GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY EDUCATION RELIEF FUND
PART C: USES OF GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY EDUCATION FUNDS

Section 18002 of Division B of the CARES Act provides in relevant part that grants awarded under the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund be used to support the ability of local educational agencies (LEAs) and institutions of higher education (IHEs) to continue to provide educational services to their students. The Department is interested in learning how and to what extent each State intends to use the award, or a portion of the award, to establish, develop, improve, or expand the availability, accessibility, capacity, and use of remote learning techniques and technologies which includes both distance education as defined in section 103(7) of the HEA and distance learning as defined in ESEA section 8101(14*)*. The Department requests the following information:

> 1. Does the State intend to use any of the awarded funds to support remote learning for all students?

a. Please describe whether the State considered conducting an assessment of the barriers to implementing effective remote learning for all students, or utilizing an existing assessment, to help target resources toward greatest needs.

b. With respect to LEAs, please describe how the State intends to use the funds to help students and teachers adopt or improve remote learning that serves all students, including students with disabilities, students from low-income families, charter school students, and non-public school students.

c. With respect to IHEs, please describe how the State intends to focus expenditures to ensure that all institutions – public and private – have the needed supports to continue executing their missions and educating their students.

a. Governor Mark Gordon established an Education Task Force to address any barriers to remote learning and to ensure the continuation of learning for all students related to the COVID-19 crisis. The task force established sub-committees that identified the greatest challenges in P-20 related to remote learning. Transitions from Pre-K to K and K-12 to higher education were among the leading challenges identified across education.   The task force requested proposals from K-12, higher education and other education institutions to identify any funding necessary to address these barriers and/or challenges related to transitions. All proposals were reviewed by the task force and recommendations were made to the Governor on the utilization of the GEER funds.

In addition to the assessment by the Governor's Task Force, adult education conducted a short phone calls to evaluate the technological needs of adult students. If they were not able to communicate through the phone, the survey was sent through email. The program was able to speak with all students before remote learning occurred.

b. All 48 school districts were required to submit a unique plan that lays out the strategies each district is implementing to continue to educate all students while schools are closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Adapted Learning Plans include strategies to deliver a combination of virtual lessons, hard copy packets of assignments, phone calls, emails, and limited in-person instruction.

Other aspects of plans include details for attendance, student progress, staff utilization, parent and community engagement, compliance with special education law, considerations for graduating seniors, and student privacy. The Wyoming Department of Education meets regularly with school districts to monitor the implementation of the adapted learning plans.

c. There are a host of needed supports across all of Wyoming's community colleges to meet their missions and serve their students high quality educations. Specific examples include, but are not limited to:

• Purchase additional flexible lab or virtual solutions for hands-on instructional areas including art, music, science, and a CTE programs. Purchase and implementation of simulation software as well as focused professional development across multiple disciplines. Significant increase in VPN, remote conferencing, and peripherals. Also includes specialized on-line blended instruction required to meet national certification standards for quality.

• Pay additional wages/salaries/stipends for faculty and staff to modify and develop content for remote delivery due to the additional workload and professional development required.

• Develop, purchase, and implement on-line authentication, proctoring, and security solutions. Proctoring is a common need statewide with a platform that would service students, instructors, and the State with licenses, lower costs, and flexibility for on-site or on-line classes. Implement project workflow management software and remote office software with increased cybersecurity.

• Purchase and implement on-line systems options for student registration, enrollment, orientation, and service for students.

• Issue college devices including cell phones and computers/additional monitors to all staff and/or faculty to increase capacity of working offsite. Purchase computers, laptops, chromebooks, routers, and hotspots for students who do not have access at home.

• Increase reliable internet connectivity to parking lot areas on campus to allow students who don't have reliable service at home to connect on a temporary basis.

In an effort to sustain adult education goals, adult education centers need to be able to finance the costs associated with maintaining new virtual classrooms and implementing protocols which lead to successful completions. This includes targeting resources for testing centers, purchasing standardized assessments, obtaining personal protective equipment and other health related equipment/supplies, licenses for online learning platforms, professional development needs so that AE instructors successfully manage traditional, hybrid, and virtual classrooms. These resources are in addition to those noted in #2 below.

2. Does the State intend to use any of the awarded funds to support technological capacity and access – including hardware and software, connectivity, and instructional expertise – to support remote learning for all students? If so, please describe how the State will achieve its goals for both LEAs and IHEs.

a. Please describe the strategies used to serve disadvantaged populations listed in Sec. 18003(d)(4) of the CARES Act.

Local Education Agencies have responded to COVID-19 by developing adapted learning plans (ALP) for remote learning. The impacts to districts have varied across the state. The State intends on awarding districts through a per pupil formula to address remote learning needs identified in the districts adapted

learning plans. These needs could include hardware, software, connectivity and instructional expertise to ensure access and a continuation of learning for all students.

The seven community colleges across Wyoming are committed to supporting learning for all students, both face-to-face and on-line with value-driven investments in technology. Their ongoing commitment to technological design has allowed for an easier transition to on-line instruction for the campuses. However, while some software vendors are currently providing free limited time access to their programs due to COVID-19, these options are not expected to be indefinite.

Serving disadvantaged populations is a strategic focus for the community colleges and is expressly outlined as a state priority related to post-secondary educational attainment. One important strategy is to provide computer labs or technology tools in outreach locations or locations with disproportionately impacts to students. For example, Central Wyoming College is considering a computer lab in Fort Washakie, WY (Eastern Shoshone tribal headquarters) and additional technology needs at the Wind River Tribal College building (Northern Arapaho tribal headquarters) for reservation students. Laramie County Community College is implementing a technology lending program targeted for disadvantaged populations. And, Eastern Wyoming College is expanding cloud-based storage and issuing cameras for students who live in remote locations.

In addition to supporting Community Colleges, the State intends to award funds to local Adult Education providers to purchase equipment, supplies, professional development, and increased instructional hours needed to achieve both federal and state goals for adult education.

In order to continue to serve this disadvantaged population, adult education centers across the state will use various strategies aimed to increase or maintain retention and completion rates, such as offering multiple learning platforms which provide learners with the means to attend classes in various formats. Establishing an engaging and interactive learning environment in an on-line classroom can be challenging, particularly when there are federal learning targets associated with each measure of success/failure. However, the COVID-19 experience has proven that new learning environments, such as the virtual classroom will have a big impact upon certain populations who have not always been able to attend the traditional classrooms.

3. Does the State intend to use any of the awarded funds to support 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? If so, please identify, generally, the resources, best practices, and innovations that the State intends to develop and expand.

The Wyoming Department of Education will use the Adapted Learning Plans that school districts have developed to share best practices and innovations in remote learning to support students, families and educators. The Superintendent of Public Instruction communicates and meets regularly with districts to share and highlight innovative best practices including personalized learning, parent and student engagement strategies, attendance, grading, and on-line professional development for teachers.

All of Wyoming's Community Colleges have spent and will continue to spend funds on faculty and staff professional development in best practices for on-line course design, development, implementation, assessment and review.

Additionally, the State fully intends to utilize awarded funds to support remote learning in adult education classrooms across the state. Local programs will be tasked with the development of new learning environments that support the Governor's goals as outlined in the WIOA state plan. This will include creating new methods for hosting learning and other training opportunities through such means as recording lessons on YouTube, utilizing Zoom, Canvas, Facebook portal and flipped classroom concepts in combination with both traditional and distance learning. Local programs will utilize best practices to develop new innovations, particularly for very rural areas while also addressing the unique needs of participants in Wyoming's larger cities. Adult education programs that are able to integrate virtual learning platforms into traditional classrooms will help to alleviate some of the barriers to employment/education.