

Utah GEER Initial (45 Day) Report

State Program Representative:	Sarah Young, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Utah State Board of Education sarah.young@schools.utah.gov
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1. Please describe the State’s process for awarding GEER funds to LEAs, IHEs, and/or other education-related entities, including:

In Utah, Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funds are being reserved for local education agencies (LEAs). This funding is to address student needs arising from the COVID-19-related disruption of the current academic year. As an initial step, the Utah State Board of Education, in consultation with the Governor's Office, developed a definition to identify the LEAs most significantly impacted by COVID-19. Each LEA that meets the designation of most significantly impacted is allocated funding from the \$29,189,663 Utah will receive from the GEER Fund. The amount of that allocation includes a base amount of \$20,000 and an additional sum based on the percentage of students in the LEA who are at risk of academic failure and the percentage of students in the LEA with disabilities. This methodology takes into account that the delivery of remote learning can be more complex for these student groups due to a variety of factors. In order to receive their allocated funding, LEAs will need to submit an application for it by July 30, 2020. Within the application, LEAs will detail how the LEA intends to use the funds to ensure that students with disabilities and students at risk of academic failure will receive support to mitigate the unintended negative academic consequences of the emergency statewide transition to remote learning. LEAs are encouraged to prioritize evidence-based practices and call those out in their applications. We are reviewing and awarding funds as the LEA plans are approved to expedite disbursement of funding to the field.

a. Timeline(s) for awarding GEER funds to LEAs, IHEs, and/or other education-related entities;

Date	Action
05/28/2020	“Most significantly impacted by coronavirus” definition crafted in consultation with Utah State Board of Education
05/29/2020	GEER Award Letter Issued to Utah
06/26/2020	Release of Application for GEER Funding to Utah LEAs
07/30/2020	Close of Application for GEER Funding for Utah LEAs
<i>Ongoing as LEA applications are approved in Utah Grants Management</i>	Awarding of GEER Funding to Utah LEAs

- b. The criteria, process and deliberations you use to determine which LEAs, IHEs, and/or other education-related agencies are:**
- i. “Most significantly impacted by coronavirus;” and/or**
 - ii. “Essential” for carrying out emergency educational service;**

Through the CARES Act, Utah is allocated \$29,189,663 from the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF). This funding is to address student needs arising from the COVID-19 related disruption of the current academic year including continuing to provide educational services while schools are closed and supporting the ongoing functionality of those schools.

One identified use for the GEER funding is to provide emergency support through grants to the local education agencies (LEAs) that the State educational agency (SEA) deems to have been most significantly impacted by COVID-19 to support the ability of such LEAs to continue to provide educational services and to support the ongoing functionality of the LEA. The Utah State Board of Education, in consultation with the Governor’s Office, has identified the most significantly impacted LEAs as follows: Utah LEAs that were not previously delivering 100% primary instruction to students through remote learning are designated “most significantly impacted” for GEER funding. In addition to consultation between the Utah State Board of Education and the Governor’s Office, this designation of most significantly impacted LEAs received stakeholder feedback from the Superintendent’s COVID-19 Council, which includes district and charter representatives, and was presented in a statewide training to LEA business administrators and the legislature's fiscal analysts.

Local education agencies that were delivering 100% of primary instruction to students online prior to the soft closure of schools in Utah due to COVID-19 were less impacted compared to LEAs that did not deliver 100% of primary instruction through remote learning. Local education agencies that were not delivering 100% of primary instruction through remote learning were forced to pivot very quickly to new modes of delivering education in order to continue to provide educational services to students. Some examples of this transformation include sending more devices into student homes, supplying Wi-Fi buses or vehicles throughout the community or hotspots for internet access, and providing additional technical support to enable continuity of educational services. Thus, as intended by Congress, the GEER funding for these most significantly impacted LEAs in Utah will address these COVID-19 related disruptions.

- c. The funding mechanisms (e.g., grants, contracts) the State will use to provide GEER funds to LEAs, IHEs, and/or other education-related entities; and**

The Utah State Board of Education has created an application for GEER funding for LEAs to submit through the Utah Grants Management system. You can find a copy of the application here: <https://bit.ly/UTk12GEERApplication>. This application along with the proposed budget will be reviewed by staff at the Utah State Board of Education and the Governor’s Office for compliance and approval. Upon approval, an LEA will be able to submit reimbursement requests

for expenses that have been approved in the application and meet the assurances and intent of the funding.

d. Any specific funding conditions or requirements the State will place on awards to ensure the funds are spent for specific purposes or activities.

The Utah State Board of Education has outlined assurances for GEER in the application that LEAs will submit through the Utah Grants Management System. You can find a copy of the application here: <https://bit.ly/UTk12GEERapplication>.

The application states that GEER funds will be used to ensure that special education students and students at risk of academic failure receive support to mitigate the unintended negative academic consequences of the emergency statewide transition to remote learning. This may include the following encouraged uses:

- Extended School Day or Year - this may include summer bridge programs, extra hours, weekend services, or before or after school programming
- Small Group Student Interventions - this may include licensed educators, paraprofessionals, or trained aides providing tutoring and interventions services
- Expanded Mental Health and SEL Resources - this may include extended hours or contract services with school counselors, psychologists, school nurses, or social workers to support students and their families; this may also include social and emotional professional learning and curriculum

Additionally, the application clarifies that no more than 5% of the recipient's award may be used for direct administrative costs.

2. Describe the system of internal controls the State will use to ensure that GEER funds are expended for allowable purposes and in accordance with cash management principles and the Uniform Guidance. See 2 CFR §200.313.

The Utah Governor's Office has partnered with the Utah State Board of Education to design a process to disburse GEER funding that will accommodate applications based on the essential needs of LEAs. The grant activities will be compliant with the CARES Act, as well as meeting the individualized and specific needs of the LEAs' schools and communities. We have developed an application that relies largely on assurances and other minimal questions as needed to facilitate oversight obligations (including CARES Act reporting obligations and financial management requirements like budget controls, identification and tracking of federal spending, etc.).

The award process will use the Utah Grants Management System that all of our LEAs are familiar with, as this is the same platform for other federal and State grant applications and processing. In the Utah Chart of Accounts, the GEER funding has been entered as a distinct program (program code 20GEER) so

LEAs will report GEER fund expenditures separately from other programs. This information will be reported in Schedule L of the Annual Program Report (APR).

- On-line grant applications will also support the ability of LEAs to complete compliance requirements, such as assurances and responses to questions proposed by the U.S. Department of Education including:
- How the LEA will determine its most important educational needs focused on equitable conditions for learning as a result of COVID-19.
- The LEA's proposed timeline for providing services and assistance to students and staff in both public and non-public schools.

3. If GEER funds are being awarded or used for payments to SEA or IHE administrators, executives, and/or state or local teachers' unions or associations, please describe your process for reporting the amount of funds used for this purpose, and how the funds are consistent with allowable uses of funds under section 18002(c) of the CARES Act.

Utah GEER funds are not being awarded or used for payments to SEA or IHE administrators, executives, and/or state or local teachers' unions or associations.

4. If you intend to provide GEER funds to LEAs, please describe the process you will use to ensure that LEAs receiving GEER funds provide equitable services to students and teachers in non-public schools located within the LEA in the same manner as provided under section 1117 of the ESEA.

The Utah State Board of Education issued a survey to all districts on May 18, 2020 requiring that they reach out to all non-public schools in the LEA to initiate the consultation process. The survey required each LEA to respond with the name, interest in services, enrollment, and low-income student enrollment. Survey response was due on Thursday, May 26, 2020 at 5:00 PM. The survey tool can be found here: <https://bit.ly/UTEquitableServiceSurvey>. Responses from the survey including follow up from USBE staff can be found here: <https://bit.ly/UTEquitableServiceLEAresponse>.

Utah LEAs are engaged in consultation with their non-public schools, and they are required to keep records related to their outreach and communications related to equitable services.

In the application process for GEER, USBE will review the LEAs' equitable services attachment in Utah Grants Management System. USBE utilizes a two-step review process, one educational expert does the primary review of the LEA applications for our specific LEAs that have private schools. Our GEER program director is conducting the second review of all the applications for final recommendation of award.

Additionally, Utah LEAs that receive federal funds are also reviewed on an annual basis through the Desktop Monitoring Instrument which has questions related to equitable services. A portion of the LEAs are selected each year to have onsite reviews.

Utah is currently developing a reporting mechanism for LEAs to report the funding used for equitable services. This tool will be utilized across GEER and ESSER grant awards for coherence.