



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

February 5, 2021

Dear LEA Leaders,

I am writing to provide you a high-level update on the availability of new federal relief grant funding for local education agencies (LEAs), and direct you and your staff to further, more detailed resources.

A second [Elementary and Secondary School Education Relief Fund](#) (ESSER II) was established under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA). ESSER II continues emergency support established under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

The United States Department of Education (USED) has awarded the District of Columbia \$172,013,174 in ESSER II funds. As with CARES-ESSER, 90 percent of ESSER II funds will be allocated to Title I-A-eligible LEAs (see preliminary LEA allocations [here](#); see note below for non-Title I-A LEA funding eligibility). And while the allowable uses for funds for ESSER II are very broad and similar to the CARES-ESSER program, LEAs are strongly encouraged by both USED and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to use ESSER II funding to safely reopen schools as soon as possible and to mitigate and recover student learning lost as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and associated school closures.

The following are key things to know about this new funding:

- For most LEAs, the ESSER II award is about four times the amount awarded under CARES-ESSER;
- ESSER II extends emergency funding out an additional year, with a period of availability of March 13, 2020, through Sept. 30, 2023;
- LEAs should plan to make use of all remaining CARES-ESSER funds *before* making use of ESSER II and, to support that effort, OSSE will make the remainder of LEAs' CARES-ESSER funds available in fiscal year 2021 (FY21) within the [Enterprise Grants Management System](#) (EGMS). Your staff will be required to submit an application or amendment for the remainder of the first-round CARES-ESSER funding by April 15, 2021, per new USED guidance;
- This spring, OSSE will release a new and separate grant application in EGMS for ESSER II funding, which is required by USED. Once awarded, LEAs may use funds for expenses incurred beginning March 13, 2020.

Given the additional resources now available, LEAs are strongly encouraged to leverage funding now to safely reopen schools and mitigate learning loss for students. ESSER II establishes new priorities and state-level reporting for the use of funds, which align to nationwide progress in combating coronavirus, mitigating its effects, and planning for recovery.

Non Title I-A Eligible Schools: OSSE is committed to supporting all LEAs and schools in the District of Columbia to respond to emergency needs arising from the coronavirus pandemic. As we did with the CARES program, we will establish a separate CRRSA ESSER II-equivalent allocation grant program for non-Title I-A LEAs. More detail on these processes will be forthcoming.

State GEER Funds: CRRSA also provides some additional funding to Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER II) Fund, with a smaller portion for discretionary use and the majority for a new [Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools](#) (EANS) program. This program will provide services or assistance to eligible private schools that enroll low-income students and are most impacted by COVID-19.

Further detail on these announcements are available in the attached Fact Sheet and will be sent to LEA finance and grant managers. We recognize that this can be a challenging time to navigate planning for the various federal grants and other funding you receive from OSSE. OSSE is committed to creating administrative efficiencies wherever possible and providing technical assistance to help you leverage federal funding to best meet student needs. For questions on ESSER II and related programs, please contact OSSE.CARES@dc.gov.

Thank you once again for your partnership in planning for the most effective use of these relief funds to support our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shana Young', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shana Young
Interim State Superintendent of Education