ARP ESSER Office Hours for LEAs

Thursday, July 15th

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American Rescue Plan ESSER

- $615,929,016 in total award to Utah K-12 for ARP ESSER
  - 90% awards to LEAs
- State Reserve $61,592,901
  - 5% for addressing accelerated learning ($30,776,000)
    - Currently, not determined for specific action.
  - 1% for evidence based summer enrichment programs ($6,155,000)
    - Available through competitive grant
  - 1% for evidence based comprehensive after school programs ($6,155,000)
    - Available through competitive grant

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Funding Allocations and Plans

- LEAs receiving the 90% distribution through Title I, Part A have received ⅔ of the total award in Utah Grants Management
  - ⅔ and full projections available on USBE Coronavirus Website

- Those receiving the state base have received their full allocation in Utah Grants Management
- U.S. Dept of Education has allocated an additional $400,000 to Utah which will be distributed to LEAs
- **Reminder: All LEAs should be writing their plans for the full amount for which they are eligible from ARP ESSER.**

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LEA Questions

Application Process Questions

Is there a process to amend plans?

LEAs will have the opportunity to amend their ARP ESSER plans at any point. This can be done through a Budget Amendment in the Utah Grants system.

LEAs need to note that any amendment must be approved by the local school board in an open and public meeting as included in the application assurance section.

What are your suggestions for feeling a little overwhelmed by the money and the plan development?

USBE recommends that all LEAs begin with a needs assessment. This assessment will allow each LEA to consider existing data sets and analyze what needs their community may have.

Additionally, USBE encourage LEAs to begin the process of stakeholder engagement. Speaking with community member such as teachers, parents, students, and representatives from diverse viewpoints can help LEAs start to identify needs and draft plans.

Note: LEAs will have the opportunity to amend their plans and budgets throughout the program period.

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Our governing board meets next week (too soon) and again on August 26th. Do you believe the August 26th date will fit within the revised timeline that is being considered?

- USBE recommends that you begin the conversation with your governing board about your plan as soon as possible (next week for your scheduled meeting). You do not have to have a draft plan to begin the stakeholder input solicitation. It is best to get input before you have a complete plan created. The input can be in the form of asking the four questions that we shared in the technical kick-off:
  - What were/are the impacts of COVID-19 on our students, teachers, and schools?
  - What data sets do we already have that help inform the extent of those impacts? *Think of existing data sources that could be compared from before March 13, 2020 and now.*
  - What have we already spent our early COVID-19 response funding on thus far? Did that work or help address the impacts of COVID-19?
  - Looking forward, what is our plan for schools in the future?
- USBE is working on an extension timeline that would allow LEAs to submit in early September. More details to come in early August 2021.

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Financial Questions

When will LEAs receive the final ⅓ of funding?

USBE's ARP ESSER State Plan was approved Wednesday, July 7, 2021 and the financial team is working to update the allocations in Utah Grants.

USBE is going to reissue the grants through the Grant Management system with the full allocation within the next 7-business days (July 23, 2021)

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Will there be a separate budget sheet in Utah Grants for the Capital Projects and the other parts of the ARP plan or will there just be one budget sheet in Utah Grants?

In the Utah Grants Management System we have a new function that will allow the LEA to select the "Federal Use Case" which aligns with the application stated allowable use cases, and THEN complete the budget form for the traditional fields (salary, benefits, supplies/materials, etc.).

Each LEA will be completing that new budget sheet for each of their projects they include in their ARP ESSER award.

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Is there a way to make the bonding process more equitable across the state?

- For questions about bonding and opportunities for legislative action, we encourage LEAs to reach out to:
    - Deputy Superintendent Angie Stallings (angie.stallings@schools.utah.gov)
    - Deputy Superintendent Scott Jones (scott.jones@schools.utah.gov)
    - Ben Leishman, LFA (bleishman@utah.gov)

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Challenges with WPU add-on… what will have to be given up to get there?

- For questions about the WPU add-on, we encourage LEAs to reach out to:
  - Deputy Superintendent Angie Stallings (angie.stallings@schools.utah.gov)
  - Deputy Superintendent Scott Jones (scott.jones@schools.utah.gov)
  - Chief of Staff Tiffany Stanley (tiffany.stanley@schools.utah.gov)
  - Ben Leishman, LFA (bleishman@utah.gov)

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When will the use of these funds be audited?

- The Office of the State Auditor (OSA) has already conducted a preliminary audit for FY2020 for USBE.
- OSA has notified the agency that ESSER I and GEER I will be audited for FY 2021 this upcoming school year as well.
- We would expect that the ARP ESSER funds would have the potential to be audited the following school year (2022-23)
- Federal monitoring and auditing has not been released at this time.

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What are the recommendations for how much to set aside or save for future?

The funding was provided for immediate emergency response. Although the funding period does extend until September 30, 2024, it should be used to meet immediate needs due to COVID-19.

Note: LEAs must request all ESSER I funds prior to requesting ESSER II funds. However, LEAs can start spending ARP ESSER funds at any time.

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We are considering reserving funds for what may happen with new variants of COVID-19. Do you expect there to be an increase in COVID cases come fall 2021?

USBE supports LEAs in planning to use their funds to address potential resurgence of the virus in schools, including procuring PPE and coordinating with your local health authority on responses with ARP ESSER funds.

UDOH is continuing to provide COVID test kits and help you in testing efforts, such as test-to-stay and test-to-play. https://coronavirus.utah.gov/education/school-manual/

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How are LEAs preparing for the cliff at the end of the ESSER funds (in 2024)?

The funding was provided for immediate emergency response. Although the funding period does extend until September 30, 2024, it should be used to meet immediate needs due to COVID-19.

LEAs should plan that this funding is one-time, and focus the use cases on reducing long-term impacts on student and schools due to COVID-19.

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Accelerated Learning Questions

What happens when we accelerate learning beyond the effects of COVID (exceed pre-pandemic student performance)?

LEAs should target their funding to address academic, social and emotional needs for students that were most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Those student needs are the prioritized use case for these funds.

If an LEA has no additional COVID-19 related student learning needs, they can look at mitigation projects as outlined in the federal allowable use cases, or waive the remaining award through the Grants Management System.

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What's the most impactful thing we can do to accelerate learning?

Evidence-based interventions (e.g., providing intensive or high-dosage tutoring or accelerating learning), such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive after-school programs, or extended school year programs, and ensure that those interventions respond to students' social, emotional, and academic needs and address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underrepresented student subgroups.

LEAs may consider the following [companion guidance that was created by the Hunt Institute](#) to support states and LEAs.

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Allowable Use Case Questions

Can funds be used for Capital Expenses?

- Requires it to be in your plan AND to get a letter of approval from USBE.
- The letter request process has been finalized and here are some of the main requirements for any capital expenditure requests:
  - Project Description Requirement
  - Project Timeline within the 34.CRF.706.707 full project must be completed by September 30, 2024
  - Expected Budget
  - Alignment to the Allowable **ARP ESSER Use Cases** for Funding Stream
  - LEA procurement policy
  - Require Three Bids for Service in alignment with LEA policy
  - Davis Bacon Compliance Responsibilities of LEA
  - USBE Construction Approvals Process for anything that requires a building code inspection per the international building code: https://www.schools.utah.gov/financialoperations/formsapplications

- If you are planning on capital expenditures, be clear with your team that they will need to plan for this process in their timeline.

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Can we submit the facilities project requests before the full ARP-ESSER plan is submitted? What might the turnaround for approval be on those? We have projects we need to get done this summer before school starts which means they must start in the next few weeks.

- You can submit your facilities project request ahead of your full ARP-ESSER plan.
- However, approvals will not occur until after your plan is approved, as that is the mechanism that allows for access to the ARP ESSER funds. This action needs to happen before individual capital projects are officially approved by USBE.
- Any early submissions for capital projects will be reviewed and preliminary outcomes communicated to the LEA to help inform next steps and planning. Official approval notification will occur after the LEA plan is approved in Utah Grants Management.

If we want to include a facilities change that will not take place until next summer or the following summer, do we have to obtain those bids now? Or could we submit a capital expenditures form for each of these projects for preliminary approval with the assurance that we will submit evidence of following our procurement policies before we execute that part of the plan?

- I recommend getting those bids and approvals now and submitting for review. Noting the construction delays we are aware of for other school entities due to the pandemic, we would encourage an LEA to complete the procurement process, capital expenditure approval process, and have that all lined up as the best approach. This includes future projects that have a start date in 2022 or later.
- An LEA needs to complete their procurement process and have bids received before they can complete a capital expenditure approval request for USBE.

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Could this funding be used for SRO funding as part of SEL work and helping to find students who are lost?

- The funding can be used for SRO's, provided the use case is in response to a need due to COVID-19.
- For example, the SRO may be a component of creating wraparound services—such as medical care, mental health and substance use disorder care, and nutrition support—for students and their families, including hiring support personnel for schools such as nurses, school counselors, and social workers.
- USBE would note that ARP ESSER funds are one-time, which would need to be considered.

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Can LEAs use the funds to pilot new programs they've always wanted to fund?

- Yes, as long as the program is in response to COVID-19 and aligns with the Federal Allowable Use Cases
  - Is the use of funds intended to prevent, prepare for, or respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including its impact on the social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of students?
  - Does the use of funds fall under one of the authorized uses of ESSER or GEER funds?
  - Is the use of funds permissible under the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR Part 200)? In particular, is it necessary and reasonable for the performance of the ARP ESSER award?

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Would the State Board's administrative funds ever be used to pay for leave for educators who have to be quarantined?

USBE State Adminstrative fund is used for cases that are approved by the State Board to support the administration of the COVID-19 relief funding. This above use cases has not been discussed or considered.

Local LEAs may consider using their local awards in alignment with use case #19:

Other activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in local educational agencies and continuing to employ existing staff of the local educational agency.

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Evidence-Based Strategies

Are evidenced-based strategies required?

Yes. The U.S. Department of Education requires that the strategies used to address accelerated learning must be evidence-based as defined in the following slide.

What is the ESSER definition of evidence based? Not research based? Will a reimbursement be denied if the practice or program doesn't meet the evidence-based definition?

The ARP Act defines the term "evidence-based" as having the meaning in section 8101(21) of the ESEA. Accordingly, "evidence-based" includes several tiers of evidence. Specifically, "evidence-based," when used with respect to a State, LEA, or school activity, means an activity, strategy, or intervention that:

- Demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on—
  - Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study (tier 1)
  - Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study (tier 2); or
  - Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias (tier 3); or
- Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention (tier 4).

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Evidence-Based Strategies continued...

- Given the novel context created by the COVID-19 pandemic, an activity need not have generated such evidence during the COVID-19 pandemic to be considered evidence-based. The Department's What Works Clearinghouse (available at https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/) identifies the tier of evidence that reviewed studies meet, as applicable. As part of the "demonstrates a rationale (tier 4)" level of evidence, grantees may develop and use approaches that are novel, if they are consistent with theoretical and empirical findings from research and the grantee will continue to review the effects of the practice to build the evidence base. Developing a logic model can help to demonstrate a rationale. Logic model resources are available at https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/elm.asp.

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What is entailed with the required needs assessment?

- USBE recommends LEAs to complete a **needs assessment** before determining how their portion of ESSER funds will be used.

- LEAs should follow **existing needs assessment protocols** to determine the most valuable and targeted use of ESSER funds.

- A needs assessment should include a review of the **current state as compared to the desired state**, the **identification of barriers** to reaching the desired state, and an **analysis of the potential sources** of the identified barriers.

- LEAs may use existing needs assessments for this plan.

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Other Resources to Consider

How American Rescue Plan Funds Can Prevent and Respond to Crime and Promote Public Safety

✓ Community violence intervention (CVI) programs

✓ Summer and year-round programs that provide job training and work-based learning experience for students, including formerly incarcerated students, and disconnected youth who live in communities most impacted by high levels of violence

✓ Summer education and enrichment programs, including summer camp

✓ Wraparound services—such as medical care, mental health and substance use disorder care, and nutrition support—for students and their families, including hiring support personnel for schools such as nurses, school counselors, and social workers

✓ Establishing or expanding full-service community schools

✓ Reengaging students who became disconnected from school during the pandemic to help them transition to career or postsecondary education programs

Additional info can be found here:

https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/06/21-0130-ARP-Public-Safety-ED-FAQ-06-16-202

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When will UDOH update the School Manual?

UDOH is planning to have the School Manual updated by July 23rd, but if not, then the beginning of August.

Do you have a copy of the State public input survey that we could use as an exemplar?

I do, and have included it for you as a word document and QSF file if you want to load it directly into Qualtrics in a shared Google drive.

Shared Google Drive with resources:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/123qAhFrSnVy2i18fCYOpJH2c9EhFdrRn?usp=sharing

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Questions?

Reminders

- If you have specific questions you'd like addressed before office hours, you can email USBE for technical support:
  - Sara Harward, sara.harward@schools.utah.gov
  - Sarah Young, sarah.young@schools.utah.gov

- Our website has a plethora of resources: https://schools.utah.gov/coronavirus

- Next office hours on Thursday, July 22nd at 2:00 PM

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Thank you for your time.