

## Resources for Students Affected by COVID19

### Financial Aid

- My [Scholly Relief Fund](#): \$200 scholarships for students experiencing financial hardship due to the pandemic.

- [TRIO Grants](#): Open to eligible Pell Grant recipients.

-Federal Loans: Students who have taken out federal loans will have a 60-day freeze on interest, retroactive to March 13, 2020. If they are currently paying back loans, they are still responsible for making payments. They can, of course, request an economic hardship deferment.

- VSAC Grants: If students' or their families' income has changed, they can appeal their 2020-2021 VSAC grant award decisions. They should e-mail [grants@vsac.org](mailto:grants@vsac.org) with a brief explanation of their loss of income – i.e. parent or student's job loss, furlough, loss of work-study position. They should explain how their income has decreased since 2018 and ask to have their VSAC grant application reevaluated.

- VSAC Loans: VSAC Loan borrowers can suspend interest and principal payments for up to three months if they apply for a financial hardship deferment. They should call 1-800-642-3177 to discuss their options with a VSAC counselor.

- Veterans' Benefit: Veterans who are pursuing higher education will still be able to use their G.I. Bill and VA benefits as usual. On March 21<sup>st</sup>, Congress and the White House approved legislation that allows veterans to use funds approved for in-person classes for online learning so that they can complete their coursework for the spring semester.

[Fastweb](#): This site allows students to search for private scholarships and offers updates about COVID19's effects on financial aid.

General Financial Aid: If students have not already done so, they should complete a [FAFSA](#) for the 2020-2021 academic year. Vermont residents should visit [VSAC.org](http://VSAC.org) for information about scholarships, grants, and loans.

### Unemployment

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance: If students or their families have been lost wages due to COVID-19, they may be eligible for unemployment assistance through their [state](#).

### Housing and Storage

- Foster Care: Former foster care recipients should contact [Vermont Youth Development Program](#) about housing options.

- Rent: Students who have trouble paying rent should contact their landlord for an extension. Vermonters who need help meeting housing costs can apply for general assistance at their local [Department of Children and Families office](#).
- Emergency Housing: All students in need of emergency housing should call 211.
- Storage: [U-Haul](#) is offering 30 days free storage to students who were compelled to vacate their dorm rooms quickly. To qualify for this offer, students must present a valid college ID. This offer is subject to availability.

## **Food**

- The [Vermont Foodbank](#) maintains a searchable list of food shelves throughout the state. Be sure to call the food shelf before visiting as hours and policies may have changed. Students need not be Vermont residents to use food shelves.
- Apply for 3Squares Vermont benefits (formerly known as food stamps) through the [Vermont Department for Children and Families' website](#).

## **Internet Connection**

- Wi-Fi Hotspots: The Vermont Department of Public Service maintains a list of Wi-Fi hotspots around the state. All of these can be accessed from a parked vehicle.
- Comcast is offering two months of free internet service to TRIO students in its service area. After the first two months, the service will be available at \$9.95 per month, and participants will be able to cancel the service at any time. This service also includes subsidized computers and free digital literacy training. Students may apply at <https://www.internetessentials.com/>. Applicants should enter the promo code TRIO2020, and they should identify their TRIO program.
- [Spectrum](#) is offering low-cost internet to households meeting certain criteria.
- Consolidated Communications is offering two months free internet. Call 1-855-399-3084 and use the promo code "Two Months Free."

## **Mental Health**

Castleton's Wellness Center counselors continue to meet with Castleton students via phone and Zoom appointments. Please e-mail [wellness@castleton.edu](mailto:wellness@castleton.edu) to schedule an appointment.

The [Wellness Center](#) also maintains a list of mental health resources.

## Standardized Testing

### -GRE

- ETS is allowing most students [to take the GRE General Test on their home computers](#). They must be approved to register for home-testing options.
- If a scheduled test is postponed or rescheduled, ETS is waiving all rescheduling fees.
- If students need to request [disability accommodations](#), they can do so electronically via their ETS account.
- Test takers should submit test fee reduction requests electronically. (TRIO-eligible students may qualify for a GRE test fee reduction. Email [Doe Dahm](#) (TRIO SSS) or [Amanda Richardson](#) (McNair) for more information.)
- As always, ETS offers free GRE preparations materials, including [two practice tests](#).

### -Praxis

- ETS has waived fees for rescheduling the Praxis.
- ETS offers [free Praxis preparation materials](#), including practice tests.
- If students need to request disability accommodations, they should do so electronically via their [Praxis account](#).



Castleton

Student Support Services

McNair Scholars

 Castleton University