

PREPARATION FOR ESSER III

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE – UPDATED JULY 2021

OVERVIEW

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, Public Law 117-2, was enacted on March 11, 2021. The ARP Act provides additional funding for school districts to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Education portion of ARP is known as the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER III or ARP ESSER)



ALLOCATIONS

Similar to the earlier CARES and CRRSA Acts, states receive ESSER III funds based on their share of total Title I funding. Then, states allocate and distribute 90 percent of funds to districts based on each district's share of Title I in FY21. Districts should anticipate an award that is approximately 2.2 times larger than their ESSER II award.

ESSER III - KEY INFO

- The period of performance is through 9/30/24.
- Allowable costs for ESSER III are the same as ESSER I/II.
- No Equitable Services Requirement for ESSER III.
- Unlike ESSER I/II, ESSER III contains new requirements for how funds must be spent and what reports/plans must be made available, including:
 - District Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction
 - District Plan on Use of ESSER III Funds
 - Robust consultation with district stakeholders to determine LEA priorities
 - At least 20% of the award must be spent on mitigating lost instructional time
 - A new "Maintenance of Equity" provision

(Read more about these specifics on pages 2-3)

ESSER III Requirements

DISTRICT PLANS FOR SAFE RETURN TO IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION

A district that receives ESSER III funds must, **within 30 days of receiving the funds, make publicly available on its website** a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services. Before making the plan available, the district must seek public comment on the plan.

If a district has developed a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction before March 11, 2021 (which all MA districts have), then that plan meets the requirements described above.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ESSER III USE OF FUNDS PLAN:

A **district** that receives ESSER III funds **must consult with the stakeholder groups listed below** and formulate a plan that includes the following, which will all be captured on your ESSER III application.

- How the funds will be used to implement prevention and mitigation strategies aligned with CDC guidance;
- How the district will use its 20% set-aside to address the academic impact of lost instructional time through evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs;
- How the district will spend its remaining ARP ESSER funds; and,
- How the district will ensure that interventions employed will respond to the academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students and particularly those disproportionately impacted, including students from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children w/ disabilities, students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migratory students.
- District must make its ESSER III Use of Funds Plan publicly available on its website within 30 days of receiving its ESSER III grant application approval email.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MUST INCLUDE:

- Students
- Families
- School and district administrators
- Teachers, principals, other educators, school staff, and their unions
- Civil rights organizations
- Stakeholders representing the interests of: children w/ disabilities, English learners, children experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, migratory students, and justice-involved youth

MAINTENANCE OF EQUITY:

A Maintenance of Equity Assurance will be included on your ESSER III application as a condition of receiving ESSER III funds. Districts must agree to the following in FY22 and FY23:

- **State and Local funds:** Your district will not reduce the per pupil allocation of state and local funds to your high-poverty schools by more than the total reduction of these funds to all schools divided by the total number of students enrolled in all of your schools (if any) divided by the total number of students enrolled in all of your schools for that fiscal year, and
- **Full-time Equivalent Staff:** Your district will not reduce the per pupil, full-time equivalent staff in any high-poverty school by an amount that exceeds the total reduction in full-time equivalent staff in all of your schools (if any) divided by the number of students enrolled in all of your schools for that fiscal year.

ESSER III Requirements



TIMELINE

- **Do now** - District **consultation with stakeholders** on district priorities and the use of ESSER III funds (see the list of required stakeholders on page 2 of this document).
- **ESSER III RFP, Allocations, and District Application/Plan are available.**
 - Make sure to consider stakeholder feedback on the use of ESSER III funds on your application.
 - Complete ESSER III District Application and submit **before Monday, October 4th.**
 - **Within 30 days of ESSER III grant application approval email**, make your **ESSER III Use of Funds Plan available on your website.**
- **Within 30 days of receipt of ESSER III funds**, post **District Return to School Plan**
 - District Plans completed prior to ARP enactment, must revise no later than six months after last reviewed.
 - Districts must update plan at minimum every six months through 9/30/23
- Visit our **ESSER III website** for additional resources and information

▶ Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief III (ESSER III) Fund

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, Public Law 117-2, was enacted on March 11, 2021. The ARP Act provides additional funding for school districts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Education portion of ARP is known as the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III or ARP ESSER) Fund. The purpose of the ESSER III fund is to support the safe reopening and sustaining safe operations of schools while meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

ESSER III Resources for Program Directors

All materials needed to apply for ESSER III funds are posted with the grant RFP

ESSER III allocation amounts by district

📄 Quick Reference Guide: District Preparation for ESSER III — May 2021

📄 ESSER III Webinar

📄 USED ARP ESSER Fact Sheet

📄 USED ESSER FAQs (Use of Funds)

📄 Take our ESSER III survey. We want your feedback on how to prioritize spending of the federal coronavirus relief funds. Translations available in upper right of the survey webpage.

Contact your DESE Federal Grants Liaison with any questions.