



Opportunity to Provide Input on the Implementation of The American Rescue Plan Act in Your Community

The recently-passed American Rescue Plan Act provided substantial funding to each state for K–12 education through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER).¹ States are allowed to use ESSER funds in a variety of ways to support the safe reopening of schools and address the academic, social, emotional, and mental health impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic.²

State educational agencies across the country have already received two-thirds of this funding.³ In order to receive the final installment of funding, state educational agencies are required to develop a plan for using the funds and must submit their plan to the U.S. Department of Education by **June 7, 2021**.⁴ Similarly, local educational agencies are required to submit their own plans for using ESSER funds to their state educational agency.⁵ Local educational agencies are also required to develop a plan for reopening schools safely.

In developing these plans, your state and local educational agencies are required to listen to your perspective on how they should use these federal funds.

This is an opportunity for your PTA to have a voice in how this funding will be used, what will be prioritized, and what is most needed in your community.

In particular, your state educational agency is required to:

- Provide the public with an opportunity to give input on its plan for using funds;
- Take public input into account in developing its plan;
- Consult with families, teachers, and other key stakeholders in the state;⁶ and
- Make information publicly available on its website.⁷

Likewise, your local educational agency is required to:

- Provide the public with an opportunity to give input on its funding & reopening plans;
- Consult with families, teachers, and other key stakeholders on these plans;
- Publish its funding plan on its website in an understandable and uniform format and in a language that parents can understand;⁸
- Publish its reopening plan on its website within 30 days of receiving funds; and
- Review its reopening plan at least once every six months, taking public input into account in determining whether to revise the plan.



Many state and local educational agencies have already started developing their plans. If you would like to provide input on the use of ESSER funds in your community, you might consider:

- Hosting virtual events with your members & community to discuss the American Rescue Plan Act, the process for providing input, and your priorities for the use of these funds.
- Checking your state and local educational agency websites to see if they are already accepting input and, if unclear, reaching out to your state and local educational agency to understand the process and deadlines for providing input.⁹
- Reaching out to your state and your local educational agency to schedule a meeting and offer your PTA to serve as a representative of students and families in your community.¹⁰
- Providing written input on the use of these funds to your state and your local educational agency on the behalf of your PTA and drive your members to do the same.¹¹
- Holding your state and your local education agency accountable to their plans once they are in place.

Together we can ensure that this federal funding is used in a way that serves *all* children in our communities, enables the safe reopening of our nation’s schools, addresses the impacts of the pandemic, and is directed toward making every child’s potential a reality.

If you have any questions or would like assistance, please contact the National PTA Government Affairs Team at govtaffairs@pta.org.

¹ You can find the exact amount of funding allocated to your state [here](#).

² For a summary of restrictions around the use of these funds see [National PTA’s ARPA Fact Sheet](#).

³ Your state educational agency is usually your State Department of Education. You can find yours [here](#).

⁴ Each SEA must submit to the Department by **June 7, 2021**, either: (1) its ARP ESSER plan or (2) the State requirements that preclude submission of the plan by that date and a date by which it will be able to submit its complete ARP ESSER plan. p. 2 of the [State Plan Template](#).

⁵ Your local educational agency is usually your school district. The timeline is determined by the state educational agency but must be reasonable and must be within 90 days of the LEA receiving ESSER funds.

⁶ Such consultation must be “meaningful,” but [the requirements](#) are silent on what’s considered meaningful.

⁷ Including modes of instruction (remote/in-person/hybrid) and disaggregated data on student enrollment and attendance, made available on the SEA’s website as soon as possible but no later than June 21, 2021.

⁸ The plan must also be provided if requested by a parent who is an individual with a disability in an alternative format that is accessible to that parent.

⁹ You can find the contact information for your state educational agency [here](#).

¹⁰ You can find the contact information for your state educational agency [here](#).

¹¹ In developing your recommendations, you may want to review the following resources to understand the restrictions around the use of these funds: (1) [National PTA’s ARPA Fact Sheet](#), (2) [ARPA Interim Requirements](#), especially p. 21200 – p. 21201, (3) [State Plan Template](#), and (4) [The U.S. Department of Education’s COVID-19 Handbook](#).

How much funding does the American Rescue Plan Act provide for education?

The recently-passed American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) provides:

- \$122 billion for K–12 state education agencies (including \$800 million for children who are homeless) through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER)
- \$39.6 billion for institutions of higher education
- \$2.75 billion to governors for private schools
- \$3 billion for [the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#)
- \$7.2 billion is provided to [the E-rate program](#) for home internet access and connected devices.

The exact amount of funding allocated to each state is [available in this table](#) and was based on the relative amount of Title I funding the state received in FY2020.

How are states allowed to spend their funding?

State Educational Agencies (*i.e.*, State Department of Education) have received two-thirds of their funding and will receive the remainder of their allocation after submitting a plan for the use of their funding by June 7, 2021 to the U.S. Department of Education. States are required to set-aside funds from their grants for the following purposes: 5% to address learning loss, 1% for evidence-based summer enrichment programs, and 1% for evidence-based, comprehensive afterschool programs. States are also required to subgrant at least 90% of their funding to school districts (including charter schools that are considered school districts). On April 21, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education released [a template for states](#) to use when developing their plans that encourages states to describe their plans for meaningful consultation with stakeholders, including students and families.

How are school districts allowed to spend their funding?

A Local Educational Agency (*i.e.*, a school district) that receives funding must make publicly available on its website a plan to reopen schools for in-person instruction within 30 days of receiving funding. School districts are required to use at least 20% of funds to address learning loss through evidence-based interventions that respond to students' academic, social, and emotional needs. The remaining funds can be used for:

- coordinating with public health departments;
- conducting activities to address the needs of students from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth;
- purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity as well as assistive technology or adaptive equipment);
- summer learning, and supplemental after-school programs;
- mental health services;
- addressing learning loss;
- school facility repairs to reduce risk of virus transmission and support student health;
- implementing public health protocols including policies in line with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for school-reopening;
- implementing activities to maintain the operation and continuity of services and to employ existing staff; and
- any allowable use under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act; and Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.

How do the Department of Education’s interim final requirements affect planning?

On April 22, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education published a set of [interim final requirements](#) intended to promote accountability, transparency, and the effective use of ESSER funds. Under the requirements, Local and State Educational Agencies must provide the public with the opportunity to give input and must consult with families, teachers, and other stakeholders in developing their plan. Local Educational Agencies must also submit to their State Educational Agency their funding plan on a “reasonable” timeline. These requirements became effective April 22, 2021, but the U.S. Department of Education will be accepting comments from the public to determine whether to revise the requirements through May 24, 2021.

Maintaining State Funding

To receive funding, states must provide at least as much funding for K–12 and higher education in fiscal years 2022 and 2023 as a proportion of the state’s overall spending (averaged over fiscal years 2017, 2018, and 2019). However, this requirement can be waived by the Secretary of Education. In addition, states and districts must comply with new Maintenance of Equity requirements that prevent state and local funding cuts from disproportionately impacting high poverty districts and schools.

Additional Resources

- [Full Text of The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education Fact Sheet on the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#)
- [U.S Department of Education Webpage: Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund](#)
- [State Allocation Table for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund](#)
- [State Plan Template for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund](#)
- [Interim Final Requirements for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 1: Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 2: Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education Guidance on Maintenance of Effort Requirements and Waiver Requests under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief \(ESSER\) Fund and the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief \(GEER\) Fund](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education’s National Safe School Reopening Summit \(Mar. 24, 2021\)](#)

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