



5 Things to Keep in Mind About New England States' and Postsecondary Institutions' Allocations of Federal Covid-19 Relief Funds

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On July 14, 2021, NEBHE, in partnership with Education Strategy Group, convened members of its Covid-19 Regional Higher Education Action Group to learn more about states' and institutions' plans for allocating federal emergency funding. The group consists of system and institution leaders representing the public, private, and community college sectors in all six New England states. Here are the five biggest takeaways from that conversation:

1. Throughout the pandemic, colleges and universities have been beset with steep expenses related to regular Covid-19 testing and implementing social distancing measures. As a result, many institutions have experienced significant losses in auxiliary revenue. Therefore, a significant portion of institutions plan to use HEERF funds to close these deficits.
2. States that had strategic plans or planning processes in place before the onset of the pandemic were able to proactively allocate federal emergency and stimulus funds toward priority areas, such as FAFSA completion and enrollment incentives in high value education and training programs.
3. The mental health of students and staff is widely considered the next crisis on campus, and institutions are actively seeking ways to improve services.
4. Policymakers may not yet fully understand the lasting financial impact of Covid-19 on the region's institutions nor the constraints on institutions face for using HEERF and ARPA funds.
5. Statewide coordination is important for ensuring that
 - a. Stakeholders have a clear understanding of federal emergency and stimulus funding streams, requirements, and expenditures
 - b. The use of funds aligns with states' education, training, and economic development goals
 - c. Agencies can collaborate to achieve state goals

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