



Understanding ESSER Funding



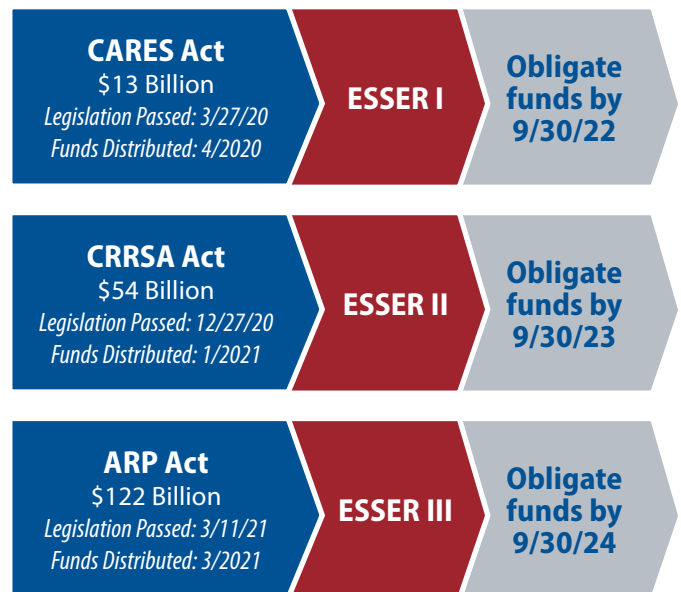
What Are ESSER Funds?

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) program

includes federal aid that flows to states to support schools and districts under Title IA of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Under ESSER, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) awarded grants to state education agencies so that they could provide emergency relief funds to local education agencies (LEAs) to address COVID-19's impact on elementary and secondary schools across the country.

The ESSER program has three funding streams because it is written in three different pieces of federal legislation, as displayed in the graphic on the right. For each funding stream, districts have 1 year after the previous year to obligate their funds or finalize awards to contractual partners.

Streams of ESSER Funds



To obligate funds: Finalize awards to contractual partner(s).

Glossary of Acronyms and Initialisms

ARP: American Rescue Plan

CARES: Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security

CRRSA: Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations

ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act

ESSER: Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

LEA: Local Education Agency

OESE: Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

USED: U.S. Department of Education

Spending ESSER Funds

Once ESSER funds are obligated or assigned, they can be used for costs dating back to March 13, 2020, the date when many schools and districts closed their doors due to the pandemic. Depending on which ESSER stream your district is using, you can spend ESSER funds on various supports for your students, educators, and families.

All ESSER Funds (I, II, III) Can Be Used for...

- Conducting any activity authorized by the ESEA, IDEA, Adult Education & Family Literacy Act, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, or McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- Coordinating preparedness and response efforts of LEAs with public health departments and other relevant agencies
- Providing necessary resources to school leaders to meet the needs of their school(s)
- Performing activities that address unique needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, students of color, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youths
- Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve preparedness and response efforts of LEAs
- Conducting professional development/training for staff regarding sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases
- Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean facilities within LEAs
- Preparing and coordinating during long-term closures (e.g., how to provide meals and technology to students)
- Purchasing educational technology—hardware, software, connectivity—for students served by LEAs
- Providing mental health services and supports
- Preparing and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental after-school programs
- Conducting any other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation and continuity of services of LEAs.

ESSER II and III Funds Also Can Be Used for...

- Addressing learning recovery among students—including students from low-income families, students with disabilities, English learners, and students of color
- Repairing and improving school facilities to enable operation of schools to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards
- Inspecting, testing, maintaining, repairing, replacing, and/or upgrading items to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities.

AND Districts Must Use at Least...

20%

of Their **ESSER III** Funds to **Address Learning Recovery**

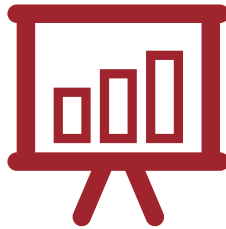
Strategic Investments with ESSER Funds

The pandemic school year may have some individuals looking for quick fixes in education, but RTI International knows that making lasting change requires a systems-level, long-term approach to improvement. Here are some ways we can help.



Learning Recovery

Recovering from the pandemic means that students and educators must have additional support to address social, emotional, and academic needs.



Strategic Planning

School and district stakeholders have to be on the same page with recovery efforts—a strong plan can drive a shared vision to recovery.



Capacity Building

Even after funding is gone, your staff members can meet the needs of every student and have the confidence to respond to new challenges.

Areas of Expertise

The RTI Center for Education Services partners with educators to promote thriving learning environments that facilitate success for every student. We empower educators to design, plan, and implement action steps to better address challenges—especially while in pandemic recovery.

- School turnaround
- Project-based learning
- Module/coursework development
- Competency-based education
- High-quality teaching and learning
- Implementation planning
- Leadership development
- Communities of practice
- Equity in education
- Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
- Human capital strategies
- Career and technical education
- Social-emotional learning
- Instructional coaching
- Literacy

If you have any questions about the RTI Center for Education Services and the support we can provide, please contact educationservices@rti.org.

Resources

- [2020–21 COVID-19 Stimulus: Navigating Federal Funding—Knowledge Guide \(SMART\)](#)
- [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021: Analysis of Funding for Education, Children, and Families \(Bellwether Education Partners\)](#)
- [COVID Relief Playbook \(FutureEd\)](#)
- [Department of Education Announces American Rescue Plan Funds for All 50 States, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia to Help Schools Reopen \(USED\)](#)
- [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund \(OESE\)](#)
- [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund Tracker \(National Conference of State Legislatures\)](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund \(ESSER Fund\) \(OESE\)](#)
- [The American Rescue Plan: What's In It for K-12 Schools? \(Education Commission of the States\)](#)
- [What Educators Need to Know About ESSER COVID-19 Relief Funds \(ASCD\)](#)

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