

PART C: USES OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EMERGENCY RELIEF FUNDS

Section 18003 of Division B of the CARES Act provides in relevant part that grants awarded under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund be used to support the ability of local educational agencies (LEAs) to continue to provide educational services to their students. The Department requests the following:

1. Information that the SEA may request LEAs to include in their subgrant applications to the SEA. For example, an SEA might propose to include the following in developing its subgrant application:

- **How the LEA will determine its most important educational needs as a result of COVID19.**
- **The LEA's proposed timeline for providing services and assistance to students and staff in both public and non-public schools.**
- **The extent to which the LEA intends to use ESSER funds to promote remote learning.**
- **How the LEA intends to assess and address student learning gaps resulting from the disruption in educational services.**

The above considerations are in addition to the application information requirements from sections 442 and 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232e and §1228a).

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction uses a department-developed federal grants management system, WISEgrants, which aligns with the 2 CFR 200 Federal Uniform Grant Guidance, the Education Department's General Administrative Regulations, and Wisconsin's Uniform Financial Accounting Requirements. WISEgrants is developed and managed by dedicated WDPI staff, so the ability to distribute and monitor ESSER funds will be streamlined and executed with expediency.

Currently, Wisconsin LEAs have a signed paper copy of GEPA assurances on record with WDPI. This GEPA assurance was last collected from existing LEAs in SFY 2009-2010. As part of the WISEgrants ESSER web-based application, WDPI will have electronic versions of the GEPA assurances digitally signed by district administrators or independent charter school administrators to ensure that subrecipients have easy access to this document in the future (from paper to web-based accessibility).

WDPI will provide technical assistance to LEAs regarding the many varied purposes allowed under the law. WDPI will also provide technical assistance and information on ESSERF set aside funds to address issues related to supporting remote learning for all students, including historically underserved populations. LEAs will be made fully aware of the reporting requirements that will be part of the ESSERF application process.

The following will be the ESSERF application steps for eligible Wisconsin subrecipients:

1. Digitally sign assurances that the LEA will comply with the provisions of all applicable statutes and regulations, including an assurance about maintaining staff to the extent practicable.
2. Digitally sign a current copy of the assurances that meet the requirements of section 442 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232e).
3. Upload an affirmation of consultation form from each private school located within the school district's boundaries confirming or denying their participation in CARES Act services.
4. Provide a description of the steps the LEA proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries who may experience any of these barriers: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, and age as required under [GEPA Section 427](#).
5. Develop separate budgets, under a single grant, for regular education, special education and private school equitable services. The WISEgrants web-based budget software has the capability of:
 - Typing each detailed budget item to an allowable activity under Section 18003(d); including:
 - I. Preparedness and Response to COVID-19
 - II. Outreach & Service Delivery to Special Populations
 - III. Addressing Long-term School Closure
 - IV. Educational Technology
 - V. Mental Health Services and Supports
 - VI. Addressing Afterschool and Summer Learning
 - Typing detailed budget items to specific private schools served by the LEA.
 - Collecting staff FTE to determine the LEA's need to use federal funds to continue employing existing staff.
 - Tracking carryover amounts for each budget type (regular education, special education and private school services).
6. Reviewing ESSER applications will be a WDPI priority in order to ensure subrecipients have expedited access to funds. The staff completing the review will also provide LEAs with technical assistance on allowable costs.
7. LEAs will be able to claim funds based on DPI-approved applications. Funds will be claimed by budget type (general education, special education, private school services) and by allowable ESSER activity.

2. The extent to which the SEA intends to use any portion of its SEA reserve (up to 10 percent of its ESSER Fund award) to support:

- **technological capacity and access – including hardware and software, connectivity, and instructional expertise – to support remote learning. If so, please describe the strategies the SEA intends to use to serve disadvantaged populations listed in Sec. 18003(d)(4) of the CARES Act; and**
- **remote learning by developing new informational and academic resources and expanding awareness of, and access to, best practices and innovations in remote learning and support for students, families, and educators.**

WDPI plans to use its SEA reserve monies to assist schools statewide in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan prioritizes the needs of all students, especially students most in need who are described in Section 18003(d)(4) of the CARES Act. WDPI was required under state statutes to get approval for its [plan to use CARES Act funds](#) from the state legislature's Joint Committee on Finance. The provisions below were part of the plan submitted related to this application questions. WDPI received [approval of our plan](#) on May 13, 2020.

Building capacity for, and expanding access to, high quality online instructional resources.

WDPI will collaborate with three strategic state partners to support online, blended, and remote instructional delivery systems. Examples of existing partnerships the department could build upon include:

- The Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative (WDLC). This is a partnership between WDPI, the Wisconsin Virtual School out of Cooperative Education Service Agency (CESA) 9, and the eSchools Network, and is Wisconsin's state-designated web academy. The WDLC partners currently support over 300 schools with online and blended courses. They are well-positioned to increase both leadership capacity for planning around online instruction, and access to online and blended learning courses for students in grades 6-12.
- The CESA Instructional Technology Network. The Network will help implement local training and leadership planning assistance.
- The Institute for Personalized Learning (IPL). A division of CESA 1, the Institute assists districts in creating and delivering learner-centered, instructional design principles, and technology-rich learning experiences. The Institute has a wealth of resources to assist schools in creating blended and digitally rich learning experiences.

The department plans to focus on providing additional capacity to facilitate access to online and blended courses and support for schools to build out their own high-quality online or blended instruction. An additional focus will be placed on areas of need as expressed by stakeholders. For example, addressing literacy and math needs for any loss of learning or credit recovery due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Providing training for educators in the provision of online and remote instruction.

DPI will work with educator preparation programs to prepare educators for delivering instruction in online and remote settings. Educator preparation programs almost exclusively make use of face-to-face, pre-clinical and clinical placements for prospective teachers. K-12 education in Wisconsin has been primarily delivered in physical classrooms with teachers present. Thus, teachers are generally not prepared for teaching in an online or a blended environment as part of their formal training.

Providing extensive training to educators in online and remote teaching techniques this summer and next fall would help schools prepare to address statewide or localized school closures during the 2020-21 school year, as well as how to work with students who are not able to attend school for health reasons.

Additionally, educator preparation programs for School Counselors, School Social Workers, and School Psychologists typically do not include training on how to provide teleservices to students. LEAs need recommendations for best practices in implementing teleservices for K-12 students, as well as training in how to use available technology.