



Questions from the 4.13.2020 Federal Programs Webinar on the ESSA CARES Act

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Q. Will the PowerPoint be available and will the webinar be recorded? Where can I find these?

A. The Powerpoint and recorded webinar are currently being made accessible. As soon as possible, they will be available at <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/resources-for-schools/> in the Federal Programs section. Contact Michelle at mperreira@sde.idaho.gov if you would like either one of these before they get posted.
2. Q. When will the state application be available to apply for funds?

A. CARES Act funds are not yet available. States are waiting for details and a timeline/application from the U.S. Department of Education (US ED). US ED has until April 26th to get this information to states.
3. Q. Is IRI testing optional for LEAs?

A. The IRI is not available at home. Unless schools are meeting in person, there is no way to administer the IRI. The Assessment and Accountability Department is working on making the assessment available as a progress monitoring tool - but that is still pending a decision by Governor Little to waive IRI reporting requirements.
4. Q. Did I understand you correctly that schools that are targeted schools but that qualify for whole school, will not be able to switch to whole school during the 2020-2021 school year?

A. A school that completes a schoolwide plan and is officially recognized with an "approval" letter from the SDE, Title I-A Coordinator, may begin operating immediately as schoolwide. If the school is under 40% low-income, the LEA must first complete a waiver. For more information, please contact Brandy at bdiazscott@sde.idaho.gov.
5. Q. One of our charters wanted to apply for Title funds for the upcoming year, but declined them last year.

A. All LEA Charters were notified in January with the process for applying for federal program funds. A *Certification of Economic Disadvantaged Student Count* form was part of the notification with instructions to complete and submit the form by March 18 if the LEA Charter thought it would be interested in ESSA federal funds for 2020-2021. Please contact Alexandra at amccann@sde.idaho.gov or Michelle Clement Taylor at mtaylor@sde.idaho.gov with questions.
6. Q. How can LEAs that did not receive Title I-A funds in 2019-2020 be supported with the CARES Act funds?

A. Superintendent Ybarra is committed to supporting all LEAs through this COVID-19 crisis. There are two areas in the CARES Act where there is possible support for LEAs that did not receive a Title I-A allocation in 2019-2020:
 1. Sec. 18002(c)(1), the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund "may be used to (1) provide emergency support through grants to local educational agencies that the State educational agency deems have been most significantly impacted by coronavirus to support the ability of such LEAs to continue to provide educational services to their students and support...the local educational agency."
And



2. Sec. 18003(e) State funding from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund "...for emergency needs as determined by the state educational agency to address issues responding to coronavirus, which may be addressed through the use of grants or contracts.
The SDE will be in touch with these LEAs as soon as there is more information.

TIME AND EFFORT

Q. Can you further explain Time and Effort requirements when employees are still being paid during the closure?

A. Time and effort records are required for any employee paid with federal funds. This could be a personnel activity report, a semi-annual certification, a time card, etc. A federally funded employee may continue to be paid with federal funds during the COVID-19 closure as long as the LEA has a policy that indicates consistent application for using state funds and federal funds for compensation under unexpected or extraordinary circumstances. If the employee is working during the closure, time and effort records should be completed as usual. If the employee is unable to work because of the closure, include verbiage on the time and effort record similar to: *"Due to COVID-19 and the Stay at home order, and consistent with the district's policy on closures, employee is being paid according to their regular scheduled hours."*

EQUITABLE SERVICES

Q. Private schools are asking about how they access Relief Funds. Is that something that comes through LEAs to private schools?

A. Yes, the CARES Act requires LEAs to provide equitable services consultation to the private schools in the same manner as equitable services are provided in Title I-A. LEAs will consult with private schools and provide services based on the consultation and needs assessment. The LEA retains control of the funds. Funds for equitable services never go directly to the private school. We are waiting for specific guidance from the US ED related to the consultation and the schools that are eligible.

Note from Michelle Clement Taylor: For those of you getting questions from private schools... they are eligible for the small business loans and other funding that is part of the CARES Act, but that is separate from the funding coming from the relief funds.

FUND ALLOCATION AND USE OF FUNDS

1 Q. What is the obligation period for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds?

A. ESSERF are considered 2019-2020 funds and must be obligated by September 30, 2021. Idaho will apply for a Tydings Amendment to extend these funds an additional year, if that is an option from the US ED.

2 Q. Will you be establishing a special fund to account for these dollars?

A. Yes. The fund number for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund is 252.

3 Q. How will we receive these relief funds? Through the GRA?

A. Yes. We anticipate that the ESSERF allocations will be distributed through the GRA system on a reimbursement basis. These funds will not be released all at once to LEAs.

4 Q. Are we able to buy computers with the funds?



A. Yes. Using ESSERF to purchase technology, including hardware, software, and connectivity for students to support educational interaction is an allowable activity. Additionally, Idaho's waiver to lift the Title IV-A 15% technology cap was approved, so LEAs with a Title IV-A allocation may purchase computers as allowable under Title IV-A.

5. Q. Will we need to run all expenditures through Fund 251? Is the CARES Act \$\$ to be run through the Title 1A fund?

A. NO. The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSERF) are not Title I-A funds. The fund number for ESSERF will be 252.

6. Q. If we use the Relief Funds for maintaining staff currently funded in the General Fund how will that affect MOE for Title and IDEA funds?

A. The intent of the CARES Act funds is to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus. The intent is not to backfill state revenue shortages. ESSA Federal program funds may be used to continue to pay federally funded staff during the COVID-19 stay home order when there is an LEA policy indicating consistent application in using state funds for state funded employees and federal funds for federally funded employees. The CARES Act, ESSER Funds and the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Funds (GEERF), are subject to maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements. LEAs should take MOE in consideration with their budget decisions.

7. Q. I am a little confused by the restrictions, because I thought the CARES Act funds were supposed to help us with the 1% that the state is holding back - but much of the money is connected to areas that are already covered.

A. The intent of the CARES Act funds is to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus. The intent is not to backfill state revenue shortages. MOE requirements apply to the CARES Act and LEAs should take this into consideration with their budget decisions. The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund Use of Funds document is located at <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/resources-for-schools/> under the Federal Programs section.

8. Q. Since IDEA is allowable can we apply the entire amount we receive to IDEA expenses? Does that impact MOE at all if I just took the district's CARES Act allocation and applied it against general fund Special Services expenses? If I can't do that, what is the guidance around the allowability of costs based on principal needs in the building, and specifically staffing. I could easily argue the holdback will affect staffing and thus to ensure principals have all of their staff in place I need to use the stimulus dollars to keep general fund staff whole.

A. Activities authorized under IDEA are allowable as part of the ESSERF. If the LEA shifts its expenditures from general fund to fund number 252 (which will be the fund number for ESSERF), the LEA will most likely fail MOE. LEAs should take MOE into consideration as budget decisions are made. Using ESSERF to provide principals with resources to address school needs to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus are allowable. The intent of these funds is not to backfill state revenue shortfalls.



CARRYOVER

1. Q. Where do we get the waiver form/application to request ESSA federal program carryover for 2019-2020? Have carryover limits for IV and II been waived? Can Title I-A carryover exceed 15% for 2019-2020?

A. All reasonable requests to carryover 2019-2020 funds for any of the ESSA federal programs will be approved. This includes Title I-A even if the LEA has previously in the last three years requested a carryover waiver. Make the carryover request through the "Comments" section of the 2020-2021 CFSGA for the specific program. Include the amount and the reason, i.e. "due to school closure because of the COVID-19 stay home order". Idaho's waiver for the 15% Title I-A carryover limitation more than once every three years for 2019-2020 has been approved. To request carryover for school improvement funds, make a note in the district comments section of the SWIP (this is only for school improvement funds for CSI schools).

2. Q. Can CARES Act money be carried over... We understand Title I can be carried over but what about CARES Act funds?

A. We are researching this question.

Please visit <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/federal-programs/staff.html> for staff contact information.

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This document is posted at <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/resources-for-schools/> under the Federal Programs section.