

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021: A guide for higher education



Table of contents

CHAPTER 1

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 for higher education: a summary

page 03 ›

CHAPTER 2

How are HEERF funds allocated?

page 04 ›

CHAPTER 3

How can schools spend this money?

page 05 ›

CHAPTER 4

What technological investments make the most sense for schools?

page 07 ›

CHAPTER 5

Why a unified communications platform is the best choice for distance learning

page 08 ›

CHAPTER 6

RingCentral's unified communications platform delivers an engaging learning and teaching experience

page 09 ›

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021: A guide for higher education



The American Rescue Plan of 2021 represents one of the biggest federal stimulus packages in American history.

Under the plan, universities and colleges receive a sizable chunk of money—nearly

\$40 billion.

The billions of dollars allocated are intended to boost the economy still reeling from the fallout of a global pandemic. Under the plan, universities and colleges receive a sizable chunk of money—nearly \$40 billion.

This guide contains a summary of provisions for higher education institutions in the US, how allocations are made to institutions, and how institutions must use those funds. It also explores some of the best investments schools can make for a better learning and teaching experience.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 for higher education: a summary



In March 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 into law. The stimulus package will pump [\\$1.9 trillion](#) into the American economy in a variety of ways.

Almost \$40 billion will go toward higher education in the US, to both private and public institutions. Specifically, the money will go into the [Higher Education Relief Fund](#) (HEERF), which was established in March 2020 under the CARES Act.

HEERF is broken down into several programs for colleges and universities:

- Institutional portion for public and non-profit institutions
- Student aid portion for public and non-profit institutions
- Historically Black colleges and universities
- Tribally controlled colleges and universities
- Supplemental support under the American Rescue Plan
- Proprietary institutions grant funds for students

How are HEERF funds allocated?



HEERF funds go [directly to universities and colleges](#). Unlike funding for K-12 institutions, HEERF monies are not distributed at the state level.

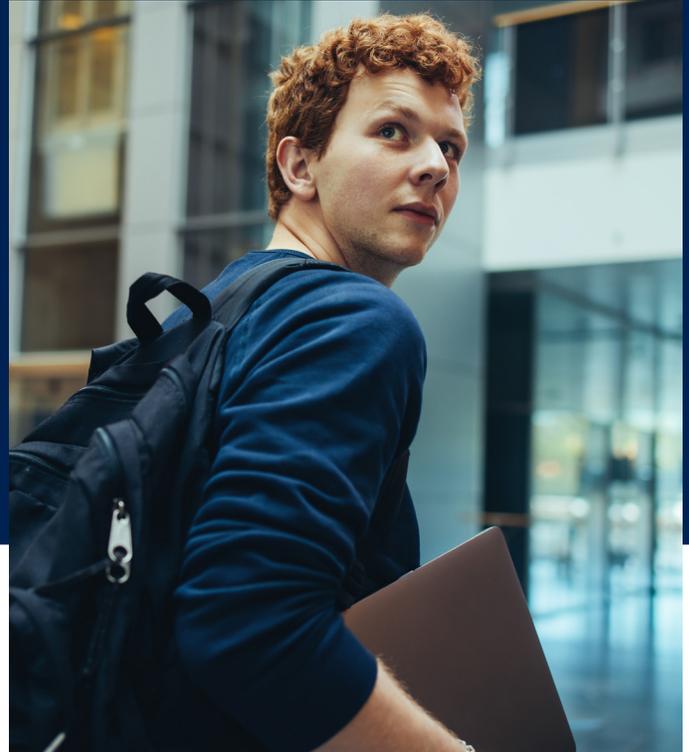
How does the government determine how much schools get? Here's an [overview of allocations](#):

- \$36 billion will go to public and private non-profit institutions
- \$3 billion will go to Historically Black colleges and universities, tribally controlled colleges and universities, minority serving institutions, and schools that are part of the Strengthening Institutions Program
- \$198 million for institutions the Department of Education has determined have the greatest unmet needs stemming from the public health crisis
- \$396 million for proprietary institutions (private, for-profit educational institutions)

Here's how [the Department of Education has set allocations](#):

- 75% of the funds will be awarded to schools based on each institution's relative share of enrollment of Federal Pell Grant recipients who weren't enrolled exclusively in distance learning courses before the spring of 2020. This amount will be split evenly between total enrollment and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment
- 23% of the funds will be awarded to schools based on each institution's relative share of enrollment of non-Federal Pell Grant students who weren't enrolled exclusively in distance learning courses before the spring of 2020. Again, this will be split evenly between total enrollment and FTE enrollment
- 2% of the funds will be awarded to schools based on each school's relative share of Federal Pell Grant recipients who were enrolled exclusively in distance learning courses before the spring of 2020, with this sum being split evenly between total enrollment and FTE enrollment

How can schools spend this money?



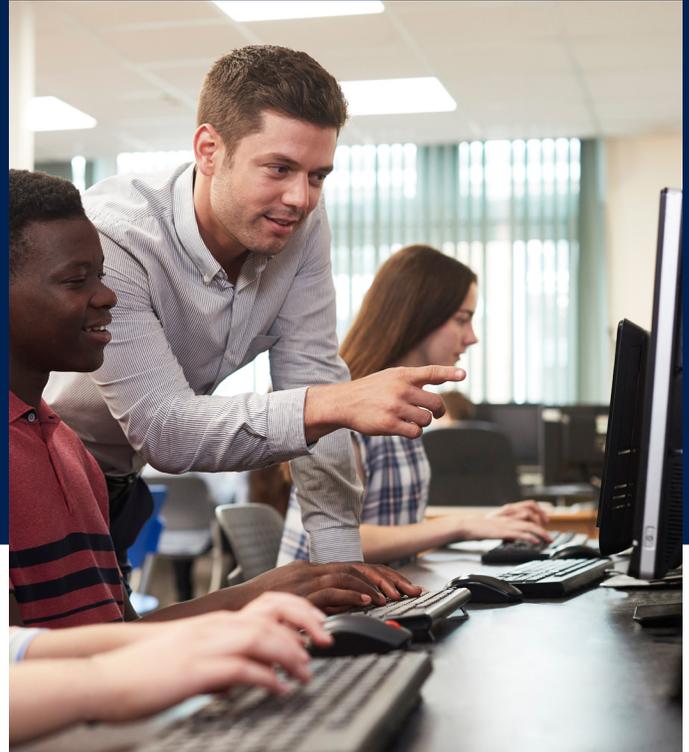
There are a few stipulations the government has placed on funds from the American Rescue Plan:

- Public and private non-profit institutions receiving funds [must spend at least as much on emergency financial aid grants](#) for students as they spent in 2020 with funding from the CARES Act
- These institutions must conduct direct outreach to financial aid applicants about the opportunity to receive an adjustment to their [aid packages](#) if they or their family members have lost their job
- Institutions must spend a portion of those funds implementing evidence-based practices to monitor and suppress the public health threat within guidelines issued by health authorities

Otherwise, schools have a fair amount of flexibility on how they spend the money from the American Rescue Plan. They can use it for:

- Defraying expenses due to the pandemic, including new safety improvements, training for faculty and staff, payroll, and lost revenue
- Technology, including solutions to facilitate distance learning

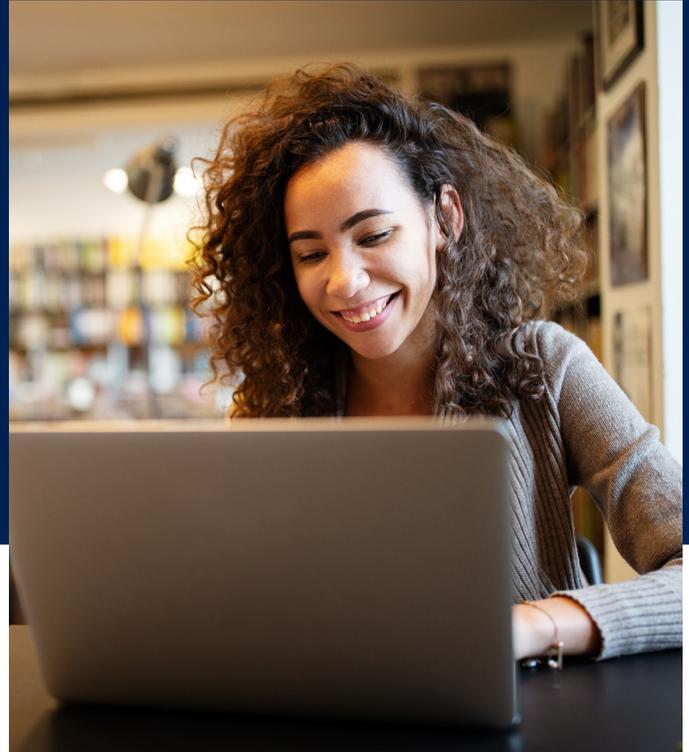
What technological investments make the most sense for schools?



At a time when schools and students are grappling with the uncertainty of closures, lockdowns, and health restrictions, investing in distance learning technology makes sense. Which distance learning platforms yield the greatest ROI? The answer is unified communications platforms.

Unified communications platforms are a set of communications (telephony, video conference, and chat) and collaboration (file-sharing and document editing) tools in a single platform.

Why a unified communications platform is the best choice for distance learning



A [unified communications platform](#) is the best choice for schools because:

- It can be accessed from any device
- Instructors can teach synchronous or asynchronously
- It gives students and instructors flexible communication options

Unified communications platforms can be accessed from any device

One of the greatest benefits of a unified communications platform is that it's accessible from any device. Students and instructors can enable one-click audio and video from any browser, or join from an app.

Instructors can teach synchronously or asynchronously

A [unified communications platform](#) gives instructors the freedom to teach synchronously or asynchronously.

They can teach live lessons, then record them and upload them to a learning management system for students' later viewing. Or, they could simply record a lesson and upload it to the LMS.

Students and instructors have flexible communication options

One of the benefits of a unified communications platform is that it gives students and instructors flexible communication options.

Students can collaborate with classmates through chat, video conference, or phone calls, while professors can schedule virtual office hours via video.

At a time when there's a great deal of uncertainty and confusion, and campuses remain empty, it's important to maintain open pathways of communication. It helps students and instructors feel a sense of familiarity and continuity.

About RingCentral

RingCentral's unified communications platform makes an excellent investment for colleges and universities: students and instructors can use it on any device, it allows instructors to teach synchronously or asynchronously, and it provides flexible communication options.

To learn more, [get a demo](#).

With RingCentral, learning is always in session.

Learn more about RingCentral for Education at ringcentral.com/education.

For more information, please contact a sales representative.

Visit us at

ringcentral.com/education

or call 844-569-2989.

RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG) is a leading provider of cloud Message Video Phone™ (MVP™), customer engagement, and contact center solutions for businesses worldwide. More flexible and cost-effective than legacy on-premises PBX and video conferencing systems that it replaces, RingCentral empowers modern mobile and distributed workforces to communicate, collaborate, and connect via any mode, any device, and any location. RingCentral's open platform integrates with leading third-party business applications and enables customers to easily customize business workflows. RingCentral is headquartered in Belmont, California, and has offices around the world.

RingCentral

RingCentral, Inc. 20 Davis Drive, Belmont, CA 94002. ringcentral.com