CARES Act, ARP, and ESSER I, II, and III:

Federal Funding for Education in the Year of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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There’s a lot of money coming from the federal government to schools, more than we’ve ever seen before or probably will ever see again.

**CARES**-Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (enacted on March 27, 2020)

* $2 trillion package of assistance measures including **ESF**
* **ESF**- $30.75 billion allocation for education in the [Education Stabilization Fund - Office of Elementary and Secondary Education](https://oese.ed.gov/offices/education-stabilization-fund/) (tracking portal: [Education Stabilization Fund](https://covid-relief-data.ed.gov/))

**ESF** include three subgroups:

* ESSER-Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund
* GEER-Governor’s Emergency Education Relief
* HEER-Higher Education Emergency Relief

**CRRSA**-Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (enacted Dec. 27, 2020)

* Provides an additional $81.9 billion to ESF
* [ESSER II Fact Sheet](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/01/Final_ESSERII_Factsheet_1.5.21.pdf)
* EANS-Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools: A separate funding mechanism for non-public schools managed at the state level rather than typical flow through local education agency

**ARP**-American Rescue Plan [Fact Sheet](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/03/FINAL_ARP-ESSER-FACT-SHEET.pdf)

* $122 billion for “ARP ESSER” or ESSER III
* “activities and interventions that respond to students’ academic, social, and emotional needs and address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underrepresented student subgroups, including each major racial and ethnic group, children from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care”

90% of funding must flow to schools

New Hampshire-$605 million in CARES & ARP funds for schools (not an official number, lots of moving parts so a final number has many variables e.g. state set-aside dollars; GEER; HEER; EANS, etc.)

Source: Mark Despotakis, Pennsylvania Music Educators Association [webinar](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6y76VXV2dg) entitled “Yes, You Can Get Federal Stimulus Money for Your Music Education in PA,” April 7, 2021.

**Use of Funds**

CARES Art Funding (ESSER I)

* First round of money—how to safely reopen schools, PPE, cleaning supplies, barriers, etc.

CRRSA & ARP: ESSER II & ESSER III

* Use of funds to focus on how the pandemic has effected students and programs. How we can enhance programs that students have lost this past year. Funds are meant to supplement programming due to the pandemic, not to plug shortfalls. Funding is also meant for mental health/Social Emotional health as well as subject-based programming. Can be used for summer programming for academics and for students who missed out on special projects and programs over the past year. (Note: The summer programming opportunity may extend through summer 2023 so think strategically and plan ahead.)

For example, if you are a beginning band instructor, this means you can set up a summer program for new band members as the students missed out on band this past year. The third round of ESSER funding is focused on this.

Equity—to make sure all opportunities are available to all students, transportation is an allowable expense (busing).

Prioritizing needs: All over the country, schools are looking to expand tutoring programs for student; looking to create a summer camp type of environment for students, for all programs and academics.

Using ESSER funds to cover costs of summer programs. There is urgency for schools and districts to get this information out to parents and teachers. Often, the camps will be a balance of programs to meet the needs of all our students. It might be that districts will look to combine music, art, PE with other subject areas, we’d like to provide this type of innovative project opportunity for students.

What makes a good case for asking for funds: Be able to respond to how has your program been impacted by the pandemic and what’s been the impact on students? How does your idea help engage students? How might you meet student and program needs in a different way? Maybe your district is looking for creative and innovative programming opportunities for students.

ESSER I – Part of $2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act—CARES

* Signed into law on 3/27/2020
* $30.75 billion in funds to Education Stabilization Fund (ESF);
* Of the ESR, $13.2 billion was allotted to ESSER (Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief) funds (NH $37.641 million to ESSER)
* The remaining funds from ESF were allocated between Higher Education Emergency Relief (HEER) and Governor’s Education Emergency Relief (GEER) NH: $43.261 million to Higher Education; ~$9 million to GEER
* Funds distributed to school districts in same proportion as Title I, Part A (but doesn’t have to follow Title I allocation guidelines)
* Funds may be obligated (expenses and activities identified) for 3/13/2020-9/30/2021
* States must award funds to schools within 1 year of receiving the funds

ESSER II—The second COVID relief bill, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA)

* signed on 12/27/2020
* extends and modifies several provisions in the CARES Act and authorizes an additional $54.3 billion for ESSER II
* Note: ESSER II funds cannot be spent until original ESSER I funds are spent.
* Obligation period is 3/13/2020 through 9/30/2023
* States must award funds to schools within a year of receiving them (Jan. 2022)
* Separate program for emergency funds for non-public schools under CRRSA that is run by the state (not as part of equitable participation between LEA and private school)

ESSER III -- American Rescue Plan (ARP)

* $129 billion for education
* At least 90% of the funds will flow to traditional public school districts and charter schools, with each entity receiving an amount proportional to the federal Title I, Part A received in 2020 under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
* More targeted funds for:
  + Learning Recovery
  + Summer enrichment
  + After-school programs
  + And other
* Two-thirds of ESSER funds are immediately available to states, while remaining funds will be made available after states once re-opening plans are submitted by districts (e.g. ESSER implementation plans).
* Obligation period until October 2024.

This equals up to 4-5 times the regular federal funding amount allocated to a single school district in a “normal” year.

These are not for reoccurring expenses, not to fill holes, extra money for extra “things” to supplement, not supplant.

In the 12 areas spelled out by the federal government for uses of funds, including areas already available under ESSA—think Title IV-A funds, “well-rounded” and “safe and healthy schools.”

Because we are talking about so much money, funding might not be your biggest obstacle in the fall, it may be scheduling. Lots of focus in schools around “learning loss” or “unfinished learning.”

Ways to appropriately obligate funds:

* In the fall, an in-school or after school program to close the learning gap in your program
* A learning or innovative summer “camp” for your program; partnered with other subjects to make learning “fun” over the summer
* Purchase of software that assist with in person, hybrid, or remote learning and assessment
* Facility repairs and improvements including proper ventilation systems
* Sanitizing supplies for unique needs of your program
* PPE for classes (masks, equipment covers, bell covers for music, etc.)
* Purchase of equipment for “new” or “expanded” programs
* Purchase of equipment so students do not have to share equipment
* Storage units for equipment-for safety purposes
* Professional development related to in-person learning in a new, safe way or innovative program improvements to engage learners as they return to school
* Materials needed to set up your learning space in safe ways that may include social distancing needs (more music stands; hoops or ways to define space in the gym;

Work with colleagues or building administrator to make a plan based on an informal needs assessment. For example, would families prefer in-person or virtual summer learning opportunities for students?

Be able to answer the Why, What, Who, When, Where for the program.

Find out who the federal program person is in your district. Work with your principal. Find your champion in the administration who can help you work through this process. Stick with it. So much money and available for over three years timespan.

**New Hampshire 2021 programs funded through the state DOE (set-aside funding):**

[**ReKINDling Curiosity: Every Kid Goes to Camp**](https://rekindlingcuriosityeducation.nh.gov/)

* This summer, the Department will provide opportunities for positive childhood experiences at New Hampshire-approved overnight and day youth recreation camps to improve student social, emotional, and mental wellness. The state-operated summer enrichment program will pay up to $650 of the youth recreation camp fees of qualifying students. Parents/caregivers of qualifying students will select a New Hampshire youth recreation camp from a list of approved camps across the state.

[**Recovering Bright Futures**](https://www.education.nh.gov/who-we-are/commissioner/recovering-bright-futures)

* The Department will offer grants to School Districts to support the creation of District Learning Pods as an option for those students who might benefit from this unique, supportive educational environment. The Department will also directly support the creation of Community Learning Pods, especially for families who do not have a District Learning Pod available to them.