



STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: May 24, 2021

To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School, Renaissance School Project Leads

Route To: ESEA Directors, Directors of Special Education, School Business Administrators, Staff involved with ESSER Funds

From: Kathy Ehling, Acting Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services

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American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Funds Application and Update

As a part of the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) commitment to providing regular ARP ESSER updates to local educational agencies (LEAs), today the NJDOE is announcing the release of the following:

1. The NJDOE's draft ARP ESSER State Plan for public comment (Deadline: June 3, 2021)
2. The NJDOE's LEA Safe Return Plan Template (Deadline: June 24, 2021)
3. ARP ESSER allocations and grant application (Deadline: November 24, 2021)

Background

The ARP Act provides an additional \$122 billion in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) to States and school districts to help safely reopen, sustain the safe operation of schools, and address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the nation's students. To provide guidance for school districts on the allowable uses and the differences between the three ESSER funds, the NJDOE created an [ESSER Fact Sheet](#).

Allocations

The ARP ESSER allocations for eligible LEAs are now available on the [ARP ESSER website](#). The allocations announced today include only those subgrants federally required to be made to LEAs based on the LEA's share of funds received under Title I, Part A in the 2020-2021 school year. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) structured the release of ARP ESSER funds such that LEAs will first be provided access to two-thirds (2/3) of their ARP ESSER Fund awards and will gain access to the remaining one-third (1/3) of the allocation after the USDE approves the NJDOE's ARP ESSER State Plan. As detailed below, today the NJDOE is making available for public comment its ARP ESSER State Plan, which includes its proposal for additional projects or subgrants funded by the ARP ESSER State set-aside.

ARP ESSER grant applications for eligible LEAs are now available through the [Electronic Web Enabled Grant \(EWEG\)](#) system. **The deadline to submit an application is November 24, 2021.** ARP ESSER funds are available for obligation beginning May 24, 2021; LEAs may submit applications any time before November 24 and begin requesting reimbursement upon submission of a substantially approvable application. Please note that, as described above, at this time the application will provide access to 2/3 of the total amount of those subgrants federally required to be made to LEAs based on the LEA's share of funds received under Title I, Part A in the 2020-2021 school year. As additional ARP ESSER funds become available, LEAs will be able to access those funds via the same application.

LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

As detailed in the NJDOE's May 12, 2021 [broadcast memo](#), section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA that receives ARP ESSER funds to develop and make publicly available on its website, not later than 30 days after receiving ARP ESSER funds, a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all schools (Safe Return Plan). To assist LEAs with the development of their Safe Return Plans, the NJDOE has released a template for Safe Return Plans on its NJDOE ARP ESSER [webpage](#). The template incorporates the federally required components of the Safe Return Plan as outlined in the ARP statute and federal regulations. The questions in the template will be included in the ARP ESSER Fund application in EWEG, where LEAs will submit their Safe Return Plans to the NJDOE. LEAs must seek public comment on their Safe Return Plans and take those comments into account when finalizing the Safe Return Plan. The final plan must be submitted to the NJDOE via [EWEG](#) and posted on the LEA's website by **June 24, 2021**.

NJDOE Seeking Public Comment on ARP ESSER State Plan

As described in the NJDOE's April 28, 2021 [broadcast](#), the NJDOE has now published the ARP ESSER State Plan on its website. The complete draft plan and a summary may be found on the NJDOE's ARP ESSER website. Among other provisions, the plan details the NJDOE's draft proposal for additional projects or subgrants funded by the ARP ESSER State set-aside. Public comment is encouraged and must be submitted via email to ARPPlan@doe.nj.gov by **June 3, 2021**. In accordance with ARP ESSER requirements, the NJDOE must submit the plan to the USDE by June 7, 2021.

If you have questions regarding the ARP ESSER grant application process, please contact ESSER@doe.nj.gov. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

c: Members, State Board of Education
Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D., Acting Commissioner of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group