

State of Georgia – GEER Clarifications

1. Please describe the State’s process for awarding GEER funds to LEAs, IHEs, and/or other education-related entities, including:
 - a. Timeline(s) for awarding GEER funds to LEAs, IHEs, and/or other education-related entities;
 - 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;
 - 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
 - d. Any specific funding conditions or requirements the State will place on awards to ensure the funds are spent for specific purposes or activities.

GEER Funds were made available to the State of Georgia on June 2, 2020. The state plans to make notice of award to subgrantees based on the priorities listed below during the Fall of 2020. Subgrantees will have until September 30, 2022 to obligate funds under the terms of Georgia’s GEER Award.

As our state had extensive impact to educational delivery across K-12 and higher education as a result of COVID-19, considerations were made for GEER funds to address multiple needs across the state and provide emergency relief to both public and private providers. A brief summary of the currently identified priorities, which were determined based on the Governor’s assessment of the greatest educational needs across the state in response to COVID-19 as well as a thorough evaluation of direct requests received by the Governor’s office, is listed below:

Governor’s Digital Classroom Connectivity Initiative

As school districts across the state continue to strive to provide the safest, most effective modes of instruction in their areas, a wide variety of needs for K-12 learning in Georgia have emerged. The Governor’s office will partner with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to provide the following with GEER funds:

- 1) Expansion of broadband connectivity in areas of highest need
- 2) School broadband extenders on every Georgia school
- 3) Mobile Wi-Fi transmitters for multi-family housing
- 4) Social distance learning environments

Supporting Onsite Learning for Virtual Education (SOLVE)

Numerous school districts across the state will begin the school year online. Georgia’s Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) will implement the SOLVE program to support additional childcare needs for students, ages 5-12, in those areas where in-person learning is not an option. DECAL currently oversees a Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program to subsidize the cost of childcare for low income families. This program will be leveraged to provide this additional support to families.

Institutes of Higher Education

The transition to remote instruction and the incredible challenges introduced by COVID-19 have particularly impacted postsecondary students. The University System of Georgia (USG) will receive GEER funds to allow them to initiate two new student assistance services that will provide access to mental health therapists, psychiatrists, and meditation services as well as access to legal and financial assistance.

Private institutions of higher education across the state will receive an allocation of GEER funds to provide direct emergency relief due to the impact of COVID-19. These allocations will be based on each institution’s respective proportion of students who receive the Tuition Equalization Grant (TEG).

Establish an e-campus for Postsecondary Technical Education

GEER funds will be used to invest in an e-campus solution for the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, TCSG and its colleges dramatically increased its online offerings and tech support to students and faculty to partake in these courses. Establishing an e-campus will provide an opportunity to deliver in-demand online courses and programs to students across the state while minimizing the time and expense.

Expansion of Construction Ready Program

Construction is an essential industry in Georgia. A portion of GEER funds will be used to support expansion of an educational program for construction workers to five strategic locations across the state.

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 §200.303.

The State of Georgia will provide funds to subgrantees through Grant Care, the state's grants administration system for CARES funds. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget will serve as the fiscal agent, and funds will be distributed according to the subgrant award terms on a reimbursement basis. Reimbursement requests will be reviewed to ensure their consistency with the terms of the subgrant awards, and GEER funds will be made available upon final approval to reimburse project costs. This system will provide the ability to track progress of expenditures and satisfy federal reporting requirements.

Additionally, the Office of Planning and Budget will provide oversight to ensure that funds are not drawn down until reimbursement requests are approvable and ready to be paid.

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.

GEER funds are not being allocated for this purpose in Georgia.

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.

In Georgia, any LEAs receiving GEER funds will provide equitable services to students and teachers in nonprofit private schools located within the LEA in a similar manner as provided under section 1117 of the ESEA. This is verified through LEA submission to the State Ombudsman of:

- 1) documentation of initial invitation and contact with private schools located in the geographic boundaries of the LEA through multiple methods (email, phone, letter, social media, advertising)
- 2) documentation of consultation on required topics with participating private schools
- 3) submission of a grant budget to the awarding agency that is inclusive of private schools
- 4) submission of an end of grant assertion that equitable services were received as discussed in initial and ongoing consultation

Technical assistance and grant monitoring is jointly provided/conducted by the awarding agency and State Ombudsman.

In the event of disagreement, private schools will follow the published guidance on the State Ombudsman website that aligns with federal requirements under ESSA.