



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

April 27, 2020

Dear LEA Leaders and Federal Grant Managers,

The federal grant funding you receive can play an important role in how you continue to serve students and families in the District of Columbia. We wanted to make you aware of a number of new and existing grant flexibilities to help you better leverage federal grant funds to support your efforts in serving students and families during this challenging time.

### **New Flexibilities**

LEAs will have **more time** and **more flexibility** to spend grant funds available for several federal programs, summarized below, so that you can consider how to best meet needs in the short-term and for the 2020-21 school year.

#### *More Time: Period of Availability Extensions*

OSSE has received a waiver from the US Department of Education that allows LEAs to request to extend the period of availability for funds originally made available for the 2018-19 school year – funds that some LEAs carried over into the current year and that would otherwise lapse on September 30, 2020. OSSE is accepting requests to extend the period of availability through September 30, 2021, for the following programs included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA):

- Section 1003 (School Improvement)
- Title I, Part A (Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs)
- Title I, Part D, Subpart I (Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk)
- Title II, Part A (Supporting Effective Instruction)
- Title III, Part A (English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement)
- Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants)
- Title IV, Part B (21st Century Community Learning Centers)
- McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program

Additionally, LEAs and other recipients that are in the final 12 months of the following grants may request up to an additional year to spend down previously granted funds for:

- Charter Schools Program (CSP)
- FFY18 SOAR Academic Quality/Early Childhood
- FFY17 SOAR Facilities

- FFY17 SOAR Third Party

OSSE continues to work with the US Department of Education and review our local authority to determine if additional federal and local grants that may be eligible for no-cost extensions. As additional opportunities are made available, we will share them with you and post them [here](#).

#### *More Flexibility: Use of Funds*

To maximize flexibility on the use of funds, both during school closures and upon reopening, OSSE is making available the following waivers for several ESEA programs:

- *Title I, Part A - Carryover Limit:* LEAs will not be limited in how much Title I, Part A money carried over from 2019-20 into the 2020-21 school year (i.e., the 15% limitation on carryover can now be waived). Even if your LEA received a waiver on the 15% carryover limit in the last three years, you may request a waiver to spend these funds to align with current needs.
- *Title IV, Part A*
  - *Needs Assessment:* LEAs that received \$30,000 or more in Title IV, Part A for the 2019-20 school year may make changes to their plans and budget without amending their comprehensive needs assessment in light of current circumstances. Note: The annual needs assessment requirement will still apply to funding for the 2020-21 school year.
  - *Allocations:* LEAs may spend any remaining 2018-19 school year Title IV, Part A funds on any allowable activities. This means there is no cap on technology infrastructure spending or limits in how LEAs spend funds across the categories of well-rounded education, safe and healthy students, and technology.
- *Professional Development:* LEAs may spend 2019-20 school year ESEA funding on short-term, one-time training so long as the training is otherwise allowable under the relevant grant program. The flexibility around sustained, intensive, and collaborative professional development requirements allow you to support immediate needs around distance learning.

You can find additional detail and complete the streamlined process for requesting any of these flexibilities in the forms available [here](#). Our grants managers are also available to discuss the details of your specific LEA and to problem solve on how to best leverage these flexibilities to meet your current needs.

#### **Existing Flexibilities**

As you consider your short-term needs and begin long term planning to support your schools as a result of school closures, we also wanted to remind you of some of the flexibilities that already exist across federal grant funds. I encourage your teams to consult with OSSE grant managers to strategize around ways to blend and braid federal and local funds to provide relief or support in the current environment.

*Consolidation and/or Transferability of Funds:* As you consider whether these flexibilities may support your school, keep in mind that you are not required to keep your funding

across ESEA programs budgeted as you initially planned. If you did not opt to consolidate ESEA or IDEA allocations initially, you can amend the schoolwide program plan and budget to do so now. If the originally planned Title II and Title IV activities have been canceled, transferring those allocations may be a way to cover new expenses in Title I, II, III or IV programs.

*Allowable Uses of Funds:* The Consolidated ESEA application provides broad allowable uses that include support for distance and recovery learning for LEAs. IDEA Part B may also be used for these activities specifically to support students with disabilities. For public charter schools, SOAR Academic Quality/Early Childhood grants also provide flexibility for activities that have a direct impact on student achievement, either school-wide or for specific groups of students.

Examples of how funds from these programs can be used to support distance learning and student/staff needs include the following:

- Behavior support strategies for online environments
- Coordinating with institutions of higher education to provide access to postsecondary courses
- Counseling and mental health for students and staff
- Instructional materials, including online curriculum
- Instructional support services
- Professional development and other supports to improve online instruction
- Summer learning and/or extended afterschool programs
- Technology, including hardware and software and assistive and adaptive technology

OSSE has also made general grants guidance as well as responses to frequently asked questions about specific grant programs available on [OSSE's Guidance Documents](#) page.

### **Next Steps**

If you would like to review and submit for the waivers and extensions outlined above, please complete the appropriate form(s) available [here](#). Our team will update that page with any additional no-cost extensions as they become available.

If you have any questions or need technical assistance on how to apply new or existing flexibilities to the grants you receive from OSSE, please contact your grant managers or [OSSE.grants@dc.gov](mailto:OSSE.grants@dc.gov).

Sincerely,



Nikki Stewart  
Assistant Superintendent for Systems and Supports, K-12

CC: LEA Fiscal Leads