



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

August 10, 2020

Dear LEA Leaders and Federal Grants Managers,

Over the last several months, we have shared information on new and continuing federal grant funding that can support your efforts to serve students and families in the District of Columbia. This letter shares updates on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and Scholarship for Opportunity and Results (SOAR) funding, as well as updates on grant flexibilities and potential additional education stimulus funding available as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) – funding and flexibilities that are designed to provide ongoing support as you continue planning for continuous education in the 2020-21 school year.

### **Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act**

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund: The CARES Act includes an Education Stabilization Fund with several programs to support states, schools and institutions of higher education in their response to COVID-19. OSSE's \$42,006,354 CARES-ESSER award from the United States Department of Education (USED) is comprised of funding granted to LEAs (90 percent) and funding for state-identified needs (10 percent). Updates on the two portions of CARES-ESSER are provided below to support your continued planning for the upcoming school year.

*90% LEA Formula Grants*: Of the ESSER funds received by OSSE, 90 percent is granted to LEAs based on the Title I, Part A formula. LEAs have flexibility in how these funds are distributed across fiscal year 2020 (FY20), FY21, and FY22.

- *FY20 CARES-ESSER*: LEAs that have not already, may submit applications for FY20 funds in the [Enterprise Grants Management System \(EGMS\)](#) from now until Sept. 30, 2020. The FY20 application budget is for eligible costs incurred between March 13, 2020 through Sept. 30, 2020. You may request adjustments to the default allocation for FY20 (30 percent of your LEA's total allocation) by completing this [LEA Request Form: CARES-ESSER Allocation Adjustment](#). Any unspent funds budgeted for FY20 in EGMS will carry over into FY21 after FY20 closeout is complete. However, if you do not plan to spend down the default allocation by Sept. 30, please submit [allocation adjustment form](#) by Sept. 11, 2020 to enable your desired FY21 allocation to be loaded and available for budgeting by Sept. 18, 2020.
- *FY21 CARES-ESSER*: OSSE will release the FY21 application in EGMS on Aug. 24. The default allocation that will be loaded into your FY21 application is 40 percent of your LEA's total allocation (unless you have already spent beyond this threshold or [requested an update](#)). The FY21 CARES-ESSER application will follow the same structure as the FY20 application and will be for costs planned for Oct. 1, 2020 through Sept. 30, 2021.

The FY21 CARES-ESSER application released on Aug. 24 will include final CARES-ESSER allocations with updates based on new and expanding charter schools. No LEAs will have allocation decreases. We will also post the final allocations on the [CARES webpage](#) and share them in the LEA Look Forward.

- *Training and Technical Assistance:* You and your staff are invited to an optional FY21 CARES-ESSER Application Overview webinar on Monday Aug. 31 at 10:00 a.m., which will include instructions on how to update FY20, FY21, and/or FY22 default allocations. You can register for the webinar [here](#) and it will be recorded and posted on our [CARES webpage](#).

*10% State Reserve:* Of the ESSER funds received by OSSE, 10 percent is available for locally determined needs. For DC, this is \$4,200,635.40. OSSE intends to use 9.5 percent of these funds for contractual needs to be determined in the 2020-21 school year to support recovery learning in accordance with OSSE's [principles for continuous education](#). We will continue to stay in touch with LEAs as we determine the highest leverage use of this funding for these needs. The remainder, a 0.5 percent administrative set aside permitted by the CARES Act, will support OSSE to improve data systems to support LEAs and schools as a result of COVID.

**Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund:** In addition to ESSER, \$5,807,678 in GEER funds were awarded to the Mayor to meet emergent needs as a result of COVID-19, including support for remote learning and technology. DC's CARES-GEER funds are being used for following partnerships to support schools, students, and families:

*Department of Behavioral Health (DBH):* Expand the District's Comprehensive School-Based Behavioral Health System in public and public charter schools in DC.

*Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE):* Expand the ONSE Leadership Academy for school safety from Anacostia High School to additional schools.

*Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO):* Provide internet access to eligible families.

### **Scholarship for Opportunities and Results (SOAR)**

**Amendment Approval:** OSSE received approval from the USED to amend the SOAR grant to address the current needs of LEAs. This includes using funds to provide the following:

*CARES Equivalent allocations for LEAs not eligible for Title I funding, including adult and early childhood charter LEAs:* This formula funding will be allocated using total 2019-20 school year enrollment as its basis and allows OSSE to support all schools in their response to coronavirus. Funding to support this need is repurposed from SOAR Teacher Pipeline, which focuses on impacting the quality and quantity of the teacher supply for DC charter schools. The current cohort of Teacher Pipeline grantees have two-year grants that started in January 2020 and will end in January 2022.

*Additional flexible formula funding for facilities, including virtual school infrastructure:* OSSE will repurpose federal fiscal year 2019 (FFY19) and FFY20 Facilities competitive grant funding to provide formula funding to LEAs to support physical and digital facilities to support continuous learning. This funding will accompany FFY20 Academic Quality and Early Childhood (AQ/EC) funding.

*Additional support for third parties to support the work of LEAs:* OSSE will increase the amount of funding available for the FFY20 Third-Party grant competition. This additional funding also comes from repurposing Teacher Pipeline funds. OSSE forecasts opening the FFY20 Third Party competition in spring 2021 and awarding \$400,000 to nonprofit organizations supporting charter LEAs by summer 2021.

**Allocations and FFY20 Application Planning:** OSSE is awaiting the grant award notice from the USED necessary to proceed with sub-awarding funds, but we wanted to share as much information as we currently have available to support your planning.

*FFY20 Allocations:* To support your budget planning for the upcoming school year, we are sharing the planned SOAR FFY20 Academic Quality/Facilities, Early Childhood, and CARES Equivalent allocations [here](#). The minimum FFY20 SOAR Academic Quality/Early Childhood & Facilities LEA award will be \$150,000 with the remainder of available funds distributed on a per-pupil basis using the 2019-20 school year audited enrollment data. As is typical for SOAR funding, funds reserved for LEAs who elect not to apply will be redistributed to other LEAs through the formula.

*FFY20 AQ/Facilities, EC, and CARES Equivalent Application:* To lessen the administrative burden for eligible LEAs, OSSE plans combine FFY20 SOAR AQ/EC, Facilities, and CARES Equivalent grants into one consolidated application for eligible LEAs. This application would also capture any applicable carryover from FFY19 AQ/EC.

LEAs will be required to use a minimum of 25 percent of the allocation for Academic Quality projects and a minimum of 25 percent of the allocation for Facilities projects, or give an explanation of how you are meeting the needs with other sources beyond SOAR funding.

OSSE will notify you of timing and next steps to apply and access these funds after we receive the grant award notice from USED.

### **Grant Flexibilities**

We also wanted to update you on available flexibilities on existing funds. In addition to the programs mentioned in our [April 2020 letter](#), flexibilities have also been added for FFY18 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and School Improvement funds. A complete list and forms to complete for available grant waivers and extensions is available on [OSSE's grants and funding page](#).

### **Additional Education Stimulus Funding**

As you may have seen in the news, Congress is deliberating on several stimulus proposals, which include additional funding for K-12. As national legislation is finalized, we will share details on funding available to DC LEAs and the timeline and allowable uses for such funding.

If you have any questions or need technical assistance as you consider grants as part of your approach to your continuous learning strategy, please contact your grant managers or [OSSE.grants@dc.gov](mailto:OSSE.grants@dc.gov). CARES specific questions may be directed to [OSSE.CARES@dc.gov](mailto:OSSE.CARES@dc.gov).

Sincerely,



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CC: LEA Fiscal Leads