



# **Hurricane Florence Emergency Scholarship Grant Program Report**

**March 15, 2019**

Submitted by the State Board of Community Colleges

2019 General Assembly

House of Representatives Appropriations Committee

Senate Committee on Appropriations/Base Budget

Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

NCDPS Office of Recovery and Resiliency

NCGA Fiscal Research Division

As Required by Section 5.3 of Session Law 2018-136

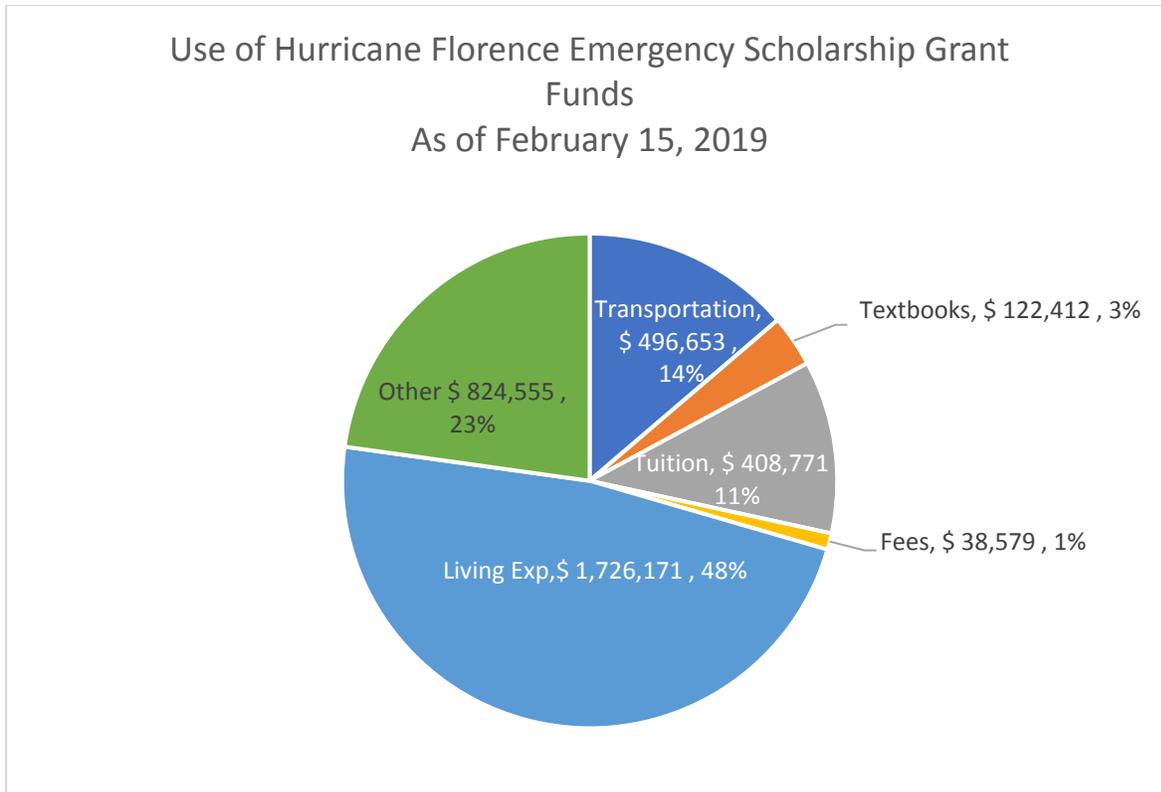
**STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES**  
**Hurricane Florence Emergency Scholarship Grant Program Report for FY 2018-19**

Session Law 2018-136 enacted *The 2018 Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Act*. Section 5.3 established the Hurricane Florence Emergency Grant Program for Postsecondary Students and allocated \$5 million in nonrecurring funds to the Community College System Office. Program funds were established to “provide emergency scholarship grants in an amount up to one thousand two hundred fifty dollars (\$1,250) per student to eligible postsecondary students who have suffered financial hardship due to the damage and destruction from Hurricane Florence. An emergency scholarship grant shall be used to mitigate the impact of Hurricane Florence on a student so that his or her postsecondary education in a North Carolina institution of higher education continues uninterrupted.” The funds were authorized to be used by recipients for any expenses that would support the student’s continued enrollment, including costs related to transportation, textbooks, tuition, fees, and living expenses. Section 5.3 outlined student eligibility criteria. In addition to these eligibility requirements, colleges were authorized to establish local policies and procedures to prioritize student applications based on their local community needs.

The State Board of Community Colleges was tasked with allocating funds to eligible colleges. In October 2018, funds were allocated to the twenty-one community colleges located in counties that were designated under a major disaster declaration by the President of the United States under the Stafford Act (P.L. 93-288) as a result of Hurricane Florence. Subsequently, funds were reallocated between colleges based on college communication about local community student needs to ensure that the grant funds were used wisely to serve the students of North Carolina’s community colleges.

The State Board of Community Colleges is required by the authorizing legislation to provide a formal report on the allocation and recipients of these grants by April 1, 2019.

Of the \$5 million in funds allocated, over \$3.6 million had been awarded as of February 15, 2019. As the chart below shows, 48% of funds awarded thus far have been to cover living expenses, while almost a fourth of the funds were used to cover other expenses such as relocation and replacements of food, clothing, and computers. Another fourth of the funds was split almost evenly between transportation and tuition costs.



Attachment A provides a breakdown by college of the allocations, number of recipients, total amounts awarded, and the remaining funds available. Nearly four thousand students received funds to assist with hurricane-related expenses which has enabled them to continue their education. Colleges continue to receive student applications and award grants. Section 5.3(c) authorizes colleges to use remaining funds presented in Attachment A for awards in subsequent semesters. The footnote in Attachment A addresses the requirement of recipients to return funds to the college if insurance or other sources offset these expenses. Only one college has reported funds returned.

This grant has helped many North Carolina students. Attachment B provides a selection of stories from community colleges about the various ways in which these funds have assisted students so that they could remain focused on completing their education and entering or advancing in North Carolina's workforce.

**NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM**      **Attachment FC 01**  
**Hurricane Florence Emergency Scholarship Grant Program Report**      **Attachment A**  
**As of February 15, 2019**

	<b>Net grant allocation</b>	<b>Number of grants awarded to students</b>	<b>Total amount of grants awarded</b>	<b>Funds remaining for awards in subsequent semesters</b>
Beaufort County CC	\$ 31,261	28	\$ 31,261	\$ -
Bladen CC	85,617	57	60,218	25,399
Brunswick CC	222,615	158	170,529	52,086
Cape Fear CC	1,126,381	1,100	1,126,381	-
Carteret CC	242,937	326	241,666	1,271
Central Carolina CC	110,540	5	3,730	106,810
Coastal Carolina CC	566,698	147	171,443	395,255
Craven CC	408,333	217	248,120	160,213
Fayetteville TCC	719,113	274	305,316	413,797
James Sprunt CC	285,969	277	258,138	27,831
Johnston CC	15,453	13	15,453	-
Lenoir CC	239,781	202	213,380	26,401
Pamlico CC	79,163	93	78,969	194
Pitt CC	166,179	365	159,076	7,103
Richmond CC	36,223	13	14,128	22,095
Robeson CC	387,529	335	344,875	42,654
Sampson CC	6,330	7	6,330	-
Sandhills CC	35,000	29	23,678	11,322
Southeastern CC	149,614	122	113,832	35,782
Wayne CC	62,137	28	18,945	43,192
Wilson CC	23,127	10	10,423	12,704
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 5,000,000</b>	<b>3,806</b>	<b>\$ 3,615,891</b>	<b>\$ 1,384,109</b>

*\*Grant dollars reported net of returned funds; Brunswick CC received \$1,250 back from a student who received insurance and FEMA reimbursements*

## NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM Hurricane Florence Emergency Scholarship Grant Program Report Student Success Stories

### **Bladen Community College**

One business administration student resided in Kelly, North Carolina, along the Cape Fear River. During the hurricane, an unexpected breach caused rapid flooding for her and her family. The family had to be removed from the home by helicopter during the night. They were relocated to Kenansville, North Carolina until other family members could travel the roads and accommodate them in their homes. Weeks later, the student was able to travel home to evaluate the damage; however, upon her return the home remained submerged in water. Nothing was salvageable. Her vehicle was lost to the flood damage as well. The student has since relocated to Elizabethtown, North Carolina for a fresh start. The Hurricane Florence Emergency Grant assisted the student with essentials for living and enabled the student to continue her education at Bladen Community College.

### **Brunswick Community College**

A student shared the following story: "I cannot express in words how grateful I am to have received the Emergency Grant- Hurricane Disaster Recovery Funds that you awarded me. I lost my apartment and my job because of Hurricane Florence. I have had to relocate and worried at times if I would be able to stay in school. These funds will help me at a critical time to stay in school without interruption. I have not received any aid from FEMA or any other resources."

### **Cape Fear Community College**

One student enrolled in Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) had to stay in hotel the during mandatory evacuation. The student used up savings for gas for car plus food while at the hotel and diapers for an entire week. The storm happened after the first day of orientation and the student needed textbooks for BLET and gas to travel to school, as the student's savings was now gone. With the grant funds provided, the student was able to stay in school and graduated from the BLET program on February 6, 2019.

### **Carteret Community College**

A phlebotomy student and single parent, who was also working as an office assistant, lost three weeks of wages due to damages caused by Hurricane Florence. Due to the loss in wages, she was unable to make the appropriate car payments. As a result of non-payment, she would soon face repossession. She was referred to the Hurricane Florence Emergency Grant at Carteret Community College where she applied and received approval. Thanks to Carteret Community College and the assistance provided, she was able to get back to work, continue attending classes and begin clinical rotations at Carteret Health Care and the Naval Hospital. She will be completing clinical rotations on 2/22/2019 and will obtain her credential in phlebotomy. She is thankful for the assistance she received and plans to continue her education at Carteret Community College.

### **Craven Community College**

A student shared the following story: "In September of 2018, my family's home was affected by Hurricane Florence. My family evacuated to Stroke of Faith Farms in Grifton, where we stayed for a little over a week until the water levels had receded enough for our vehicles to get through.

There was roughly 3-4 feet of water in our living room and about 6-10 inches throughout the rest of our home. We immediately began to gut our home in order to prevent mold and mildew. My family's church opened up the parsonage to my family and we have been living there since late September. We are currently in the process of restoring our home, and we hope to be able to move back by March or April of this year. During this process, my dad went through a transition of jobs. My dad is the sole provider for my mom, my five siblings, and myself.

When I began school at Craven Community College, I knew that I would need to apply for as many scholarships as possible to ensure that the financial burden of my education would not fall on my parents' shoulders, especially my dad's. When I learned about the grant that Craven Community College received from the state, I spoke to the student services staff to gather more information about the scholarship, they told me how I could apply, and they helped me through the process. A few days later, I was told that I was awarded the scholarship. When I told my dad that I had received this scholarship, he took a deep breath and seemed relieved to hear the news.

I was able to complete all six of my classes and finished the semester stronger than I had in prior semesters. I cannot begin to express my gratitude to Craven Community College for all of the support the college as a whole has shown me and to the State for the generosity and financial support to help me reach graduation."

### **Fayetteville Technical Community College**

One self-employed student was unable to meet with clients that had been scheduled up to two weeks in advance, due to water and power outages, as well as localized flooding in Fayetteville. Her loss of income for these two weeks was significant. The laptop she uses for coursework and online classes was damaged by a power surge during the hurricane. She suffered other losses, including damage to three of her textbooks and damage to her vehicle. She has been able to resume working, but the financial setbacks she suffered during the hurricane have been very difficult to overcome. Without grant funding, she would have had to skip a semester in order to allow more time for work. This student does not receive financial aid and did not have the resources to pay for spring classes. With the grant funding assistance, this student is on track to graduate in May with hopes of continuing to advance her education. In her words, "Thank you for everything. I'm so grateful."

### **Johnston Community College**

On December 21<sup>st</sup>, the last day the college was open before the Christmas holidays, the Financial Aid office received a call from a desperate student. She wanted badly to register for the upcoming semester but was very low on funds. As she began to tell me her story, I could tell she was trying her best to hold in the tears. This student was not eligible for any other financial aid but it was a struggle even before the hurricane hit for her to pay for everything on her own. She was accustomed to taking advantage of our payment plan option but was now having trouble even coming up with the down payment. She told me how her mother was having some health issues but lived quite a distance away in Halifax County. The student had to travel to her mom's house to check on her and ready the house for the hurricane. Then she had to come back to check on things at her own house. Then the hurricane hit and she had to travel back to her Mom's. At her Mom's house, the power went out and they lost all the food. When she went back to her home, she found the same scenario. She had to use her school money for groceries and gas.

From this conversation, I realized that she may be eligible for the Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery grant. I urged her to apply so she could continue her studies. Her request was approved. When she came to the Cashier office to pick up her check she was crying tears of joy. You see, her mom's health

had declined more and she had passed away. So for this student, being able to continue working towards her degree was the only bright spot in her life. She had incurred funeral expenses and was feeling so overwhelmed. She told us this grant was an answer to prayer and was the only reason she was able to enroll for the Spring 2019 semester.

### **Coastal Carolina Community College**

An Associate of Arts degree student at Coastal Carolina Community College suffered devastating losses due to the effects of Hurricane Florence. On September 11, 2018, with a mandatory evacuation in Onslow County, this single parent of two small children, responsibly decided to evacuate to a safer location in the home of a close friend.

Five days later, she returned home to a devastating scene: a home that was severely flooded, mold rapidly spreading throughout her living quarters, and personal belongings essentially destroyed.

While waiting for insurance adjusters, she cleared out space among the ruins to ensure the children had a roof over their heads. Unfortunately, the City of Jacksonville identified the home as uninhabitable, and she and her children subsequently lived in a tent under the carport.

A month later, the insurance adjuster denied her insurance claim due to the lack of flood insurance. The North Carolina Legislature's Hurricane Relief Fund provided her with the resources to make a deposit on a rental in Onslow County. As a result, she remained enrolled and completed fall semester.

When asked, she attributed her success to the "generosity of others," particularly the relief funding she received from the North Carolina Hurricane Relief Fund.

### **Richmond Community College**

The Hurricane Florence Emergency Grant funding allowed a Richmond Community College student to remain enrolled in school after receiving tremendous and devastating damage from Hurricane Florence. The student lives in an area that was severely impacted by flooding. The student's home and yard were both damaged. Her yard flooded to the point her septic tank was not flowing properly and sewage was leaking into her yard. She also had major roof damage that caused flooding inside her home. Half of the home was not livable, so her children had to stay with family members, while the student and her husband remained in the home. Homeowner's insurance covered the roof and home repairs but would not cover the yard and septic damage. Unfortunately, the student did not have flood insurance. She first applied for the Hurricane Florence Grant in the Fall 2018 semester. Those funds allowed her to replace the septic tank system so the children could return home. She applied for the Hurricane Florence Emergency Grant again in the Spring 2019 semester. Those funds allowed her to correct the drainage problem in her yard. The student was very grateful and appreciative for the Hurricane Florence Emergency Grant and Richmond Community College. Without the availability of this funding, this student would have had to withdraw from school and return to work to secure the funds to make the necessary repairs. This student will be graduating in May 2019 with an Associate Degree in Nursing.

### **Robeson Community College**

A student was excited to pursue a nursing career but was a little apprehensive to do so. This anxiety was not only attributed to the rigor of a nursing program but also because she would be a non-traditional student and single mother of two children. Nevertheless, she did not let her doubts deter her. She

applied and subsequently enrolled in the Practical Nursing Program at Robeson Community College. She is currently a second-year student in the program.

In September 2018, Robeson County was impacted by yet another hurricane. Hurricane Florence attacked an area that was still trying to recover from the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew. She and her children had lost everything; housing, transportation, clothes, and food. She had to immediately establish an action plan for her and her family. Thankfully, they were able to relocate to her brother's home. Although this was a devastating time, she was also concerned about her education. She thought that it would have to be halted because of her circumstance but found it difficult to accept. She remained steadfast and determined that her life would not be unhinged. She not only continued to attend church regularly but also continued to come to school.

The student was awarded funding assistance through the Hurricane Florence Emergency Grant fund. This financial support was extremely helpful to her. It could not possibly replace all that was lost but it greatly enabled her to cover needed living expenses. It also gave her hope and the will to continue her academic pursuits.

### **Sandhills Community College**

One student lost her home, vehicle, and all belongings as a result of Hurricane Florence. Shortly after the hurricane hit, she found a new apartment for her family, but she did not have enough funds to cover both the housing and utilities deposits. The emergency funding was able to assist with both a past due electric bill that also resulted from the hurricane and the utility deposit needed for her new home. She completed the fall semester and is on track to graduate at the end of this semester, Spring 2019.

### **Wilson Community College**

A nursing student who lives in La Grange, North Carolina, and commutes to Wilson was impacted by Hurricane Florence. She is enrolled in the Associate Degree of Nursing program at Wilson Community College. She has limited financial aid, and she was once using her personal savings to assist with all expenses of the program. Because of classes, coursework, and clinicals, she is unable to work full time.

When Hurricane Florence struck eastern North Carolina, her home was flooded, and she was unable to leave it for four days. Her home is not located in a designated flood zone, and therefore she did not have flood insurance. She had to use her personal savings to move her family out of the damaged home.

The Hurricane Florence Emergency Grant allowed her to continue her studies. The funds helped her with living expenses and transportation during the fall semester. She completed the fall 2018 semester and returned for the spring 2019 semester.