Rural Education Achievement Program: Understanding Allowable Uses of Funds

2020 NAESPA Summer Meeting

Presenters

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Objectives

By the end of this presentation, attendees will be able to...

- Understand allowable uses of Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) funds

- Understand Alternative Fund Use Authority (AFUA)

- Know how funds can be used for addressing COVID-19 related needs (e.g., technology and professional development)

Agenda

❑ REAP Overview

❑ Uses of Funds

❑ AFUA

❑ U.S. Department of Education Resources

RURAL EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM (REAP) Title V, Part B

- REAP is designed to address the unique needs of rural districts that may lack the personnel and resources to compete effectively for Federal competitive grants and that often receive grant allocations in amounts that are too small to be effective in meeting their intended purposes.

- Consists of two formula grant programs:
  - **Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA):** Department makes grants directly to local educational agencies (LEAs)
  - **Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS):** Department makes grants to State educational agencies (SEAs); SEAs administer subgrants to LEAs

Eligibility Criteria: Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA)

&

Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS)

SRSA Eligibility Criteria
(ESEA section 5211(b))

1. The total number of students in average daily attendance (ADA) at all the schools served by the LEA is fewer than 600,

OR

Each county in which a school served by the LEA is located has a total population density of fewer than 10 people per square mile.

AND

2. All schools served by the LEA have a locale code designation of 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the Secretary of Education,

OR

The Secretary of Education has determined, based on a demonstration by the LEA and concurrence of the SEA, that the LEA is located in an area defined as rural by the State.

* If an LEA is a member of an educational service agency (ESA) that does not receive SRSA funds on its behalf, and the LEA meets the above requirements, the LEA will be eligible to receive SRSA funds.

RLIS Eligibility Criteria
(ESEA section 5221(b))

1. Twenty percent or more of children aged 5 to 17 served by the LEA must be from families with incomes below the poverty line as determined by the small area income poverty estimate data (SAIPE Data).

AND

2. All schools served by the LEA must have a locale code designation of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43,

OR

The Secretary of Education has determined, based on demonstration by the LEA and concurrence of the SEA, that the LEA is located in an area defined as rural by the State.

REAP Locale Codes

#	Type	Definition
11	**Large City**	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of 250,000 or more.
12	**Midsize City**	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.
13	**Small City**	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of less than 100,000.
21	**Large Suburb**	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of 250,000 or more.
22	**Midsize Suburb**	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.
23	**Small Suburb**	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of less than 100,000.
31	**Fringe Town**	Territory inside an urban cluster that is less than or equal to 10 miles from an urbanized area.
32	**Distant Town**	Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area.
33	**Remote Town**	Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 35 miles from an urbanized area.
41	**Fringe Rural**	Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster.
42	**Distant Rural**	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster.
43	**Remote Rural**	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.

Dual-Eligible LEAs
(ESEA section 5225)

- An LEA eligible for both SRSA and RLIS is referred to as "dual-eligible."

- A dual-eligible LEA must choose either the SRSA or RLIS grant.

- **A dual-eligible LEA indicates it chooses the SRSA grant by applying for SRSA during the application period.**

- All dual-eligible LEAs may exercise the AFUA, regardless of which grant they choose.

Uses of Funds

Allowable Activities for REAP Grants

RLIS	SRSA
ESEA section 5222(a)	ESEA section 5212(a)
Title I, Part A (Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs)	**Title I, Part A** (Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs)
Title II, Part A (Supporting Effective Instruction)	**Title II, Part A** (Supporting Effective Instruction)
Title III (Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students)	**Title III** (Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students)
Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment)	**Title IV, Part A** (Student Support and Academic Enrichment)
Parental Involvement Activities	**Title IV, Part B** (21st-Century Community Learning Centers)

* REAP funds must be used to supplement, and not supplant, any other Federal, State, or local education funds.

Examples of Allowable Activities

REFERENCE	RLIS	SRSA	EXAMPLE
Title I, Part A (Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs)	✓	✓	High-quality preschool or full-day kindergarten to facilitate the transition from early learning to elementary education programs.
Title II, Part A (Supporting Effective Instruction)	✓	✓	High quality professional development to train teachers, principals, and other school leaders about topics such as technology in the classroom, student data privacy, parent and family engagement, academic readiness skills, school policy decision-making, and experiential learning through observation.
Title III (Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students)	✓	✓	Supplemental professional development for teachers of ELs.
Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants)	✓	✓	Digital resources for students in rural, remote and underserved areas.
Title IV, Part B (21st-Century Community Learning Centers)		✓	Academic enrichment learning programs, mentoring programs, and remedial education activities, and tutoring services that are aligned with the challenging academic standards and any local academic standards and local curricula that are designed to improve student academic achievement.
Parental Involvement Activities	✓		Creation of a parental advisory committee to provide input on various education topics.

Alternative Fund Use Authority (AFUA)
(ESEA section 5211(a))

- Allows **SRSA-eligible** LEAs greater flexibility in spending the funds they receive under Title II, Part A and Title IV, Part A.

- LEAs may use Title II, Part A and Title IV, Part A funds to pay for activities under any of the allowable uses for SRSA grant funds.

- A dual–eligible LEA may exercise this authority even if it chooses to participate in RLIS, instead of SRSA.

- LEAs do **not** need to apply for (or receive) SRSA funds to exercise the alternative use of funds authority.

- The State must establish a deadline by which an eligible LEA must notify the State of its intent to exercise this authority.

AFUA Scenario #1

- An LEA has depleted its REAP and Title IV, Part A funds. The LEA has remaining funds under Title II, Part A and previously used these funds to support professional development. It decides to use those Title II, Part A funds to provide its students with supplemental online resources, such as digital practice problems or additional reading, to provide enrichment for students engaged in remote learning.

- Is this an allowable use of funds?
  - Yes! Providing supplemental online resources is an allowable use of funds under Title IV, Part A. With AFUA, LEAs may spend Title II, Part A funds on any of REAP's allowable uses of funds.
  - The LEA must notify its SEA by the SEA's deadline of its intent to exercise AFUA.

AFUA Scenario #2

- An LEA has depleted its REAP and Title II, Part A funds and is now looking for ways to fund additional distance learning professional development opportunities. The LEA still has remaining funds under Title IV, Part A. It decides to use the remaining Title IV, Part A funds, under AFUA, for professional development that trains teachers on effectively using technology in the classroom.

- Is this an allowable use of funds?
  - Yes! Professional development regarding technology in the classroom is an allowable use of funds under Title II, Part A. With AFUA, LEAs may spend Title IV, Part A funds on any of REAP's allowable uses of funds.
  - The LEA must notify its SEA by the SEA's deadline of its intent to exercise AFUA.

How REAP Funds Are Spent

- **REAP districts most frequently used their funds to improve or expand access to technology and to provide educator professional development.**

- **More than half of REAP district coordinators reported targeting the use of REAP funds to improve the educational outcomes of particular subgroups of students.**

* From the *Study of Experiences and Needs of Rural Education Achievement Program Grantees* (https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/rural/reap-report.pdf)

Title II, Part A Uses
Supporting Effective Instruction

Example activities:

- High quality professional development to train teachers, principals, and other school leaders about topics such as technology in the classroom, parent and family engagement, academic readiness skills, and school policy decision-making.

- Professional development for school leaders to integrate academic content, career and technical education, and work-based learning in order to prepare students for postsecondary education and the workforce.

- Trainings for teachers, principals and other school leaders on how to accurately differentiate teacher performance and constructively utilize evaluation results.

- Programs to support teaching children with disabilities and English learners.

- Providing trainings, technical assistance, and capacity building to teachers, principals, and other school leaders on assessment systems.

✔ **Both SRSA and RLIS can support**

For the full list of uses, please see Title II of the ESEA, available at https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/essa-legislation-table-contents/title-ii-part-a/#TITLE-II-PART-A

Title IV, Part A Uses
Student Support and Academic Enrichment

Relevant Allowable Use of Funds:

Effective Use of Technology (ESEA Section 4109)

- Providing students in rural, remote and underserved areas with digital resources.

- Building technological capacity and infrastructure in schools.

- Carrying out blended learning projects.

- Delivery of rigorous academic courses using technology, including digital learning technologies and assistive technology.

- Supporting high-quality professional development for educators, school leaders and administrators on the use of technology and in areas of STEM.

✓ **Both SRSA and RLIS can support**

NOTE: the Department invited SEAs to request a waiver of the Title IV, Part A 15% spending cap on technology infrastructure for funds awarded in FY 2018 and 2019
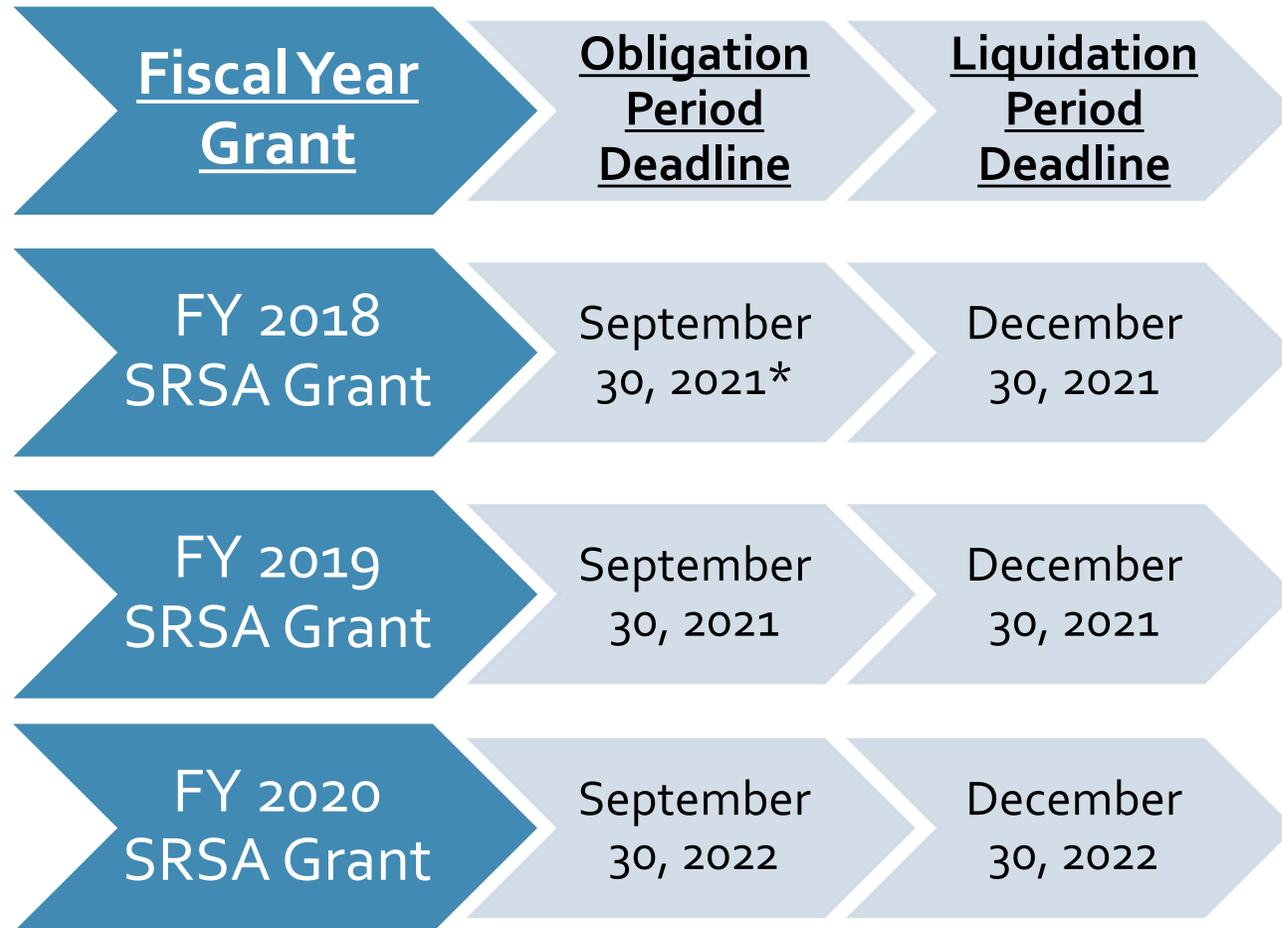
For the full list of uses, please see Title IV of the ESEA, available at https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/title-iv-part-a-statute

Announcements & Resources

SRSA Performance Period Extension

Fiscal Year Grant	Obligation Period Deadline	Liquidation Period Deadline
FY 2018 SRSA Grant	September 30, 2021*	December 30, 2021
FY 2019 SRSA Grant	September 30, 2021	December 30, 2021
FY 2020 SRSA Grant	September 30, 2022	December 30, 2022

- SRSA grantees will now have 27 months (2 years) to obligate funds

- Beginning for FY 2019 SRSA grants and going forward

*The performance period for FY 2018 awards has been extended to September 30, 2021

Resources

SRSA & RLIS Webpages	• Includes access to eligibility spreadsheets, monitoring reports, and other resources: https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/rural-insular-native-achievement-programs/rural-education-achievement-program/
REAP State Coordinators	• Full contact information of all state coordinators: https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/rural-insular-native-achievement-programs/rural-education-achievement-program/rural-education-achievement-program-coordinators/
US Department of Education COVID-19 Homepage	• Includes COVID-19 updates, resources for remote learning, and more: https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus
US Department of Education Funding for Technology Homepage	• Links to CARES Act for Remote Learning, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund; Discretionary Grant Funding Opportunities, Funds for Connectivity (i.e. broadband infrastructure), etc.: https://tech.ed.gov/funding/
Education Stabilization Fund Homepage	• An emergency fund for States and schools to prevent, prepare for, and respond to Coronavirus. Includes Discretionary Grants, Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund and the CARES Act Project SERV: https://oese.ed.gov/offices/education-stabilization-fund/

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