

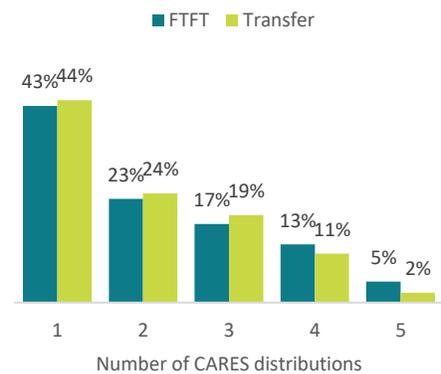


Student Success Outcomes of CARES Grant Recipients

During the COVID-19 pandemic, CSU received \$43 million for direct student payments from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The report, [Financial Aid Response to the COVID-19 Crisis](#), provides an overview of how CSU utilized CARES funding during the SP20 term to support vulnerable students and posits the funding may have enabled the return of students in the fall. This report takes a cohort-based approach to examine student persistence rates by CARES funding status.

Summary of Findings

- More than 8,000 students received CARES grants since the SP19 term, and these recipients were more likely to hold structurally underserved identities when compared to the most recent FA21 cohort. In both the FTFT and transfer cohorts, about half of CARES recipients were also Pell recipients or were first generation students compared to about 20% of the FA21 cohorts. Racially minoritized students comprised about half of FTFT CARES recipients and over one-third of transfer CARES recipients compared to about one-quarter of the overall FTFT and transfer cohorts.
- As funds were targeted toward students with financial need, almost all Tier 1, 2, or 3 students received at least one CARES distribution during their first three years at CSU. Additionally, more than half of students received two or more distributions.
- Analyses included a comparison of persistence rates between CARES recipients and a group of comparable peers (students who did not receive CARES funds and were in Tier 1, 2, or 3 for their financial aid packaging). Overall, students who received CARES funds persisted at the university at higher rates than their peers who did not receive funds. For example, FTFT students who received CARES funds during their first year persisted at rates at least +3 PP higher than those who did not; in their second year, rates were at least +10 PP higher. Differences in persistence rates between transfer CARES recipients and comparable peers were less marked though still positive in the first and second years (with the exception of first fall to first spring), ranging between +1.2 PP and + 14.2 PP higher for CARES recipients.



First-time full-time Cohort CARES Grant Recipients

Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the FA14 through FA21 FTFT cohort CARES fund recipients and the FA21 cohort for comparative purposes. Almost half of all CARES recipients were Pell recipients, first generation, or racially minoritized, compared to about one-quarter of the most recent fall cohort. Additionally, about two in five CARES recipients had participated in Key Communities (Key), Academic Advancement Center (AAC), and Community for Excellence (C4E).

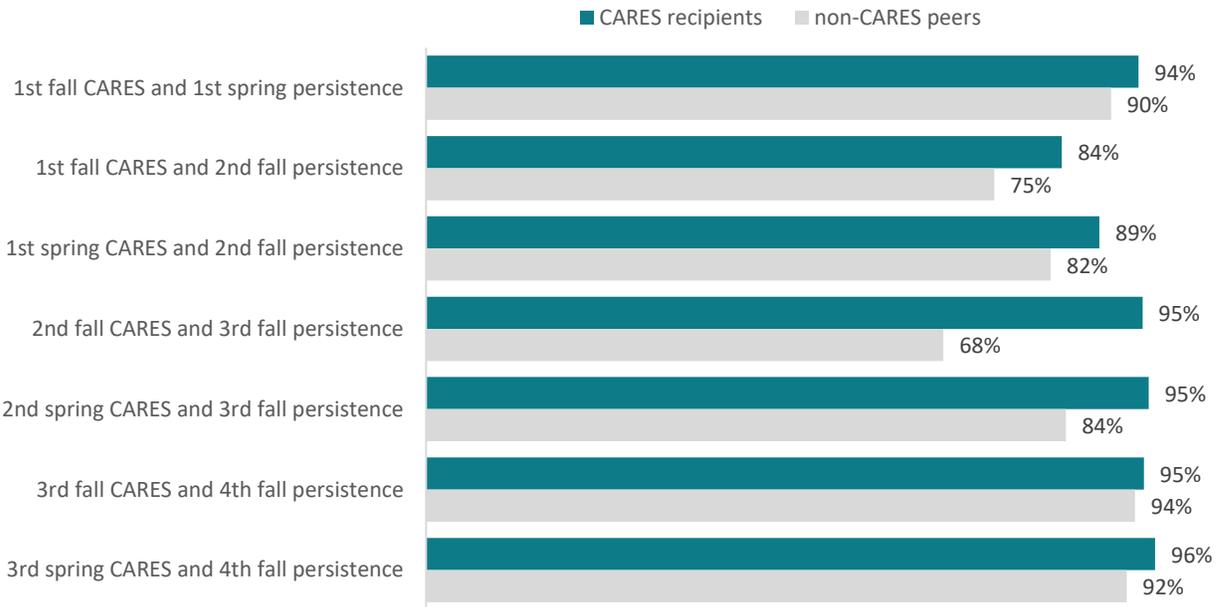
Table 1: FTFT Cohort Demographic Characteristics of CARES Grant Recipients

	CARES recipients (FA14 to FA21 cohorts)	FA21 cohort
Headcount	6,724	4,970
Pell recipient	49.1%	19.1%*
First generation	47.0%	21.2%
Female	61.3%	57.6%
Racially minoritized	48.5%	27.7%
Asian	6.9%	6.6%
Black or African American	9.4%	5.0%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1.2%	0.7%
Hispanic/Latinx	32.1%	16.4%
Native American or American Indian	4.9%	2.6%
White	79.9%	89.0%
Multi-race	7.2%	6.5%
STEM major	39.2%	40.4%
Exploring studies major	22.4%	17.5%
Key	22.8%	8.2%
AAC	3.9%	1.4%
C4E	23.1%	6.7%

* Preliminary, subject to change after those close of the current financial aid year.

Figure 1 and Table 2 display the persistence rates of CARES recipients and a comparable group of peers, students who did not receive CARES funding and whose financial aid packaging group was either Tier 1, 2, or 3.

Figure 1: FTFT Cohort Persistence and Graduation Rates by CARES Funding Status



Rates calculated for students who remained until the end of the term prior to the term being measured.

Non-CARES peers are students who did not receive CARES funding in the term prior to the term being measured and whose financial aid packaging group was either Tier 1, 2, or 3.

Table 2: FTFT Cohorts Persistence Rates by CARES Funding Status

FTFT Cohorts	CARES recipients		non-CARES peers		Difference (CARES-non-CARES)
	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	
1st fall CARES and 1st spring persistence	1,712	94%	167	90%	3.6 PP
1st fall CARES and 2nd fall persistence	678	84%	156	75%	8.9 PP
1st spring CARES and 2nd fall persistence	1,736	89%	416	82%	6.4 PP
2nd fall CARES and 3rd fall persistence	626	95%	123	68%	26.3 PP
2nd spring CARES and 3rd fall persistence	1,602	95%	302	84%	10.9 PP
3rd fall CARES and 4th fall persistence	513	95%	1,057	94%	1.2 PP
3rd spring CARES and 4th fall persistence	1,486	96%	372	92%	3.8 PP

Rates calculated for students who remained until the end of the term prior to the term being measured.

Non-CARES peers are students who did not receive CARES funding in the term prior to the term being measured and whose financial aid packaging group was either Tier 1, 2, or 3.

The non-CARES peers out-numbered non-CARES peers by a factor of four or higher, highlighting OFA's prioritization of routing CARES funding to the students with the greatest financial need. Additionally, almost 60% of CARES recipients received two or more distributions of funds and almost all Tier 1, 2, or 3 students received at least one CARES distribution during their first three years at CSU.

In terms of student success outcomes, FTFT CARES recipients persisted at higher rates than their non-CARES peers. Percentage point (PP) differences in persistence rates for students who received CARES distributions during their first year and those who did not ranged from +3.6 PP (first fall to first spring) to +8.9 PP (first fall to second fall). Notably, 95% of students who received CARES funds in their second or third years persisted to their third and fourth falls, respectively. Persistence to third and fourth falls for non-CARES students ranged between 68% and 94%.

Transfer Cohort CARES Grant Recipients

Table 3 displays the demographic characteristics of the FA14 through FA21 transfer cohort CARES fund recipients and the FA21 cohort for comparative purposes. Almost half of all CARES recipients were Pell recipients or first generation and over one-third were racially minoritized; all of these identities are higher in the CARES recipient group than in the overall FA21 transfer cohort.

Table 3: Transfer Cohort Demographic Characteristics of CARES Grant Recipients

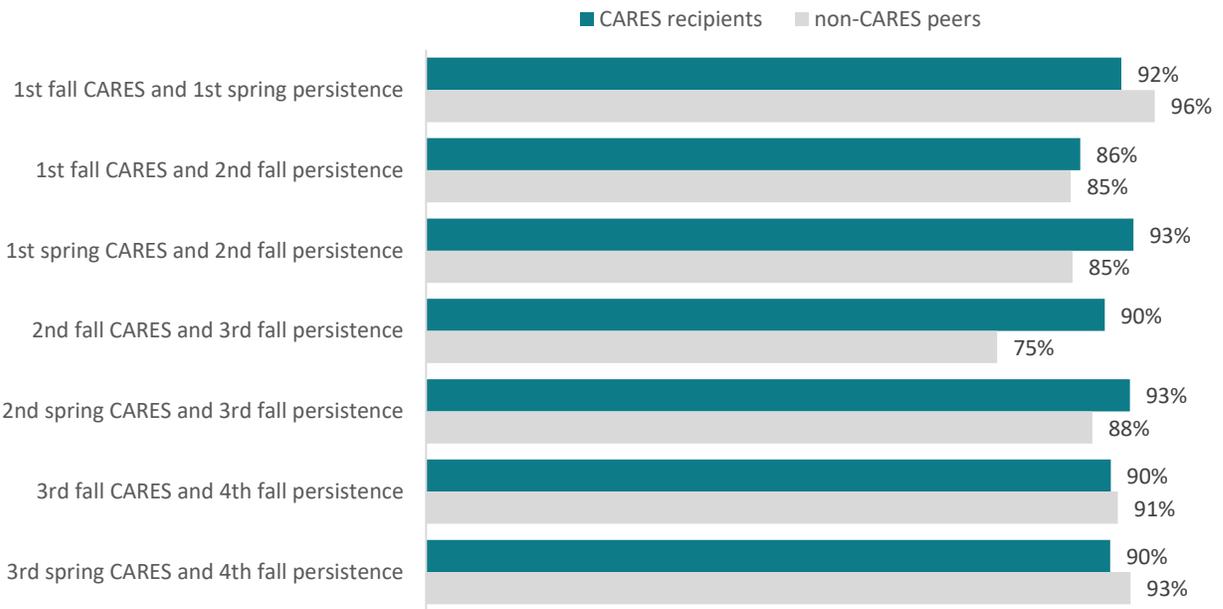
	CARES recipients (FA14 to FA21 cohorts)	FA21 cohort
Headcount	2,070	1,254
Pell recipient	49.7%	27.1%*
First generation	49.4%	28.9%
Female	50.7%	52.6%
Racially minoritized	34.9%	24.3%
Asian	5.2%	4.7%
Black or African American	6.4%	3.7%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1.1%	0.9%
Hispanic/Latinx	22.7%	14.5%
Native American or American Indian	5.0%	4.3%
White	87.0%	91.1%
Multi-race	7.1%	6.1%
STEM major	42.2%	35.6%

	CARES recipients (FA14 to FA21 cohorts)	FA21 cohort
Exploring studies major	14.0%	18.3%
Key	0.2%	0.3%
AAC	7.4%	3.1%
C4E	10.4%	4.2%

* Preliminary, subject to change after those close of the current financial aid year.

Figure 1Figure 2 and Table 4 display the persistence rates of transfer CARES recipients and a comparable group of peers, transfers students who did not receive CARES funding and whose financial aid packaging group was either Tier 1, 2, or 3.

Figure 2: Transfer Cohort Persistence and Graduation Rates by CARES Funding Status



Rates calculated for students who remained until the end of the term prior to the term being measured.

Non-CARES peers are students who did not receive CARES funding in the term prior to the term being measured and whose financial aid packaging group was either Tier 1, 2, or 3.

Table 4: Transfer Cohorts Persistence and Graduation Rates by CARES Funding Status

Transfer Cohorts	CARES recipients		non-CARES peers		Difference (CARES-non-CARES)
1st fall CARES and 1st spring persistence	572	92%	105	96%	-4.4 PP
1st fall CARES and 2nd fall persistence	205	86%	94	85%	1.2 PP
1st spring CARES and 2nd fall persistence	589	93%	150	85%	8.0 PP
2nd fall CARES and 3rd fall persistence	231	90%	70	75%	14.2 PP
2nd spring CARES and 3rd fall persistence	607	93%	174	88%	5.0 PP
3rd fall CARES and 4th fall persistence	187	90%	415	91%	-1.0 PP
3rd spring CARES and 4th fall persistence	371	90%	157	93%	-2.7 PP

Rates calculated for students who remained until the end of the term prior to the term being measured.

Non-CARES peers are students who did not receive CARES funding in the term prior to the term being measured and whose financial aid packaging group was either Tier 1, 2, or 3.

The non-CARES peers out-numbered non-CARES peers by a factor of two or higher. Over half (55%) of transfer CARES recipients received two or more distributions of funds and nearly all Tier 1, 2, and 3 students received at least one CARES award during their first three years at CSU.

Persistence rates for transfer students tended to be higher among those who received their grants in their first spring, second fall, and second spring compared to non-CARES peers. Persistence rates for CARES recipients were slightly lower than non-CARES students in the third year.

Conclusions

Overall, CARES grant awards provided thousands of students emergency funds during the pandemic. The receipt of these awards is positively associated with persistence for both FTFT and transfer students, who were more likely to hold structurally marginalized identities. While the emergency funds have run out, need has not. Continuing to have emergency funding available to in-need students can help to retain these students and close gaps student success.