



2SHB 1893 STUDENT EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE GRANT (SEAG) PROGRAM LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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Student Emergency Assistance Grant (SEAG) Program

The Washington State Legislature established the Student Emergency Assistance Grant (SEAG) Program through passage of 2SHB 1893 during the 2019 legislative session. The Legislature funded the program on a pilot basis, adopting the governor's budget proposal of \$750,000 for the 2019-21 biennium. During the 2021-23 biennium, the Legislature approved an additional \$8 million with the passage of [ESSB 5092](#) for the expansion of Student Emergency Assistance Grant program in the community and technical college system. This allowed the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to expand the SEAG program from 16 to 26 community and technical colleges beginning July 1, 2021. A list of colleges that participate in SEAG and the amounts they were granted for FY 21-23 are provided in Appendix A.

The SEAG Program, administered by SBCTC, allows community and technical colleges to provide monetary assistance to students experiencing unforeseen emergencies or situations that affect a student's ability to remain enrolled in their classes. The program delivery model requires colleges to demonstrate need, ensure student access to emergency aid funds are low barrier, allow flexibility to whom may apply for emergency assistance funds, and not require students fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to receive assistance, and prioritize emergency aid disbursement. Additionally, colleges are responsible for making referrals for students funded through SEAG funds or not funded through SEAG funds to on-campus and off-campus resources. SBCTC requires colleges to follow up with students who submit emergency assistance requests at 10-and 45-day intervals, irrespective if the student was ultimately awarded SEAG funding. Following up at these intersections provides opportunity to check with students about the extent to which funding met their emergent needs as well as engage with students and make additional referrals to resources. Colleges report back to SBCTC the results of those contacts.

Executive Summary

This report will focus on comparing the number of students served during FY 21 through emergency assistance funds with the number of students served in FY 22. Colleges served 62% more students in FY 22 through SEAG. Strikingly, colleges saw a drastic increase in student emergent need: Across the 26 SEAG colleges, nearly \$50,000,000 emergency requests went unfunded.

In FY 21, the community and technical colleges offering SEAG served 2,573 students and in FY 22, they served 4,177 students. This increase is partially due to the State Board expanding the SEAG program by 10 colleges in July 2021. Additionally, with funding from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEER), which was passed by Congress in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, fully expended at many colleges, there was increased pressure in FY 22 on SEAG funds to assist students with emergent needs. This is an impact we expect to continue over the next year(s) as fluctuating economy continues to cause hardships.

Community and technical colleges fielded 15,369 student emergency assistance requests in FY 22. The average amount per student request was \$977.00. Of the 15,369 fielded requests, the system funded 51% (7,762) total student emergency assistance requests. An outstanding 90% of SEAG recipients who attempted credits completed credits in the quarter after they received SEAG

emergency. It is important to note that not all student requests were funded. Colleges worked hard over the academic year to connect students in need to additional resources outside of SEAG to help them stay in school.

Seen year over year, the most requested emergency needs are housing, transportation, and food. This trend did not change in FY 22. In fact, the demand increased significantly:

1. The housing category represents student housing or shelter expenses and if the student is at risk of losing housing or shelter due to foreclosure, eviction, or loss of resources to remain housed. Housing reflects the highest number of student requests and dollars requested. In FY 22, there were five times more housing requests than in FY 21, leaving more than 6,000 student requests unfunded.
2. The transportation category represents any travel expenses related to education and most often included public transportation, gas, and auto repair costs. Transportation was the second most requested emergency need. FY 22 shows transportation related requests on average were seven times higher than FY 21, leaving 5,000 student requests unfunded.
3. The food category refers to any food or nutritional related expenses. Food was the third most requested emergency need. In FY 22, the number of emergency food requests was five times higher than in FY 21, leaving more than 5,400 student requests unfunded.

It is clear there is a substantial student need for housing, transportation, and food support within the community and technical college system. Colleges continue to focus on providing immediate and equitable access to resources that meet student basic needs. However, without additional resources, students are left with emergent needs that prevent them from focusing on continuing their education.

Emergency Assistance for Community and Technical College Students in Washington State

Washington community and technical college students

During the 2021-22 academic year, 261,874 students were enrolled in Washington's community and technical colleges. Among enrolled students in 2021-22, 36% had children or other dependents, 52% were 25 years old or older, 43% were students of color, and 53% were female. During that same year, 49,382 students, or 29%, who were enrolled in an aid-eligible program received need-based aid. Additionally, in 2020-21 (the most recent year of available data), 16,970 Washington community and technical college students (about 6.5%) were enrolled in one of the following student support programs: Basic Food and Employment Training (BFET), Early Achievers Grant (EAG), Opportunity Grant (OG), Passport for Foster Youth Promise Program, TRIO, WorkFirst, or Worker Retraining (WRT).

Washington community and technical college students' basic needs insecurity

Vulnerable student populations suffered because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Hope Center #RealCollege 2021 basic needs insecurity survey results showed the pandemic affected students financially, mentally, and their overall well-being. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students were 20% more likely than their white fellow students to be affected by basic needs insecurity.¹

The most recent SEAG data collected from the community and technical college system shows colleges fielded 15,369 student requests for emergency funds. Of the 15,369 student emergency requests, the system funded 51% (7,762) of those requests. This is a 62% increase from 2021 in the number of student emergency requests across the college system.

Today, most students need substantial financial assistance from federal, state, and institutional sources, even while working, to barely manage the price of attending college. The pandemic further exacerbated long-standing disparities among those who struggle to get into college, stay enrolled, and graduate.² Public benefits programs, which could help fill in the gaps for students with low incomes, exclude millions of college students through burdensome and often racialized eligibility restrictions. As a result of these policy failures, three in five college students do not have enough to eat or a stable place to live. Rates of basic needs insecurity are 16 percentage points higher for Black students than their white peers. It is time for structural reforms to secure students' basic needs and allow them to focus on their learning.³

Nationally, we see a trend of rising cost of attendance. At 2-year institutions, average tuition and fees were higher in 2020–21 than in 2010–11 for public and private nonprofit institutions, but lower for private for-profit institutions (in constant 2020–21 dollars). Specifically, average tuition and fees were 18% higher in academic year 2020–21 than in academic year 2010–11 at public 2-year institutions (\$3,900 vs. \$3,300) and 9% higher in 2020–21 than in 2010–11 at private nonprofit 2-year institutions (\$18,000 vs. \$16,500). In contrast, average tuition and fees were 5% lower in 2020–21 than in 2010–11 at private for-profit 2-year institutions (\$15,800 vs. \$16,600).⁴ Recognizing student basic needs is foundational to understanding the need for basic needs' policy within postsecondary learning. When basic needs are left unaddressed or unrecognized, this severely impacts a student's ability to complete their education, especially in BIPOC communities.

In fall 2022, Washington State Student Achievement Council (WSAC) conducted a basic needs assessment of Washington state community and technical college students to help campuses reduce barriers to educational attainment and address basic needs in postsecondary environments. The assessment survey was a result of a workgroup which consisted of university and college representatives. The survey tool aligns with the previously administered #RealCollege Survey and

¹ Temple University Lewis Katz School of Medicine: #RealCollege 2021: Basic Needs Insecurity During the Ongoing Pandemic <https://medicine.temple.edu/news/realcollege-2021-basic-needs-insecurity-during-ongoing-pandemic>

² Hope Center Federal Policy Priorities for 2022

https://hope.temple.edu/sites/hope/files/media/document/Federal%20Policy%20Priorities%202022_The%20Hope%20Center.pdf

³ Hope Center Federal Policy Priorities for 2022

https://hope.temple.edu/sites/hope/files/media/document/Federal%20Policy%20Priorities%202022_The%20Hope%20Center.pdf

⁴ National Center for Education Statistics: Fast Facts <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=76>

can be fielded as a standalone survey or integrated into existing institutional research efforts. State-level findings of the survey, which will be released January 17, 2023, will inform communication with our state partners to strategically plan next steps for programs like SEAG and other support service programs to eliminate gaps in access.⁵

Federal and state-funded emergency assistance for postsecondary students in Washington state during the COVID-19 pandemic

Fortunately, unprecedented student need during the COVID-19 pandemic was met with unparalleled federal and state investments in emergency aid. Washington's community and technical colleges received a system total of \$593,221,068 from the Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEER) Fund as reported by the U.S. Department of Education.⁶ The HEER Fund includes awards made through federal legislative appropriations under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES), Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA), and American Rescue Plan (ARP) acts. The portion of the HEER Fund dedicated to student emergency aid is \$249,377,879, and, as of Aug. 31, 2021, \$82,262,947 of this portion was expended. The conditions of these federal relief funds were to make grants available to students, including those enrolled exclusively in distance education, for any component of the student's cost of attendance or for emergency costs such as food, housing, healthcare, and childcare that occurred due to the pandemic.⁷

“The COVID 19 pandemic affected my husband's job, and since then, we have been managing with the little money to pay for rent and take care of the family needs. My sponsor is unable to support me at the moment. The funds are needed for childcare while I attend class. Unemployment income was cut off the first week of September 2021. I did not qualify for any Pell Grants this year. I am behind on rent and utilities. I had to charge a credit card for my required textbooks. I am also having to pay for medication out of my own pocket. I really need money to pay for my rent and also pay for my textbooks and pay for medical bills. This will mean a lot, so I will be very grateful.”

— Student

⁵ Washington Student Achievement Council; Basic Needs Overview for Partners

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AeVuxlHvierfz6aoYlWdYnHRIWC70sKo/edit>

⁶ Department of Education COVID relief report data roll up <https://covid-relief-data.ed.gov/profile/state/WA>

⁷ Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 Supplemental Agreement (CFDA 84.425E)

((a)(1) Student Aid Portion) <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/supplementalagreement314a1s.pdf>

Students in the community and technical college system were acclimated to receiving large sums of funds from HEER Funds. With colleges' fully expended or close to fully expended CARES funds, students are now forced to adjust to the shifting financial aid landscape. Now, however, the Washington state COVID-19 emergency, higher education, and eviction moratorium proclamations expired, federal HEER Funds are diminishing on campuses, and pandemic Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) allotments are ending, coupled with rising costs of food and other life necessities, we have a crisis in the community college system. This can be seen through increased numbers of student emergency requests during the 2021-22 academic year.

College staff ... Some students are requesting assistance with as much as \$10,000 in back rent. CARES set students up with unreasonable expectations ... Students who are requesting first are the students who don't really need it because they are highly resourced and then don't have enough funding to help those who really need it. [Through] word of mouth, [we're] finding out students receiving large amounts and re-requesting for larger amounts of funds."

— Clover Park Technical College staff

"CARES funds awards were extremely generous, and once the funding ran out, the students were in need"

— Pierce College staff

Some of the increase in FY 22 emergency assistance requests may be because of the expansion to the number of colleges administering funds and reporting data. There were 26 colleges awarded with SEAG funds in FY 22 versus 16 colleges awarded in FY 21. However, the expansion does not address the emergent needs of students in our community and technical college system and the colleges' inability to fund student requests due to lack of funding and resources.

Comparing the number of students served during FY 21 through emergency assistance funds to the number of students served in FY 22, we see an overall increase of 62% in the number of students served. Additionally, the sum of unfunded emergency requests in FY 22 also indicates a striking increase in student emergent need: Nearly \$50,000,000 student emergency requests went unfunded across the 26 SEAG colleges. The community and technical colleges simply did not have enough SEAG funding to cover all student emergency requests.

"Thank you very much for the grant. It has proven to be helpful to me and my needs."

— Student

Students served

Community and technical colleges administering the SEAG program focused on students' emergent needs and connected them with additional resources so they could persist in their educational programs. Because the SEAG Program is intended to be as low barrier as possible, colleges also focused on improving student access to emergency funding and prioritizing quick response times to students' requests.

In FY 21, 16 community and technical colleges administered funds and reported on funding activities. In FY 22, SEAG expanded to 26 colleges. In FY 22, saw a striking increase in the volume of students served, number of requests, as well as larger dollar amounts requested compared to FY 21.

Chart 1 Number of Students Served During FY 20, FY 21 & FY 22

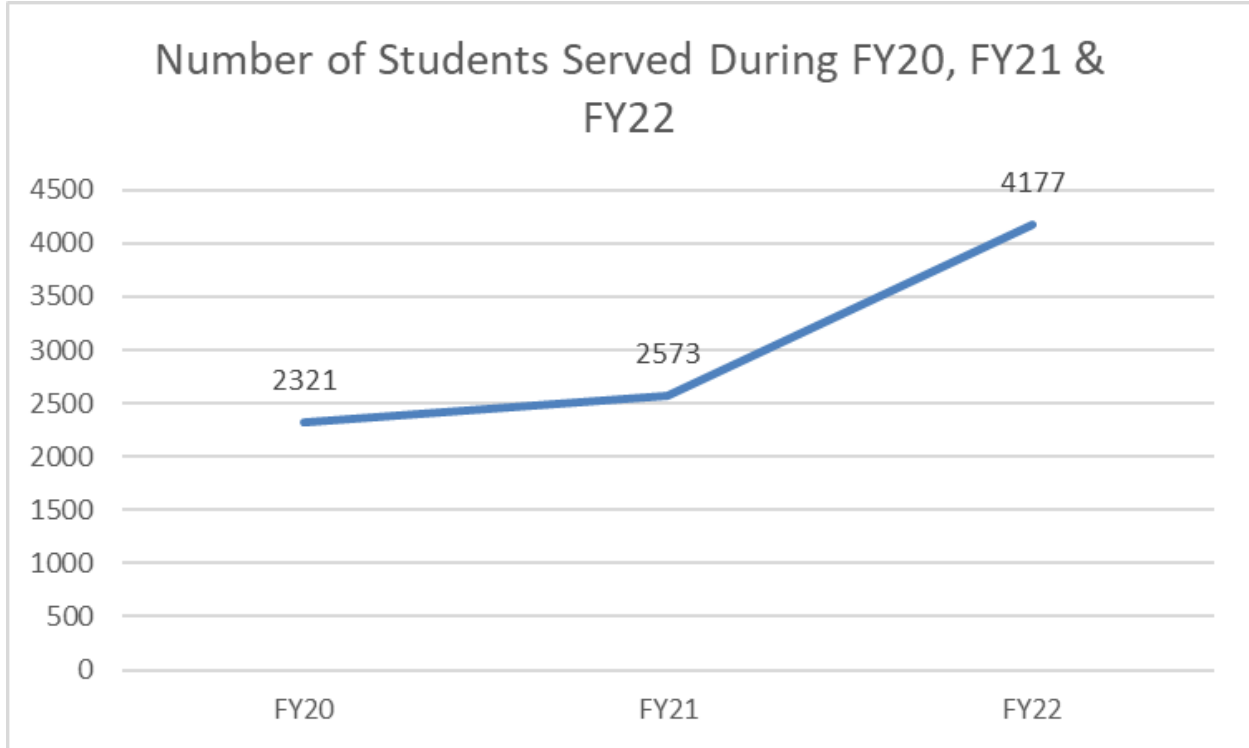
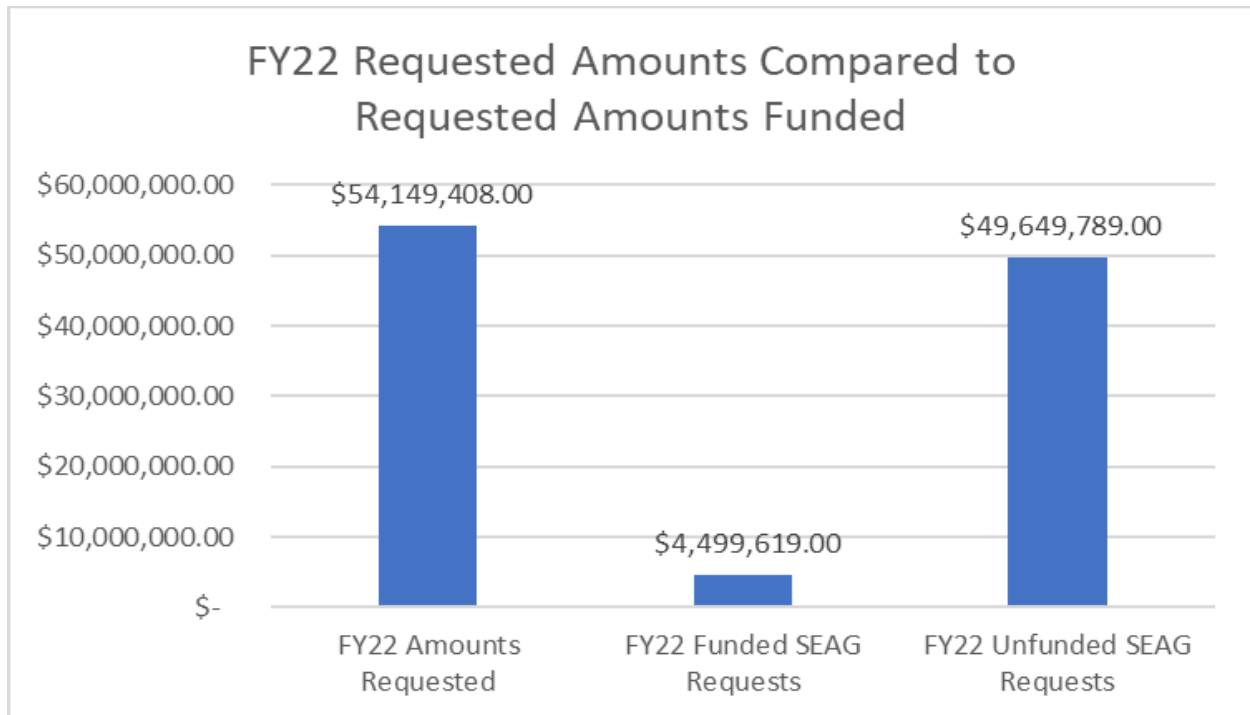


Chart 1 above shows 2,321 students were served in FY 20 with SEAG funding. In FY 21, 2,573 students were served, and in FY 22, there were 4,177 students served. The total number of students served in FY 22 demonstrates a 62% increase and 79% increase in students served with SEAG funding from FY 21 and FY 20, respectively.

In FY 22, the colleges fielded 15,369 student emergency assistance requests. Of those requests, colleges were able to fund 51% (7,762) requests. Colleges, however, were unable to fund all student requests, citing lack of SEAG funding, no room in students' financial aid package due to student financial aid unmet need, and access to low barrier funding such as HEER Funds as the top reasons SEAG student requests were not funded or fully funded with SEAG funding.

Chart 2 FY 22 Requested Amounts Compared to Requested Amounts Funded



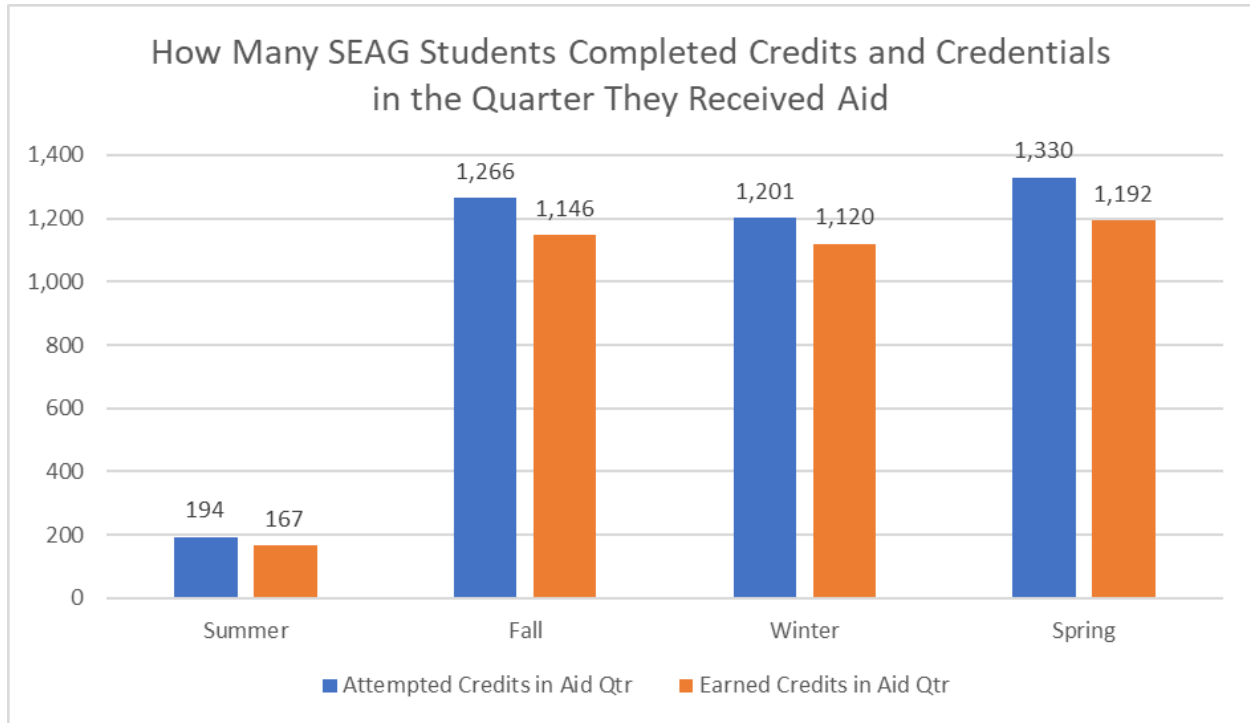
The above Chart 2 demonstrates the total amounts requested, the amount funded, and the amount left unfunded by SEAG funding. Chart 2 shows the total amount of unawarded student emergency requests in FY 22 was \$49.7 million. The level of unfunded student emergency requests across the community and technical college system demonstrates an unprecedented amount of student emergency need in the system. Colleges reported other funding sources such as HEER Funding which temporarily filled some of the gap, however, many colleges have nearly expended all HEER Funding going into FY 23.

“It is a lifesaver.”

— Student

Colleges worked hard over the FY 22 academic year to connect students in need to resources to help them stay in school, especially when there were limited resources. As shown in the following Chart 3, FY 22 SEAG recipients who completed credits in the quarter they received SEAG emergency aid were relatively high. Chart 3 also shows FY 22 fall and spring quarters as the terms with the highest number of credits completed by SEAG recipients.

Chart 3 SEAG Students Completed Credits and Credentials in Quarter Received Aid

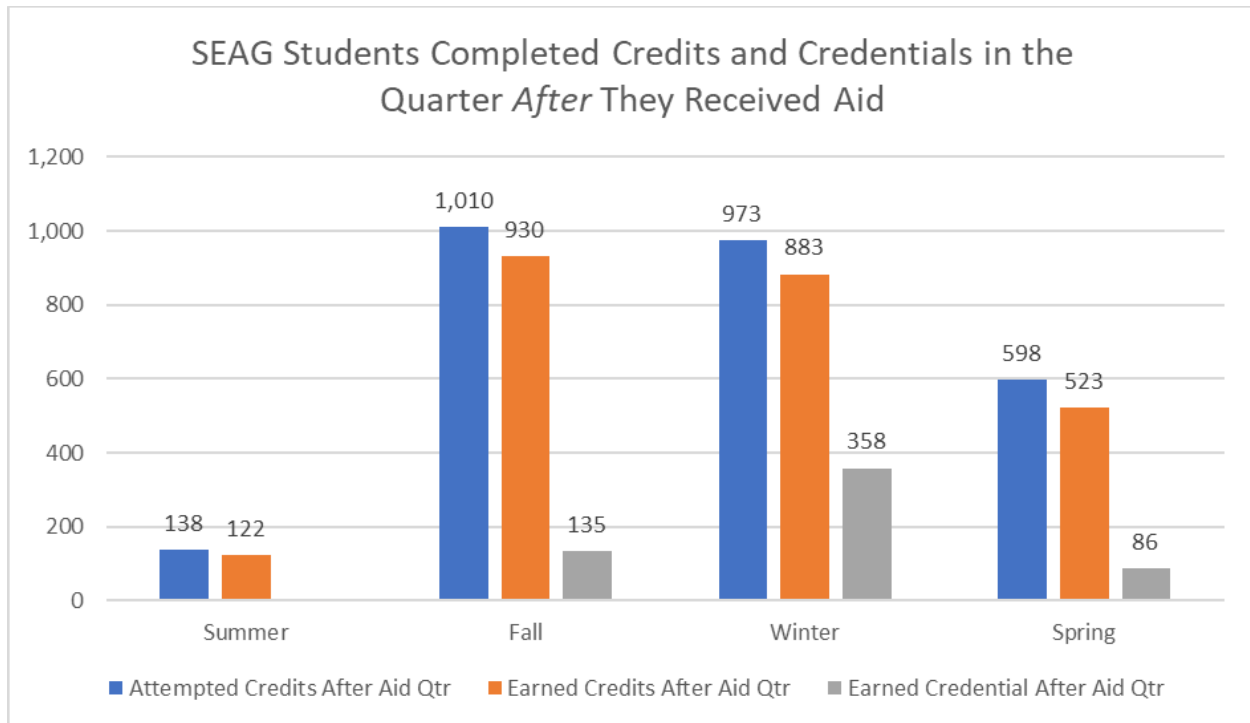


“Thank you for the help. It has allowed me to continue to stay in school thus far. I’m extremely grateful to you all for helping me keep my apartment.”

— Student

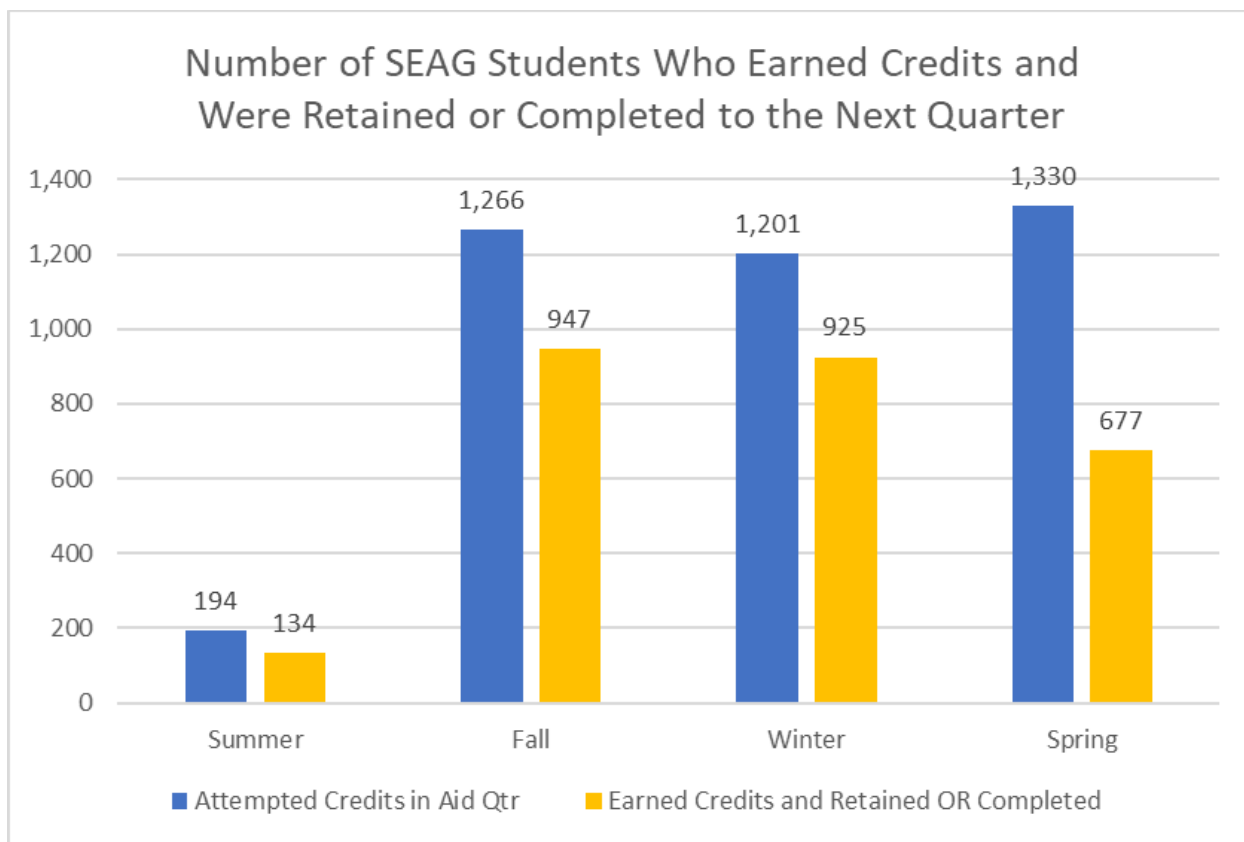
The below Chart 4 demonstrates in FY 22 students who received SEAG financial aid also completed credits or credentials in the following quarter after receiving SEAG aid. The percentage of students in the summer quarter who earned credits after they received SEAG emergency aid is 88%, however, there were no students who earned credentials in the following quarter after receiving aid. The FY 22 data shows that 90% of students completed the credits they attempted in the quarter after they received SEAG assistance and 21% earned a credential the quarter after they received SEAG assistance.

Chart 4 SEAG Students Completed Credits and Credentials in Quarter After Received Aid



The following Chart 5 shows the number of FY 22 students during the 2021-22 academic year who received aid and who remained in school by completing credits or a credential in the quarter in which they received aid and earned credits or a credential in the succeeding quarter. Chart 5 shows fall quarter 2022 students who remained and earned credits and succeeded to the next quarter is 74%. The winter quarter percent of students who received aid and remained in school with credits completed in quarter of aid and in the succeeding quarter is 77%. Spring quarter percent of students who remained in school and completed credits in the quarter of which they received aid and succeeded to the next quarter is 51%.

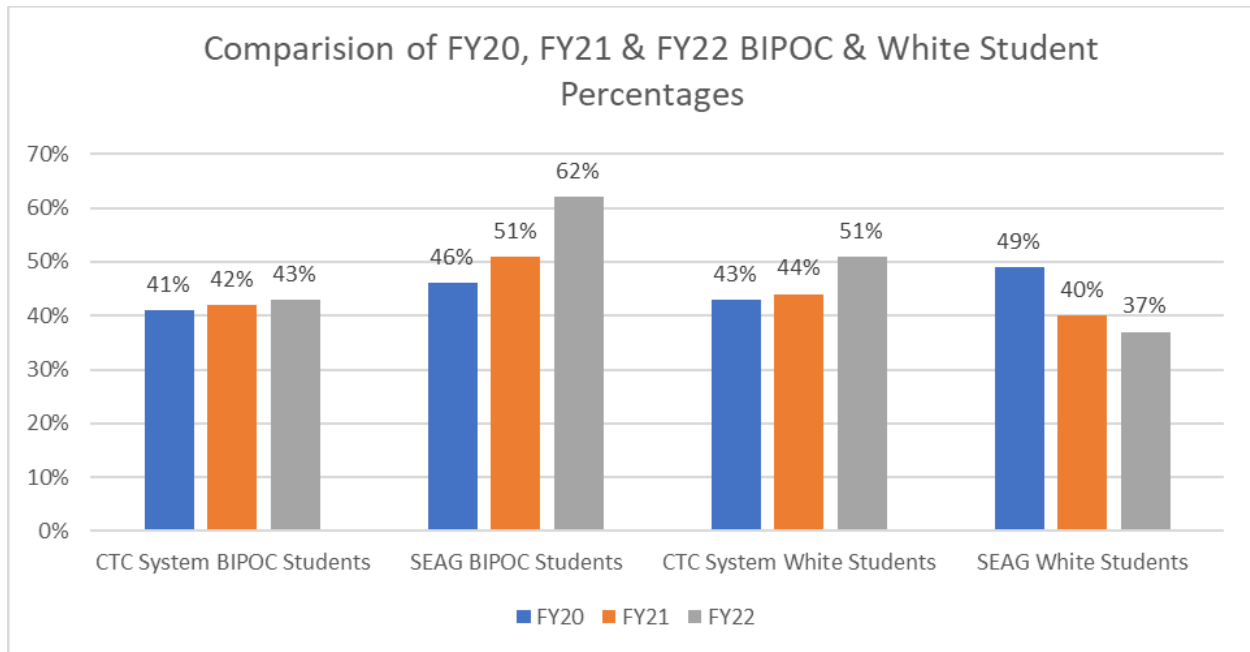
Chart 5 Number of SEAG Students Earned Credits and Retained or Completed into the Next Quarter



Recipient demographics

As cited earlier in this report, BIPOC students were 20% more likely to be impacted by the effects of the pandemic. In FY 22, 62% of students served by SEAG identified as BIPOC, compared to an enrollment of 43%. BIPOC students submitted requests for SEAG emergency assistance at a rate six times higher than white students. Chart 6, below, shows a sharp increase in the percentage of BIPOC SEAG students in FY 22 compared to FY 20 and FY 21. Further illustrating the need for funding, many of the federal and state COVID-19 aid programs that supported students during the pandemic have already concluded or are sunsetting before the end of 2022. Challenges in our current economy such as rising costs of housing, food, and gas will continue to impact all college students and disproportionately impact BIPOC students as we move into a post-pandemic era.

Chart 6 Comparison of FY 20, FY 21 & FY 22 BIPOC & White Student Percentages



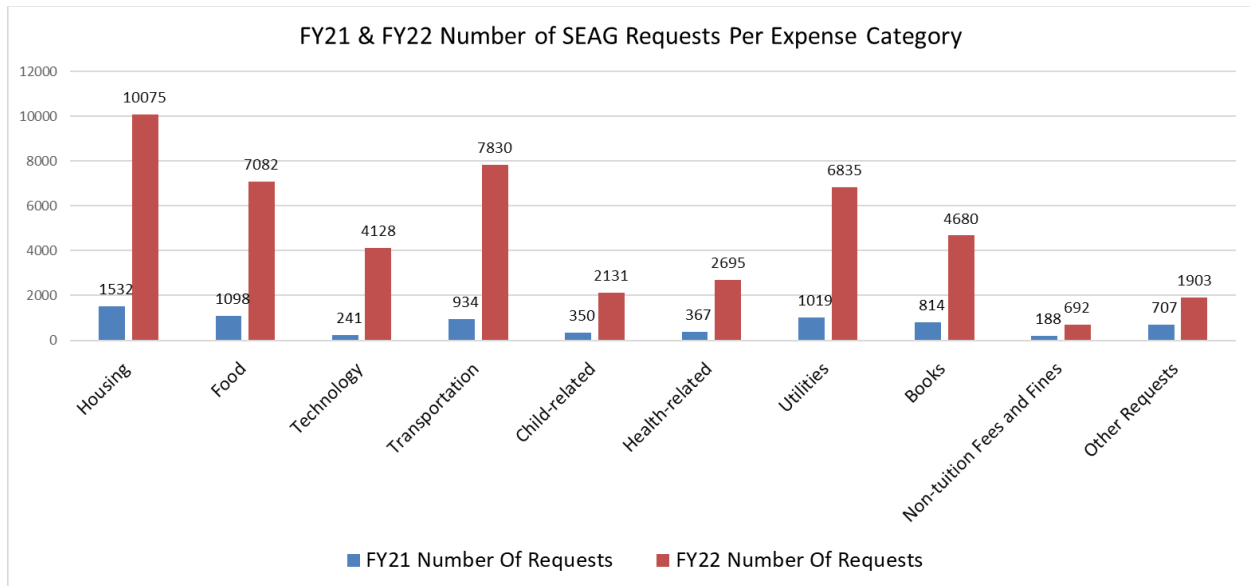
Additional analysis of FY 22 SEAG students reveals that 71% of students 25 years or older were served with SEAG emergency aid, while total enrollment of students aged 25 years or older is 56%. For women, SEAG funding supported 66% women, compared to 53% of total enrollment.

Emergency Assistance Requested and Additional Student Needs

It is important to note 26 colleges administered and reported on SEAG funding in FY 22 compared to 16 colleges in FY 21. Significant increases in each of the SEAG student emergency assistance categories and the increases may be related, in part, to the increased number of colleges administering SEAG funding in FY 22.

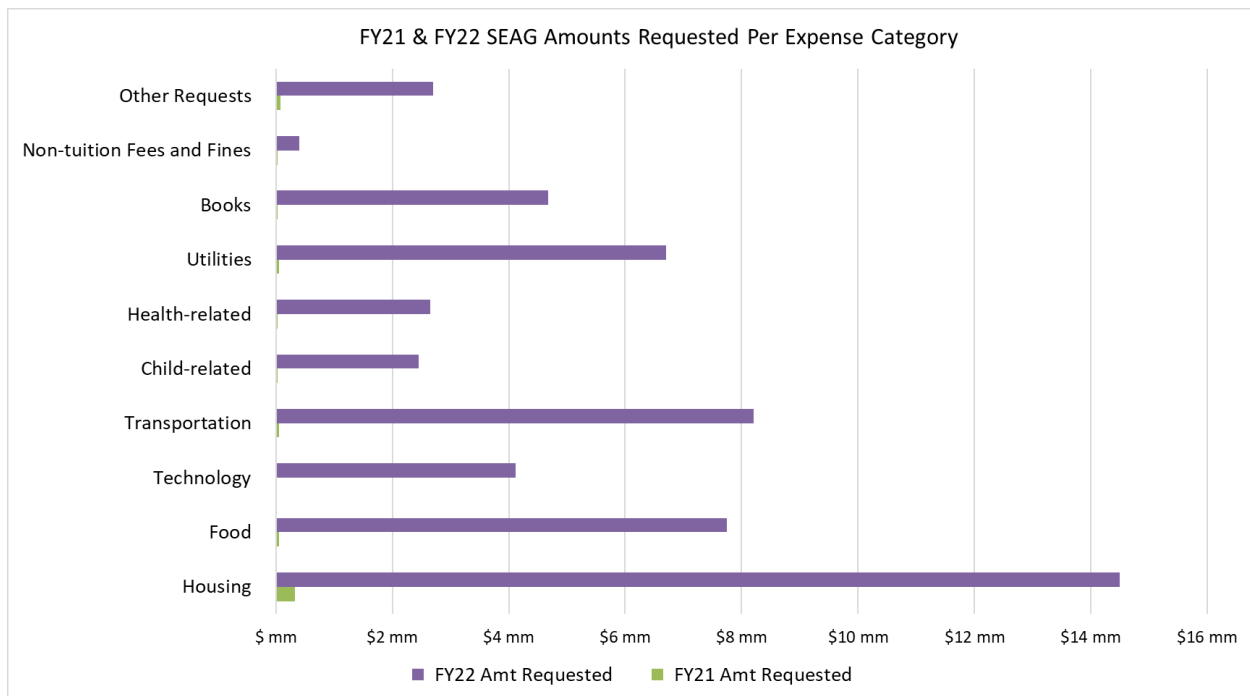
The total number of SEAG emergency assistance aid requests listed by emergency category expenses is shown in the below Chart 7. Housing far exceeded all other SEAG expense categories in FY 22. Chart 7 also demonstrates a sharp increase in housing requests compared to FY 21 and accounted for 21% of the number of requests.

Chart 7 FY 21 & FY 22 Number of SEAG Requests Per Types of Emergency Expense Categories



As shown in Chart 8, below, housing had the largest amounts requested compared to the other SEAG expense categories for emergency assistance in FY 22, far exceeding FY 21. Even with the expansion to the number of colleges offering SEAG funding, housing remained the number one requested emergent need across our community and technical college system.

Chart 8 FY 21 & FY 22 SEAG Amount Requested Per Expense Category



The above Chart 8 shows FY 22 housing expense category accounts for 28% of the total amount of funding requested. This data suggests that a continued investment in student housing is necessary to support students in lived experience to persist through their educational goals.

“This grant could help me tremendously especially with housing and books for school so I’m not scrapping to make ends meet.”

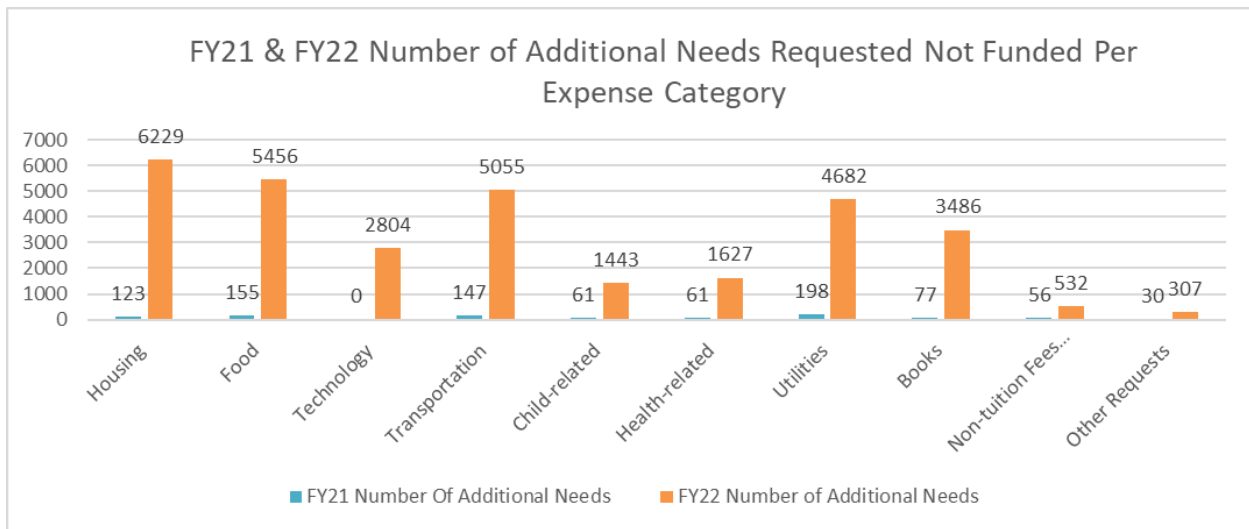
– Student

Rarely do students face one emergent need. To identify additional needs, college emergency assistance applications include a section for students to mark additional needs in addition to their primary need. Once identified, colleges could then help students with meeting those needs.

Colleges reported they often learned of unresolved emergent needs through the colleges’ 10-and 45-day post fund disbursement follow up. For reporting purposes, those additional emergency needs were tracked separately through the college application process and marked as “additional need.”

Total numbers described in the below Chart 9 refer to the additional needs identified by students, which were in addition to their primary request for emergency funding.

Chart 9 FY 21 & FY 22 Number of Additional Needs Requested Not Funded Per Expense Category



SEAG expense categories

Housing

The housing category represents student housing or shelter expenses and if the student is at risk of losing housing or shelter due to foreclosure, eviction or loss of resources to remain housed. In Chart 7 and Chart 8, above, housing reflects the highest number of student requests and dollars requested. In FY 21, there were 1,532 requests and in FY 22 there were 10,075 student emergency assistance requests, a fivefold increase. Similarly, students requested \$14,500,486 in FY 22 whereas \$321,640 was requested in FY 21. Average student requested housing amounts in FY 22 were over \$500,000 per site as compared to FY 21 when the request averaged \$20,000 per site. Lastly, in FY 22 there were an additional 6,229 additional housing needs which went unfunded across the community and technical college system. The additional colleges administering SEAG

funding alone does not account for the increase in requests. It is clear there is a substantial student need for housing in the community and technical college system.

Transportation

The transportation category represents any travel expenses related to education. It most often included public transportation, gas, and auto repair costs. With the return to campuses, transportation became a more prevalent student emergent need in FY 22, making it the second most requested category with 7,830 requests. In FY 21, 934 transportation requests were made by students. The number of requests in FY22 was seven times higher. Similarly, in FY 21, the total amount of requests for transportation was \$50,537, and in FY 22 total transportation emergency request amount was \$8,202,692. This reflects an average of over \$300,000 in transportation emergency assistance per site compared to FY 21 which was over \$3,000 per site. Over 5,000 transportation requests went unfunded. Although some of these increases may have occurred as a result of the 10 additional colleges added to the SEAG system as well as increased communication to student populations who may have the highest need, there is still evidence indicating a strong emergent need among students in the community and technical college system for transportation support as they struggle to remain in school.

Food

The food category refers to any food or nutritional related expenses. Food was the third most requested category. In FY 21, students requested emergency funding for food 1,098 times. In FY 22, there were 7,082 student emergency requests for food. In FY 22, the number of emergency food requests was five times higher than in FY 21. The amount of student requests in FY 22 was \$7,751,398 and in FY 21 student emergent food requests were \$47,562. On average the dollar amount requested per site in FY 22 was nearly \$300,000 compared to FY 21 which was \$2,900. There were also 5,456 additional student food needs in FY 22 which were unfunded.

Technology

In FY 21, technology was part of the “Other” category along with expenses such as non-utility bills or debt, non-child family expenses, hygiene and clothing, and tuition. Technology was added as its own category because in FY 21 it was one of the most requested forms of emergency assistance in the “other” category, therefore warranting an individual SEAG student emergency assistance category. In FY 21, there were 241 Technology requests under the “other” category, and in FY 22 there were 4,128 requests. Technology was requested 16 times more often than compared to FY 21. There were 2,804 additional unfunded technology needs in FY 22.

Child-related

The child-related category refers to any child-related expense to include childcare provider payments, emergency care or child healthcare. FY 22 saw 2,131 requests, compared to FY 21 requests at 349, an increase of five times. Additionally, the total amount of child-related requests for FY 22 totaled \$2,455,030, an average of over \$90,000 per site, compared to FY 21, an average of \$1,500 per site. There were over 1,400 unfunded additional student child-related needs.

Health-related

The health-related category reflects any health-related expense or bills including medical, dental or vision. In FY 21, there were 367 student emergency requests and in FY 22 there were 2,695

requests, five times higher than FY 21. In FY 21, the amount requested for health-related requests was \$27,483 and in FY 22 the requested amount was \$2,645,313, a rate 95 times higher than FY 21. There were 1,627 unfunded additional health-related student emergent needs.

Utilities

The utilities category reflects any expense related to electricity, water, sewer, or garbage services. This category is the fourth largest student emergency need requested in FY 22. In FY 21, there were 1,019 student requests and compared to 6,835 requests in FY 22, a fivefold increase. The total amount for utilities requested in FY 21 was on average over \$3,600 per site, and in FY 22, the total requested amount was on average over \$250,000 per site, 113 times higher than FY 21. There were over 4,600 utility requests which remained unfunded in FY 22. Taking into account the additional 10 colleges added to the SEAG system in FY 22, the increase does not invalidate evidence there is an exponential student emergent need in utility support.

Books

The book category refers to any printed and online books, access codes, study and exam costs, and other course materials to include tools and supplies. This applies only when all other funding sources have been exhausted. Student emergency requests rose from 814 in FY 21 to 4,680 in FY 22. Books support was requested four times more than in FY 21. Similarly, the student emergency assistance requested amount for FY 22 was \$4,675,544, while in FY 21, the amount was \$31,174. This was an average of nearly \$180,000 in FY 22 for book requests per site compared to nearly \$2,000 in book requests per site. There were 3,486 unfunded student book requests.

“Thank you for your time ... I need money for my study materials like textbooks, transportation, and things I need for my clinical lab (stethoscope, etc.). I think this will go a long way in helping me to keep in school. Since I have to source for my tuition for winter, this money can go a long way in helping get other materials I need for my nursing program.”

— Student

Fees and fines (non-tuition related)

The fees and fines category refers to any non-tuition related fees and fines that create a barrier to the student continuing in courses. This category includes non-utility or non-housing related bills or debts. In FY 21, the number of requests for fees and fines was 188, and in FY 22, the student emergency requests was 692, a threefold increase. Total dollars requested for support with fees and fines increased from \$27,546 in FY 21 to \$399,645 in FY 22, representing an average increase from \$1,700 per site to \$15,000 per site.

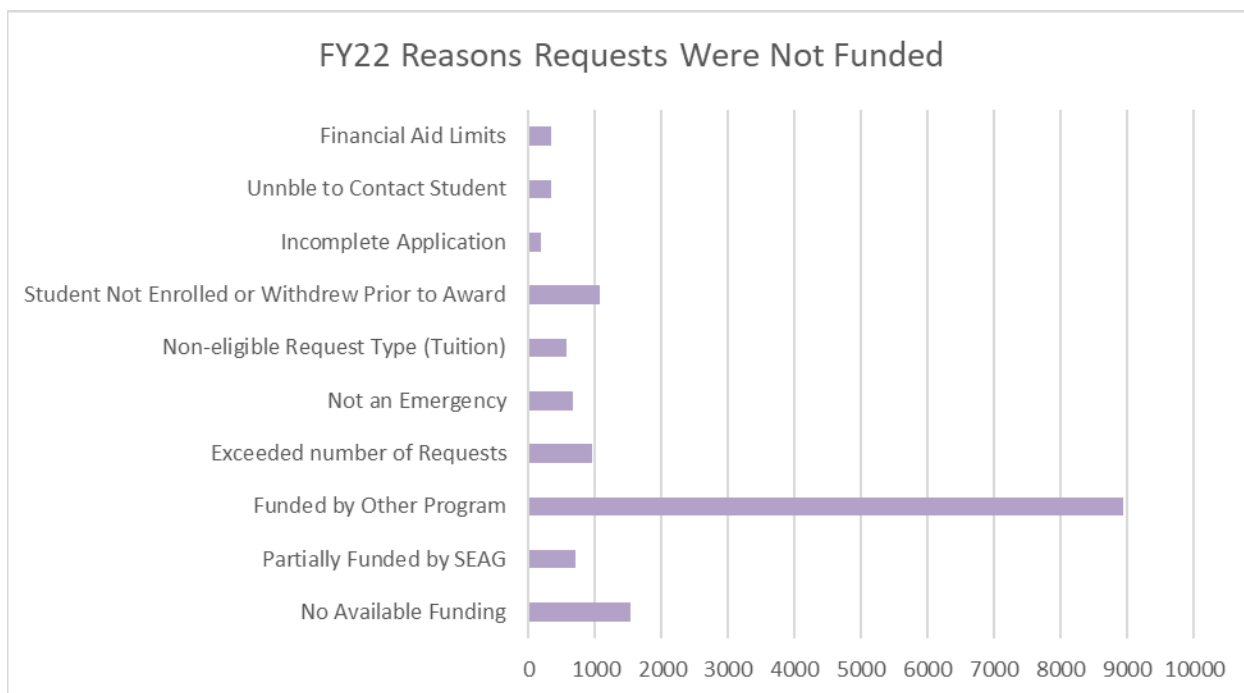
Other

The “other” category is a category used by colleges to collect data on any emergency expenses that did not fit into the defined expense categories. These expenses include non-utility bills or debt, non-child family expenses, hygiene and clothing, and tuition. In FY 21, there were 678 requests for “other,” and in FY 22, the system fielded 1,098 emergency requests, a 61% increase. In FY 22, technology was removed from the other category due to the large number of requests in FY 21.

Understanding reasons requests were not funded

The community and technical college system was unable to fund all student emergency requests. Colleges cited as the top two reasons requests were not fully funded being the lack of SEAG funding and students having immediate access to non-restricted HEER Funds. Of the 15,369 student emergency requests, the system funded 51% (7,762) of student requests. Many requests were denied or partially funded because of rules related to financial aid unmet need. Financial aid is impacted by the cost of attendance, and thus, how much room is available in a student's award for disbursement of emergency funds. Unfunded requests were often funded through other funding sources such as HEER Funding. Chart 10 below shows other reasons for non-disbursement of SEAG funds. Large fund requests went unfunded or were only partially funded due lack of SEAG funding, excess number of student emergency requests, lack of student enrollment, submission of non-emergent requests, and incomplete applications.

Chart 10 FY 22 Reasons Requested Were Not Funded



SEAG Program Evaluation

Since FY 20, the community and technical college system has implemented SEAG funding to assist students with emergent needs and have maintained a system of general and targeted outreach and low-barrier access to students who request emergency funding. The college system's SEAG program delivery model requires that colleges' operations to identify students with financial emergencies, provide an accessible and low-barrier emergency assistance request process, build an equitable review and decision process for student emergency assistance requests, provide timely notifications of decision process to students making requests, ensure timely disbursement of SEAG funds, and provide a follow up system to collect student feedback about emergent need resolution. Additionally, colleges are required to conduct personalized follow up and referrals.

The SEAG program evaluation is an essential operational process that assists college staff to evaluate and make mid-course corrections when necessary. In FY 22, colleges, through the grant summative and formative evaluation process, identified gaps and put measures into place which improve access and continuity in service delivery of SEAG operations.

Outreach

Colleges used a variety of targeted outreach approaches in FY 22 to include social media, texting, newsletters, websites, Canvas, syllabi, emails, and in-classroom presentations. All college websites provide a centralized location for students to find important and general SEAG information about access points as well as provide a link to an online emergency funds request application. In addition to online outreach, some colleges have formed in-person funding teams with a primary goal to reach more at-risk students needing emergency assistance. The teams provide a key element in providing information, answering questions, and assisting with filling out low-barrier emergency fund applications.

Colleges set up operations as part of evaluation infrastructure to collect student feedback about the emergency assistance process and have made mid-course changes using this important student feedback. Examples of how some colleges have used student feedback to update processes to meet student needs is through revised applications, simplified student eligibility requirements, and centralized intake processes. Increased visibility of the program can be seen through the increased number of student emergency assistance requests in FY 22. Most colleges have standardized their online application to meet accessibility needs. Additionally, colleges have identified the need to scale up emergency assistance outreach to first generation, limited English speakers, and refugee students, including translating the application into languages other than English.

Accessible and low-barrier request process

SEAG colleges employ a low barrier approach which does not require additional documentation of student need. Colleges are encouraged to trust students. The SEAG program only requires the student to submit an application. Colleges engage funding teams as an accessible and low barrier approach to reach more students who might be at risk of needing emergency assistance. Teams help answer questions and assist students with filling out low barrier emergency assistance applications. The funding teams also work effectively to review student applications and triage needs across multiple funding sources to support the student's whole need as much as possible. Most colleges have returned to in-person staffing, so students can submit an emergency assistance application online or in person.

Equitable review and decision process

In addition to college centralized application intake and vetting processes for any emergency funding opportunities for students in need, many colleges developed priority funding models to include funding criteria. With additional emergency assistance fund resources provided by limited programs like the federal CARES and HEERS acts, the priority funding models allowed disbursement of funding to more students. Funding criteria prioritized need by limiting requested amounts and/or number of quarters a student may request emergency funds. As a result of funding criteria, however, student requests were at times denied or only partially funded in cases when considerable sums of money were requested. Colleges believed these measures were necessary to serve greater numbers of

students with limited SEAG funding resources.

Colleges continue to experience large volumes of emergency funds requests each quarter and find difficulty in maintaining quick turnaround times during the emergency request vetting process. This was described in the Accessible and Low Barrier Request Process of this report. Many colleges are trying to solve this challenge by increasing staffing, however, colleges struggle to fill open positions. This has put pressure on current staff to meet fund disbursement turnaround timelines.

Colleges also found that large amounts of disbursed HEER Funding during the pandemic changed students' expectations about requesting large amounts of aid. Students' needs remain unmet with smaller SEAG funding amounts in comparison to what they received in HEER Funding. Administering HEER Funding was also less administratively burdensome on college financial aid staff because it was easily and quickly disbursed. The federal emergency aid did not count against a family's earned income as part of the student aid award, therefore "unmet need" required less administrative processing time and effort.

Efficient disbursement and timely notification

Nearly all colleges disburse funds directly to student BankMobile accounts or issue a check to the student for a quicker turnaround time. There is an option to submit emergency assistance funds via third party payments on behalf of student requests, however, the processing time takes much longer. With the implementation of a statewide centralized student tracking system for colleges, the process of awarding and disbursing funding to students has become more administrative. This creates longer processing times, significantly impacting students' ability to access funds to meet their emergency needs and keep them enrolled in classes.

Additionally, colleges identified challenges in administering and disbursing SEAG funding to students, citing extensive staff time required to check student financial aid awards for "unmet need" prior to disbursing SEAG funds. If a student's "unmet need" is low, this impacts other financial aid in the student's award packaging. This requires staff to consult with students to accept or deny SEAG funds as part of their overall financial aid award. This financial aid processing time was frequently reported by colleges as a challenge in meeting the 4-day disbursement timeframe.

Colleges also reported a delay in disbursement was due to financial aid offices running aid disbursement processes only one to two times a week. Colleges also reported lengthy processing time is needed when fielding high volumes of emergency fund requests. Other challenges were reported by colleges about timely disbursement of funds when funds are disbursed directly to BankMobile accounts. If a student does not have a BankMobile account setup to receive the funds electronically, this adds to the disbursed funds turnaround time.

However, despite such challenges in meeting the 4-day turnaround, many colleges have made creative changes to disbursement processes to include disbursing gift cards for partial payment and disburse the remainder of the funds a few days later to meet the 4-day turnaround requirement.

Follow up assessment and evaluation findings

In addition to the 4-day turnaround requirement, colleges follow up with students at different intersections, providing staff an opportunity to check in with the student about how the SEAG funding met their emergent needs as well as an opportunity to make referrals to on- and off-campus resources. Colleges implemented a variety of follow up techniques, of which the most common were

email follow up surveys sent to the student. During the follow up process, colleges contact the student to assess how things are going and determine if there are any additional needs. Colleges often find the student's emergent need(s) were not always fully resolved.

Colleges also utilized student feedback to make mid-course corrections such as revised and simplified emergency assistance applications and simplified eligibility requirements. Colleges adopted a centralized emergency funds application intake site along with internal operations processes and teams to vet a student's emergency fund application request and apply the appropriate funding source to the request. This reduced the processing time for fund disbursement. This type of infrastructure lessened the onus on students to submit multiple applications for different pots of funding or submit multiple requests to different offices across campus and repeatedly retell their story. Additionally, colleges also found through post disbursement follow up that the student emergent need was not always resolved and learned of multiple emergent student needs in addition to what the student initially requested SEAG funds to resolve.

Conclusion

In FY 22, an additional 10 community and technical colleges offered SEAG funding. Colleges reported they were inundated with student emergency assistance requests, ultimately serving 4,177 students out of 15,369 requests. FY 22 saw an increase of 62% over FY 21 and a 79% increase over FY 20 in the total number of students served. Many colleges made mid-course corrections to their operations based on important student feedback they collected. Overall, the community and technical college system was successful in fully administering FY 22 Student Emergency Assistance Grants to students and connecting them to other resources.

As cited in this report and identified through FY 22 SEAG data along with individual conversations with SEAG college staff, the pandemic negatively impacted students and their ability to successfully stay in school. There were more requests than SEAG funding could address. Many colleges fully expended CARES/HEERS Funds which put pressure on staff to find and administer other emergency funding. Colleges worked diligently over the course of the 2022-23 academic year to meet the demands of student emergency assistance requests but were only able to award 51% of student requests; mostly due to lack of available funding. Many SEAG staff reported the loss of pandemic financial assistance left students in difficult financial situations as they came to rely on pandemic financial assistance to meet their needs. With the increased number of emergency funding requests, increased sums of requested funding, and nearly \$50,000,000 in requests left unfulfilled because of lack of funding, the high level of need and among Washington community and technical college students and the necessity of programs like SEAG is clear.

Appendix A: FY 21-23 College Selection Process Results

The SBCTC received 26 applications and fund all applications for the FY 21-23 biennium. A full list of funding awarded is listed below. Funding amounts listed below are for July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023.

College	Funding
Bates Technical College	\$275,000.00
Bellevue College	\$177,452.00
Bellingham Technical College	\$44,500.00
Centralia College	\$215,000.00
Clark College	\$200,000.00
Clover Park Technical College	\$115,000.00
Columbia Basin College	\$230,000.00
Edmonds College	\$300,650.00
Everett Community College	\$200,000.00
Grays Harbor College	\$150,000.00
Green River College	\$207,379.00
Highline College	\$151,333.00
Lake Washington Institute of Technology	\$177,000.00
Lower Columbia College	\$135,000.00
Olympic College	\$141,100.00
Peninsula College	\$115,000.00
Pierce College District	\$300,000.00
Renton Technical College	\$220,000.00
Seattle Central College	\$200,000.00
North Seattle College	\$200,000.00
South Seattle College	\$115,000.00
Skagit Valley College	\$120,036.00
South Puget Sound Community College	\$300,000.00
Spokane Community College	\$200,000.00
Tacoma Community College	\$115,000.00
Walla Walla Community College	\$100,000.00
Totals	\$4,707,450.00



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Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges