations are properly applied to students' aid packages. FAFSA policies and regulations should not impact students who have not applied for or received FAFSA funding.

Q26) Our college has some emergency funds which we run/process via our Foundation Department. This process has worked for us for a few years now and the students usually have funds within a few days. Can we process the SEAG funds through our Foundation Department or the funds are to be processed via Financial Aid?

A26) Please see A1.

Q27) Is there any chance that more funds will be allowable for Admin costs? Because of the closure of the ABAWD program and the Admin requirements for SEAG, my college will not likely apply unless there is additional funding available.

A27) Under the SEAG Program, colleges are able to budget up to 10% for admin costs associated with managing the funding itself - everything from preparing your application in OGMS to budget management and reporting requirements. Colleges are also able to budget for program supports which include staff time dedicated to providing direct support to students i.e. any time spent processing requests, follow-up and referrals to additional services. There is no limit to the % of your budget that can go toward program supports. However, the primary purpose for SEAG Program funding is to provide monetary aid to students so we do recommend that the largest portion of the budget be allocated toward student grants.