

FSA Training Conference

Speaker Bio

Session(s): BO2. Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (CARES, CRRSAA, & ARP)

Karen Epps

*Director, Higher Education Emergency Response Unit (ERU)
Higher Education Programs, Office of Postsecondary Education
U.S. Department of Education*

Karen is the Director of the Higher Education Emergency Response Unit (ERU) established in response to the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*. She is responsible for the implementation, distribution, and oversight of more than \$75 billion available to students and institutions of higher education through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds, affectionately referred to as HEERF. HEERF encompasses the \$14 billion for CARES, the \$21.2 billion for the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act, 2021 (CRRSAA)* and the \$39.6 billion for the *American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act*.



Karen previously worked with the Strengthening Institutions Program and Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Predominantly Black Institutions Divisions within the Higher Education Programs, where she administered and managed the federal funds awarded to institutions of higher education to support programs and projects designed to strengthen the academic resources, student services and physical facilities. Her tenure within the Office of Postsecondary Education commenced with a special assignment with the TRIO Upward Bound and Educational Opportunity Centers.

Karen has worked with the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities as a Senior Program Manager. She began her career with the U.S. Department of Education in Federal Student Aid, where she was a respected and highly sought-after Trainer, Presenter, and Workshop Facilitator. Prior to joining the Department, Karen worked with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Karen holds her B.S. in Business Administration from Alabama A. & M. University and an MBA from Bowie State University.