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**State of Mississippi – 45 Day Report**

**GEER Funds**

**The State’s process for awarding GEER funds to LEAs, IHEs, and/or other education-related entities, including:**

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

The purpose of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Education Stabilization Fund, under which the Governor’s Emergency Education Response (GEER) Fund program is authorized, is to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the novel coronavirus. The GEER Fund program aims to address the impact that the coronavirus pandemic has had, and continues to have, on students and parents across the nation. The U.S. Department of Education awarded GEER Funds by formula to the nation’s Governors. Mississippi received an allocation of $34,662,872.

The Governor has chosen to divide the GEER Fund into two funding categories in order to quickly and efficiently target funds to the state’s most pressing emergency needs…Essential Emergency Educational Services and Innovative Educational Solutions. The Governor’s Office estimates accepting grant proposals for the first funding category, Essential Emergency Educational Services, by the second week of September 2020, and the proposals will be evaluated with a rubric as quickly as possible.

The Governor’s Office intends to provide up to $23.2M to fund proposals accepted under this RFP; however, if not enough quality proposals are received, the Governor will make leftover money available as part of the second RFP, which will address Innovative Educational Solutions to the novel coronavirus.

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

Essential Emergency Educational Services is the first funding category, and it is divided into two priorities: Early Care and Education Services for Very Young Children (0-5) and Care and Education Services for School-Age Young Children (5-12) and Persons with Special Needs (5-21). Under these priorities, the Governor invites proposals from local educational agencies (LEAs), institutions of higher education (IHEs), education-related entities who propose to serve very young children, or education-related entities who propose to serve school-age young children or persons with special needs.

The Essential Emergency Educational Services must address one of the priority tasks listed in the proposal.

Provide full- or part-time care and education for very young children who are in foster care and/or whose parents

* + have lost access to their regular childcare arrangements;
  + cannot afford available childcare within their county;
  + are at risk of experiencing, or have experienced, negative job impacts due to unexpected childcare responsibilities; or
  + are at risk of delaying, or have delayed, a job search due to unexpected childcare responsibilities.

Enable parents or existing care providers to improve the quality of care and education offered to very young children, e.g.,

* + provide access to programs, training, or technical assistance that improves the quality of care and education services;
  + provide health and safety equipment or supplies *and* training, e.g., personal protective equipment (PPE) paired with training on disease prevention techniques, to parents or existing care providers to fill an unmet need;
  + build the long-term capacity of care providers to offer quality services; or
  + support the coordination of care, education, and health-related services for very young children.

Provide school-day or work-day care during day-time work hours (7 AM-6 PM) for school-age young children in foster care and/or whose parents meet at least **one** of the following criteria:

* + are essential workers;
  + have children who have lost access to 5-day-a-week, in-person schooling due to a local public school operating fully or partially via online learning;
  + have medical concerns about enrolling children in available 5-day-a-week, in-person schooling but cannot take advantage of an online learning option due to the risk of negative job impacts;
  + are at risk of experiencing, or have experienced, negative job impacts due to unexpected childcare responsibilities; or
  + are at risk of delaying, or have delayed, a job search due to unexpected childcare responsibilities.

Provide full- or part-time care for persons with *diagnosed* developmental delays, intellectual disabilities, or mental or behavioral health disabilities who are in foster care *and/or* who meet at least of the following criteria:

* + have lost access to regular care and education services, such as those provided through 5-day-a-week, in-person schooling, due to a local public school operating fully or partially via online learning or
  + have medical conditions that will force their regular caregivers to choose between the health risks of available in-person schooling and negative job impacts or a delayed job search.

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

The funding mechanism the state will use to provide the GEER funds to LEAs, IHEs, and/or other education-related entities will be through a competitive grant process.

**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 State adheres to the policies found in the publication Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government (the Green Book). The GEER funds will be administered by the Governor’s Office. The Governor’s Office is working closely with the Department of Finance and Administration as well as a third-party administrator, CRI.

Once the review team has scored the proposals, the applicants selected for funding must log on to a secure portal on the Department of Finance and Administration website and complete the award process. They will use this portal for reporting as well.

All applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements to be considered for a grant:

* Be an LEA, IHE, or education-related entity as defined by the GEER Fund statute.
* Be established in Mississippi or serving Mississippians prior to August 1, 2020.
* Be willing to comply by the assurances for all funded providers.
* Continue to pay employees and contractors to the greatest extent practicable during the ongoing pandemic.
* Propose new, unique, or additional services not already supported by any CARES source or other funding source.

**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.**

Currently, the State does not plan to award GEER funds to SEA or IHE administrators, executives, and/or state or local teacher unions or associations.

**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.**

If an LEA is awarded, the Governor’s Office will work with the Department of Education and the LEA to calculate the equitable share amount for each nonpublic school with which they must consult and with which they must provide services.