

# 2021 Annual Report Financial Aid and Scholarships

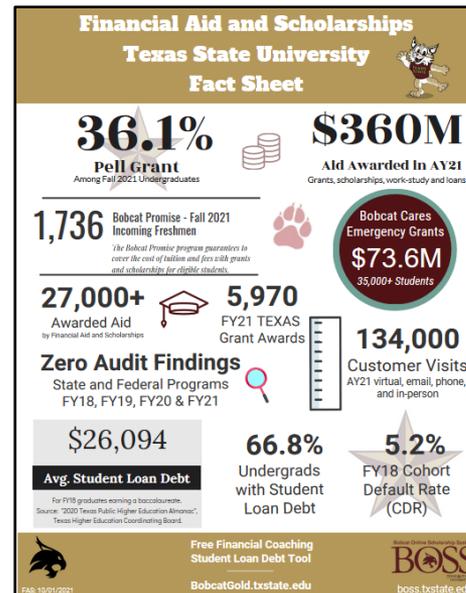
For the 2020-2021 Award Year



*The rising STAR of Texas*

# Purpose

An overview of the work accomplished by Financial Aid and Scholarships during the 2020-2021 academic year.



# Executive Summary

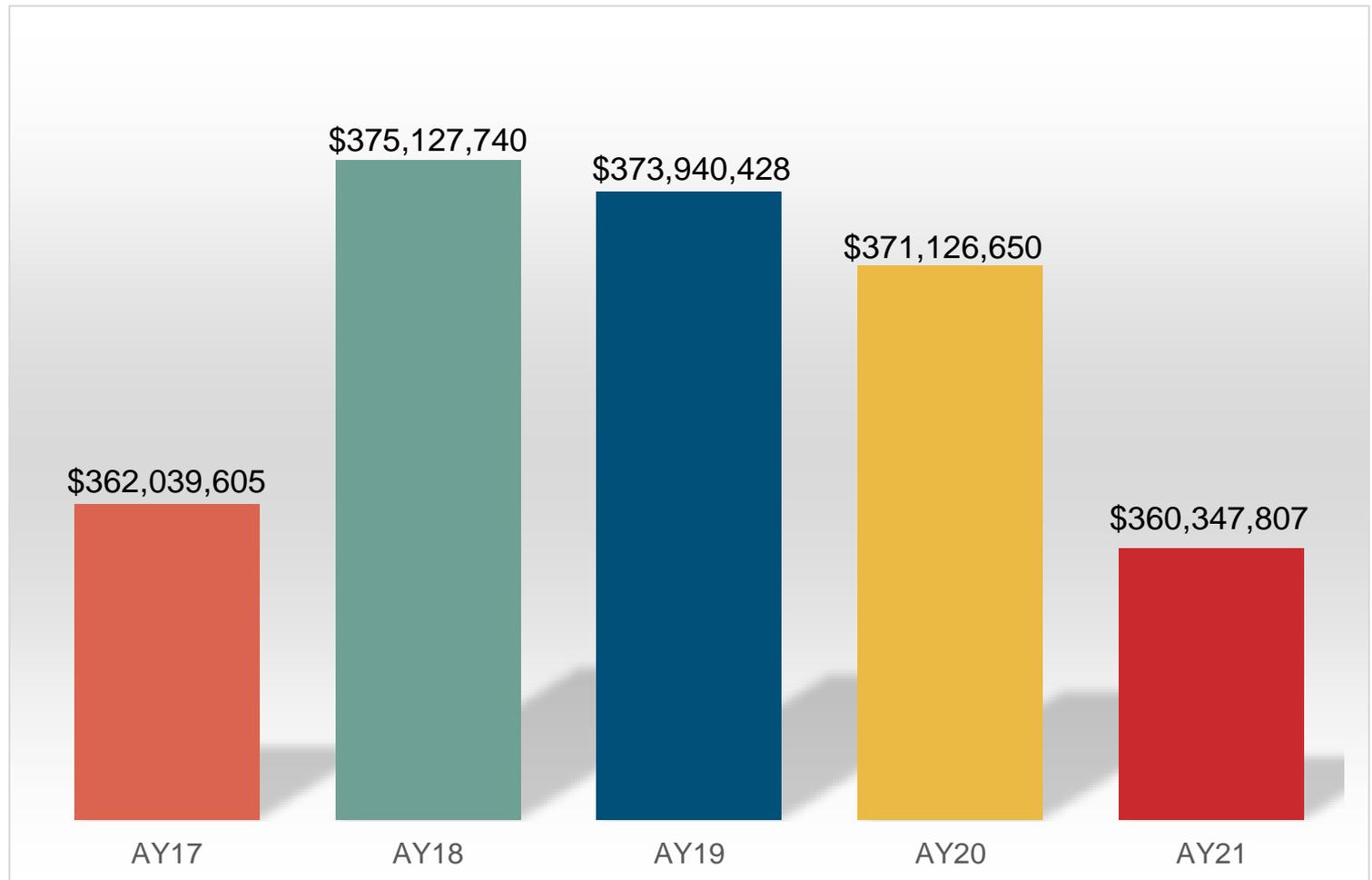
- Processed over 75,000 financial aid applications.
- Disbursed \$360.3 million in standard aid to 27,000+ students and their parents; a \$10.7 million (-2.9%) decrease from last year.
- Administered an additional \$17.5 million in Bobcat Cares Emergency Grant funds.
- Increased the AGI threshold for the Bobcat Promise program from \$35,000 to \$50,000.
- Incoming customer service contacts decreased by 11,091 (-7.6%) from 145,797 (FY20) to 134,706 (FY21).
- No adverse findings were identified in two separate audits; federal and state.

**\$360M**  
**Aid Awarded in AY21**  
Grants, scholarships, work-study and loans

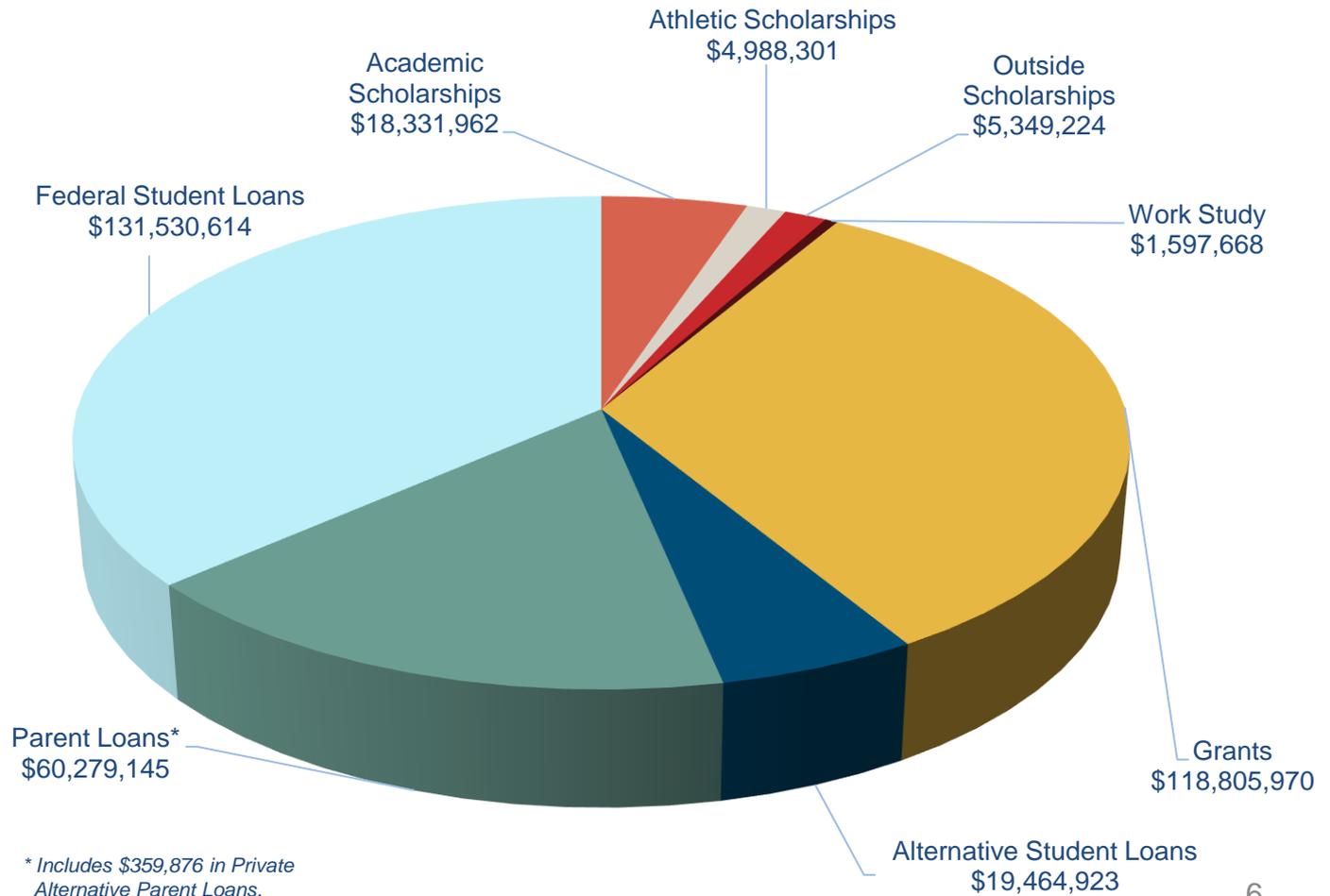
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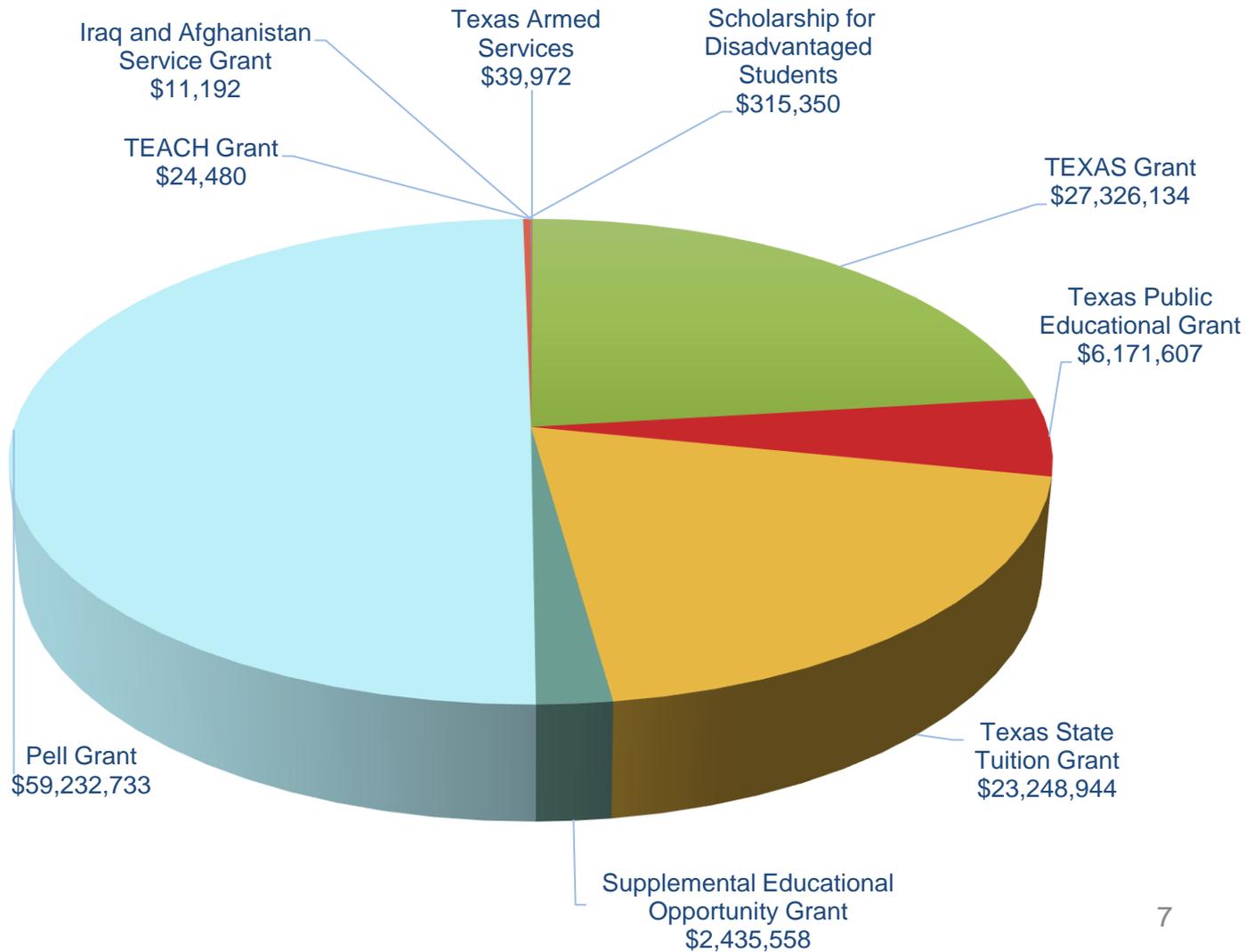
# Aid Disbursed by Financial Aid and Scholarships



# 2020-2021 Aid Disbursed by Category

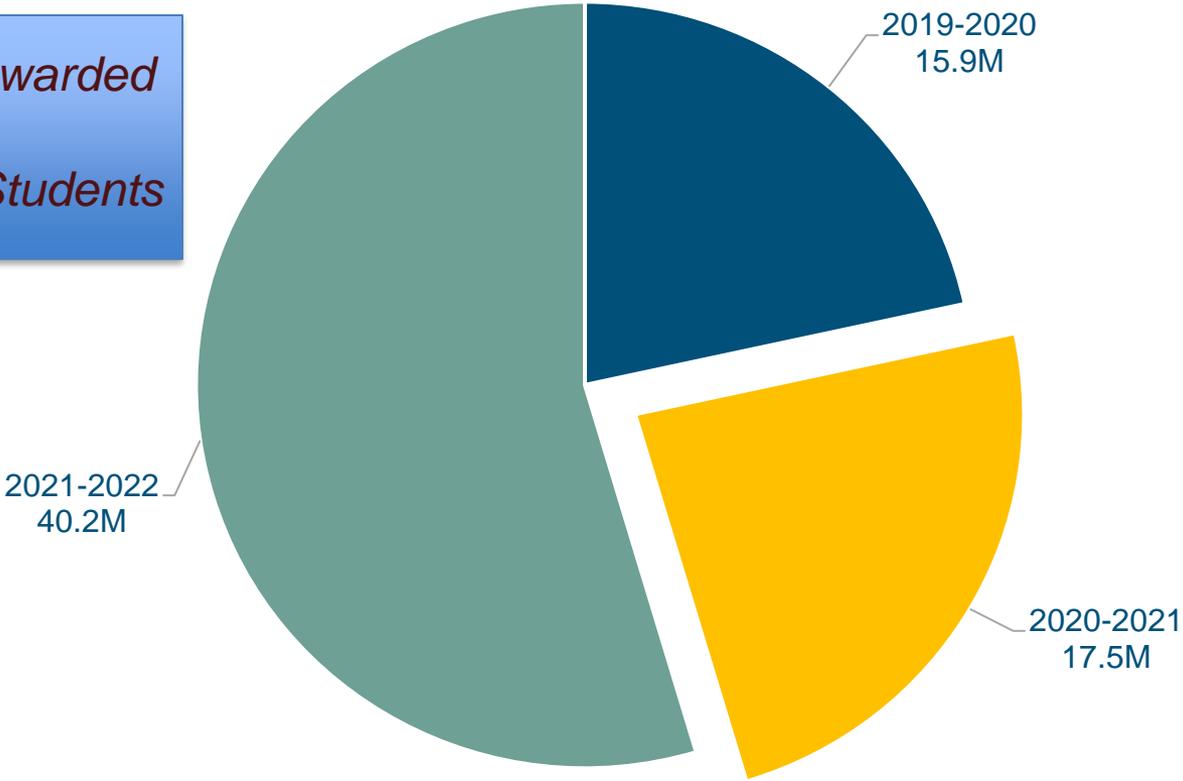


# 2020-2021 Grant Aid Disbursed by Type



# Bobcat Cares Emergency Grant (HEERF and GEER)

*\$73.6M Awarded*  
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*35,000+ Students*



# Pandemic-Related Activities

1. Awarded **\$14.6 million** in spring and summer 2021 federally-funded HEERF emergency grants for students affected by the pandemic.
2. Disbursed **\$2.9 million** in fall 2020 emergency grants through monies provided by the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund.
3. Awarded **\$2.8 million** in additional TEXAS Grant awards funded through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund.
4. Awarded \$353,000 in Bobcats-2-Bobcats Scholarships for students who were at risk of not matriculating for fall due to the hardships imposed by COVID.
5. Conducted outreach to more than 18,000 students about their potential eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.
6. Conducted outreach to students about the potential for increased aid packages via a special circumstances form.

# Improvements in Customer Service

1. **Earliest Awarding Ever!** Awarded aid to incoming freshmen in December of 2020 for the upcoming 2021-2022 academic year.
2. **Online Form Submission!** Converted all federal verification and related forms (over 100 per academic year) to the Dynamic Forms platform that allows students and parents to complete and electronically sign the forms online.
3. **Verification Assistance** – Undertook early and sustained outbound calling campaigns to help high-risk students complete high-difficulty federal verification scenarios (e.g., amended returns, marital filing status, etc.).
4. **More Scholarships in BOSS** – Collaborated with remaining academic departments to transition their scholarships to the Bobcat Online Scholarship System (BOSS) for the upcoming academic year.



# Compliance Topics

1. **Fourth Consecutive Year!** No adverse findings were identified in the FY20 federal financial assistance cluster (A-133) audit conducted by the State Auditor's Office.
2. No adverse findings were identified with our administration of the FY20 direct-to-student CARES Act (HEERF I) monies in the audit performed by the State Auditor's Office.

*Compliance is the office's primary guiding business principle, and related work helps prevent financial risks for the university and loss of aid for students.*



# Customer Service Data

## Virtual Appointment Bookings

- 6,463 virtual bookings were made in FY21.

## Email Contacts

- Email volume increased by 1,790 (4.9%) from 36,732 (FY20) to 38,522 (FY21).

## Call Center

- Call volume decreased by 9,944 (-10.7%) from 92,755 (FY20) to 82,811 (FY21).
- Average caller wait time was 13:25—an increase of 00:41 (5.4%) compared with the FY20 wait time of 12:44.

## Customer Service Lobby

- Walk-in volume decreased by 9,400 (-57.6%) from 16,310 (FY20) to 6,910 (FY21).
- Average guest wait time was 4:39—a decrease of 2:02 (-30.4%) compared with the FY20 wait time of 6:41.

# Future Objectives and Challenges

1. Implement a **Customer Service Ticketing System** that will unify incoming omni-channel customer contacts to facilitate more accurate and timely responses by more effectively leveraging existing staff.
2. Work with IT to **freeze student-level aid data**, which will allow for more incisive and comparative analysis of aid data to better inform aid administration (e.g., aid packaging, student interventions, communications, etc.).
3. Secure funding for a **Financial Education Center** to ensure students have the knowledge, resources and confidence to become financially successful while enrolled (as well as after graduation), thus, improving their likely persistence to graduation.
4. Successfully train other offices on the use of Dynamic Forms to help streamline departments' online form submission processes.
5. Continue to work with stakeholders to facilitate:
  - changes regarding pre-major/pre-programs and Title IV eligibility
  - the timely and accurate reporting and documenting of students' beginning attendance in courses.