

Project Name

Evaluation of federal CARES act funds utilized by Oklahoma's institutions of higher education
21-000-01-HIGHERED-COVID

Rapid Response Evaluation: It is estimated this evaluation will be completed date within 90 to 100 days from the date of the entrance conference, which took place on October 2nd, 2020.

Project Background

To alleviate some of the economic reverberations of the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress passed the CARES Act. This Act included some \$14 billion dollars earmarked for institutions of higher education (IHEs), administered through the Federal Department of Education. These funds were awarded as direct grants to institutions, with the requirement that 50% of funds must be spent on student relief, with the other 50% going to institutional costs.

Original Scope and Project Description

Project Description:

Gather preliminary data on current COVID-19 reimbursement and funding allocation.

Scope of Work:

Ensure transparency and availability of data to analyze institutional cost share expenditures.

Material Findings from Entrance Conference

Based on the discussions held at the entrance conference with Chancellor Johnson and members of the State Regents, the LOFT evaluation team believes that additional data is needed to complete this project. Although the evaluation team has access to summarizing statements that show the proportion of expenditures for IHEs in Oklahoma, the scope of work for this project necessitates transactional data.

Evaluation Objectives

The LOFT evaluation team will establish communication with all IHEs that have received CARES Act funding to get the transactional data which is used to prepare the summarizing statements. To adequately understand the impact of COVID-19 on the post-secondary education system in Oklahoma, the evaluation team is also procuring the same information from the CareerTech system.

This evaluation seeks to answer the following questions respective to institutions' use of CARES Act funds:

1. Is the data we are getting complete? Are there any missing entries?
2. Is the data we are getting substantive? Do we have the details that we need?
3. Are the institutions compliant with the 50% cost share requirement?
4. What are the trends in macro-level datasets, such as expenditure category, student population served, etc.?
5. Are there any expenditures which require more explanation?
6. For those institutions independent of state funds, what processes exist to ensure compliance?

