# FY23 ESSER Data Collection Webinar Transcript – April 12, 2024

Okay welcome everyone to the 2023 FY 2023 annual ESSER data collection webinar. My name is Matt Deninger. I'm the chief strategy and research officer here at DESE and have been going and working through all of the COVID-related federal grants with all of you for the past 3, 4 years and happy to be here today to talk to you about this year's data collection from the Feds. I'm joined today by 2 colleagues who have been wonderful in helping out throughout this data collection process to get all of these slides and materials ready for you. That's Michelle Thomas and Dessi Kirova. They’re both from the Resource Allocation Strategy and Planning team/federal grants team here at DESE, and you probably recognize them if they're your liaison.

Alright, just a few housekeeping items before we begin. These slides will be emailed to all registrants. We are in webinar mode. So, video and microphone are turned off to preserve bandwidth. And we also encourage you throughout the presentation to use the question-and-answer feature at the bottom of the screen to ask questions rather than the chat feature. The QA. Feature we prefer because it allows you to organize the questions. Answer some in real time. It's just a little bit more manageable. All right. So, here's what we're going to go over today. I'll start off with a little bit of context where we've been and then move into where we are this year. I will go over 2 changes that the Federal Government has placed upon us this year. That are additions to prior year collections. and then I will do a walkthrough of these collection tools. and then at the end. happy to do a question-and-answer session, to answer everything I possibly can, and provide you with links and helpful resources. Alright. So, here's where we've been year one in July of 2021 district submitted data on, at the time the only ESSER grant that existed, the ESSER 1 spending. And this was really just from March 13th of 2020 to September 30th of 2020 It was the beginning of the pandemic to the end of that federal fiscal year. Federal fiscal years go from October 1 to September 30th. That was a pretty small data collection. The following year in year 2 is when USED started to expand their data collection. And so, districts submitted in May of 2022 data on ESSER 1 and any ESSER 2 spending from the beginning of that Federal fiscal year to the end of the State fiscal year. This is the year they got back onto the state fiscal year cycle, and they had a very long data collection form that we were able to winnow down to about 14 pages of data last year in April. So, it was a little bit earlier last year. Districts submitted FY22 data on ESSERs, 1, 2 and 3, and also something called the Cross Act, which was non spending data, more like, “what are you doing with the money?” So, it’s more sort of activities based. Again, a lot of the questions were optional, and we did not have to respond to them.

And here we are now in year 4 of the data collection, FY23. So again, it is very important that we're only looking at activities and expenditures that were administered between July 1st of 2022, and June 30th of 2023, just the FY23 year. The data collection window for this is opening Monday, the 15th and is closing Friday, May 10th. And in fact, I think we're actually live now. So, if you wanted to, by the end of today, you know, get in your data collection, I think you could use those links. But I think officially, we're saying we're saying Monday, even though Monday's a holiday. This year's survey is longer and more complicated than last year's. In those ESSER 1, 2, and 3 financial surveys they ask for more detail around the types of expenditures, this activities dimension that they've added. And in Cross Act they've asked for more detail around student participation. So, to reduce as much burden as possible, we're always looking to do this, we will be using SIMS and other existing data sources to populate dozens of required fields. We're not even going to ask you about those and of course I think you'd expect that of us to make sure that we're not asking you know, duplicative information. The other thing that we're doing to reduce some of the burden here is we're eliminating the reporting requirements for the dozens of smaller grants that used ESSER 1, 2 or 3 funds that we gave out to districts. So, if you probably remember that DESE received 10% of the ESSER 1, 2, and 3 grants, and most of that money went back out to districts in the form of lots of lots of smaller grants. And once we got ESSER 3 going it's literally dozens of smaller grants. We feel like the information that we have from those smaller grants is sufficient for us to be able to report to the Feds on those. So, in this sense, we are going to narrow what you are reporting to us to ESSER 1. ESSER 2, if you spent any in FY23, most of you did. ESSER 3, if you spent anything in FY23, most of you did. And if you spent anything in FY23 from any of the ESSERs you have to do the Cross Act. So that's what this slide shows. Right? The ESSER main collection for all districts.

Now for ESSER 1. This was actually just the last 3 months of ESSER 1. So, July 1st of 2022 to September 30th, of 2022, which means it's the final collection for ESSER 1. So, this is the last year we're going to be asking for any ESSER 1 data. If you have unreported spending, and you've taken money, these. These books should be well closed now for ESSER 1 you must report on everything like last year. And like in previous years, you'll see a [survey summary spreadsheet](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/esser/surveys-by-district.xlsx). That's one of the useful tools that we have for you. So, and a balance in ESSER 1 that is unreported, that's got to be reported. Okay, ESSER 2. Obviously, again, this is FY23 ESSER 2. Most districts are going to have ESSER 2 spending in FY23. That was a very big ESSER 2 spending year and very similarly, with ESSER 3, a pretty big spending year for ESSER 3. So we're going to see the majority of districts be having to fill out those 2 forms for sure. And then if you did spend ESSER 2 or ESSER 3 or ESSER 1 dollars during that fiscal year, you have to fill out the Cross Act just to give you a sense. This is, you see, in the yellow. This is ESSER 1. We're in the last year of ESSER 1, and ESSER 2. We are in the second to last year, and then for our ESSER 3, we are in the third to last year. Okay, the question always comes up about what numbers to report. Expenditures can be reported on a cash or accrual basis, whichever accounting form you use. So please be consistent with the methods that you've used in data collections in prior years. As in pre prior years, we're going to be continuing with our use of the Alchemer platform. We will also have Microsoft word versions of all of these surveys because we know that we've gotten feedback in the past “it'd be really helpful for us to have these, so we can fill them out in advance.” And then, as we go through the actual survey we can just sort of copy and paste in this. [PowerPoint](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/esser/data-collection-webinar-slides.pptx) will be available. A recording of this webinar will be available, depending on how quickly we can transcribe it for the web, and other helpful information for you. As you use the Alchemer platform, please coordinate with one another as to who is doing the final submission. We do sometimes get multiple people from the district trying to submit. And then it's especially distressing if the if the numbers are different from those multiple people. So please coordinate with one another on that. Multiple people can use the link and the password, but the surveys themselves have to be completed in in order and just like last year, you'll be asked for an access code in order to access the data collection forms, and that will be your 4-digit district code.

Okay. I'm going to go over the these additional changes that have been made by the Feds this year. The first major change is for the more financial-related surveys. ESSER 1, 2, and 3. This is where you're at, you know, in inputting. Mostly, it's just spending data. They’ve added activities to mention for the 1, 2 and 3 surveys. So, if you recall from last year us, USED has been collecting data in like 4 broad categories. So like health and safety, academic, social emotional learning/mental health is its own, and then, other operational continuity, uses they are essentially taking and then object codes right? Is it salaries, benefits, contracts, etc., etc. In each of those broad categories this year they've broken out each of those broad categories into sort of subcategories by object codes. So, they're getting a little bit more fine-grained with what they're looking for. I put an asterisk next to ESSER 3 to remind folks that the Feds are also very, very, very interested in the 20% learning loss set aside. I say at least 20% learning loss set aside, because, of course, 20% was the minimum that had to be set aside for learning loss. You could set aside more than 20% but we'll call it the 20% learnings plus set aside, they want specific data just like last year. And they wanted again this year specifically, what did you spend on the 20% learning loss set aside? And what did you spend on the non-20% learning loss set aside? So, it kind of creates a situation where ESSER 3 is almost a double survey, because they want unduplicated information on both. So, as I said, this is what the FY21 and FY22 collections look like. You've got these 4 broad categories by these object codes this year. What they're doing is, say, take health and safety, and they've taken health and safety, and they've broken it into, you know, “are these building improvements? Are they meals, cleaning temporary space, disaster, preparation, and other help?” Again, by object code. The real challenging one, I think, is this, next one academic and social emotional learning. They've broken this out into a number of columns: summertime tutoring, staffing screenings, service, coordination, early childhood, hardware or software, internet, curricula, PD, educator, pipeline. And for ESSER 3 they've taken the summer learning, and they actually want to break it between summer, after school, and extended time. And this staffing other is broken into, they want to know specifically about classroom teachers and other staffing. So, I know this is a challenge, again unduplicated. The one that they don't pull apart is mental health, mental health stays the same. They did not break this into subcategories. Operational continuity. They broke into these 6. But they're sort of these other catchalls that I'm not sure a lot of districts are going to use, as you know, with ESSER funds you could use ESSER funds for any allowable activity that was allowable under McKinney Vento, ESSA, IDEA, the adult ed act, and Perkins. And so, they just broke this down into, if you didn't input an expense into the previous 3 categories there, was there anything else that was related to McKinney-Vento, ESSA, IDEA, Perkins, ESSER, other than that you did spend money on? I don't think that this is going to get a lot of use. Maybe this other, which is really the final catchall for anything else that was spent, might be used. But most of most of what we're probably going to receive comes from those. This you know, the health and safety, the and the academic and social, emotional learning grids.

The second major change that we have to report to the Feds on is the in the Cross Act. If your district used any ESSER 1, 2 or 3 funds you have to submit the Cross Act survey. It's more activities related. and they're asking about 7 specific interventions. And if your district you know, provided one of these 7 specific interventions used is asking for this information on student participation. I'll show you how this works. So, this is just their list of 7 that they're collecting data on. They're collecting data on evidence-based summer learning, evidence-based after school programming. extended instructional time. evidence-based high dosage tutoring programs, early childhood programs, expansions. full-service community schools and purchasing education. Technology. what came up in the webinar yesterday. I did the same. Webinar yesterday was what are like the exact definitions of each of these. Because a tutoring program, for instance, is could be much different from evidence based high dosage tutoring. There's a there's a real specific standard that that describes. So, in this PowerPoint that you are going to get, in the Notes section under this slide I've included USED-specific definitions for each of these interventions. So, you have it at your fingertips. and you can determine whether or not the program that you ran meets the definition of one of these interventions that the Feds are collecting data on. If you say that you did a summer learning program, and we know that it's high-quality evidence based? You would then be prompted to submit the capacity and availability of that program. Was it available to all students? What was the capacity, provide a unique head count of the number of students who participated, and then a non-unique percentage of students who participated who belong to any of these federally reported subgroups? And so this would be, you know, 10% students with disabilities or 20% with low income. You know, they don't all have to add up to 100%. But you will be prompted to give us percentages of students who participated who belong to any of these groups. So, you might be asking if you select yes, for any of those 7 interventions that the Feds are collecting data on. But you don't have specific numbers or percentages of students. The guidance that we're being given is you can estimate provided that you document how you came to those estimates and keep those estimates on file in case of an audit or USED review. We do expect that at some point after ESSER is over that USED, will come our way, and ask for how this was done and ask for districts that. They want to look at the records, for, you know, etc. So just, you know, if you if you don't have unique head counts you know, we do say, well, I know about this. Many kids participated. And you know, this is how we came to that number. Just make sure you document that.

Okay, I am going to stop my share right now of the PowerPoint and walk you through what these collection tools look like and what the survey summary spreadsheet looks like. Okay, this is the Survey summary spreadsheet. Where, if I were you, this is where I would start. There are 3 tabs in the survey summary spreadsheet. It starts with the read me just some quick instructions, please take a look at that. The main tab in the middle is the summary. Then your survey links are in the third tab, it'll give you the link to the actual fund codes, and then it'll give you a link to the actual survey surveys that you'll have to fill out. So, let's go back to the middle tab. Right? You have your DESE 4-digit code here. This is all in alphabetical glory, so you can find yourself quickly. We provided a little bit more information here about some of your federal numbers. [The DUNS number, which is now your UEI number, is a new number](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/Unique-Entity-Identifier-Transition-Fact-Sheet.pdf). The [NCES](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/) number. But here is how we've set this up just in, you know, simple shading here. So, in the gray is ESSER 1. So, this is how much Sr one was awarded. And this is how much ESSER 1 remains now, remains to be reported to the fed. Now, in most districts, as you can see, a bunch of zeros here have already reported on the last of their ESSER 1 funds, and that's great. But if you do have a number here it means that much money has not been reported to the Feds and if you've taken that money, that needs to be reported. So, because this is your last chance for ESSER 1 I put those numbers in red. This is how much ESSER 2 is awarded in blue. This is how much has not yet been reported. Obviously ESSER 2 is a lot more money, and so most districts have large numbers here. I’m sure a lot of that was spent during FY23. There are just a few that seem to have spent it all by last year. So again, if you've got a 0 here, you wouldn't have to. You wouldn't have to do this survey, but if you've got numbers here and you spent any ESSER 2 funds you’ve got to do the ESSER 2 data collection. And lastly, in the purple is ESSER 3. And this is what I was talking about before, where it's kind of like double right? Because the Feds want to know how much is being spent, and both for the 20% set aside and for the non 20% set aside. So, I've put that here. Your ESSER award, your total not yet reported, but reported on the 20% set aside that you put in your grant budgets when you first applied. And you said 20%, this is going to learning loss. And the 20% set aside that has not yet been reported to the Feds. Okay so, say, I'm one of these districts up here. I know I have to look at it. I have to do ESSER 2 and ESSER 3 and cross act. And so, I will click into that. And I'm going to stop, share and go to the ESSER 2 recipient data collection form. Find it here. Okay. here it is. We have you know, introductory text here. And then this is where you put your 4-digit code in, I am going to do a dummy code. I will add my name, my email address, and the completed form will be sent to this email address. It usually takes like 5 min or so for the system to process, create a PDF and then send it to you. So then it'll ask you if you were a lead district for a schedule A consortium. If you are, you click yes, but most districts are not so they would click no. And here is where you'll find the grids on this on this second page. It'll ask you first of all, okay, how much was spent? And then we will look and basically, this is here. I'll input a total amount of $100,000, let's say. And then here's addressing health, physical health, and safety, that overarching category. And then here are these subcategories that they're asking for by object code. The next grid is academic and social emotional learning needs by object code. That grid, as I said, they didn't break out the mental health supports into anything. So, the mental health and then operational continuity into those subcategories again, by object code. And again, these are unduplicated counts. They are all mutually exclusive boxes, so that at the end what should happen is that the sum of all of the boxes on this page equals what you put in question 4. Just a note on that try to submit this, having checked that because it's we don’t just want to have to go back and forth with validation errors, as the Feds will come back, and they'll say, this is wrong. You got to do it again or fix it.

I'm going to go to the next screen. It's telling me that I should probably put information in these before going onto the next screen. And then, based on your funds that remain as of July first of 2023, what percentage are you planning to spend on these four things? That's just an estimate and then a district certification. So, the bulk of this is, if I go back, it's really this page. Right? It is. It is really how much was spent and in what categories and subcategories, and that is, that is really the meat of this report. I am going to go to ESSER 3. Dessi, Michelle, can you see? Did that work? I know sometimes it is only okay. Good just want to make sure it's going between the tabs. Alright, I'm going to do my ESSER 3 report. Again, looks very, very similar, total of total amount you spent in FY23, and then the same kind of grid. But for ESSER 3 it starts with 20% learning loss. And then the non-20% learning less. So exclusive of the 20% learning loss for each of these. Okay, so it starts with physical health and safety. 20% physical health and safety non, 20% academic, social, emotional, 20% academic, social, emotional non, 20% mental health supports 20% mental health supports non 20%, and then operational continuity, 20% operational continuity, non-20%. So ESSER 3 is bigger. It’s really kind of double because of the 20% learning loss set aside. And the Feds want information on all of that. Oh, yeah, it's telling me I do actually have to provide an amount here. And then it asks for, well, what did you plan to do with the remaining funds, as of July first, 2023. You put in percentages there. These are just estimates. and then they do have an open text box that they've kept in there, and it just it asks for a quick, you know, describe how the selected activities or interventions address the disproportionate impact of COVID under, served on underserved groups of kids. and that is the end of the ESSER 3. So again, the real meat of this form is. you know, the grid page and the challenge with. So, 3 is 20% set aside, non-20% set aside.

The last one I will take you to is the Cross Act and walk you through this. enter my information. So, this is again non-financial. But if you've spent any S for 1, 2, or $3 during FY. 23, you have to. You have to fill this one out. Let's see, we did. Now that we're a few years past the depths of the pandemic you know, promoting vaccination mass use? It's probably not. We're not going to see a lot of a lot of these. But if you did during FY23, then select one of those or none of the above. Home internet access. That's another one that probably going to see a lot of not during FY 23. Re-engaging student students in activities, maybe we say yes to this, and we did. And did you allocate any portion of ESSER funds directly to schools? Via some kind of flat amount or rate? You would answer that question, we're going to say, no. Okay, this is where these those 7 special activities come in. So, do we do summer learning, and this would be the summer of 2022 right? FY23 is July 1st of 2022. So, we would, you know, if you had July, August summer school that year. 2022 summer school. I would say, yes, we did evidence-based summer school. And this is where you'd have to give information on student participation. Was it available to all students. Yes. What’s the unique head count? It was 500. And this is where we would add, okay, this was 20% students with disabilities, 40% students low income. 15%. I'm just throwing numbers in here again. These all don't have to add up to 100% because you could have students in multiple categories. I mean. and we'll stop there and let's say, well, we didn't do after school. Yep. The third thing that they are asking for is an extended instructional time. No? We did tutoring, but we didn't do evidence-based high dosage tutoring. I think the high dosage tutoring again. That's a high standard. Read that definition. in PowerPoint, and I'm going to say that our district did not. We didn't expand early childhood. We didn't do a full-service community school. We didn't purchase educational technology. So no, we didn't purchase Ed tech for all students. We purchased 200 Chromebooks for 200 students. Again, you would input the percentages. And then that's the end of the Cross Act. Alright.

The last thing I want to share with you right now is our [ESSER data collection website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/esser/data-collection.html) on DESE's website. We've got the slides. See? They're already up. We’ve got the data collection tools. We've got the survey summary spreadsheet. That is up. We have the tools in Microsoft word format, all 3 of them: 113, 115, 119, and the Cross Act. The webinar recordings and the transcript will be up there shortly. I'm going to go back to my PowerPoint. Okay? So, we just did the walkthrough of the survey summary spreadsheet. So, the links how to get to the collection tools. And I just walked you through each of those collection tools. I did ESSER 2, 3 and Cross act, because that's, I think, what we're mostly going to see. But that ESSER 1 looks very, very similar to ESSER 2, if you have to do the ESSER 1. Alright.

So, let's get to QA. If you have questions and answers, please, or quick, if you have questions, I would love answers. If you have questions, please drop them into the QA. Feature, and I'm I'll be happy to answer all of these on the fly right now, if I'm able to, and if I'm not we will. We will put that information on the website in our tools, in our resources, or maybe we'll have to get back to you individually. But if I could get Michelle and Dessi to read those off to me, I'll answer whatever I can for you right now. So we have. Go ahead, Dessi. Yeah, we have a few that we are not able to answer. So, Matt, maybe you can. You can try for those the one that I really didn't know the answer to was:

How was the UEI obtained? So they're asking whether that's the CPU UEI or the schools, school district. Oh, the UEI numbers! I don't know a whole lot to be honest with you about how the UEI number, but that's what the Feds have on file for the entity that is you know that that that is being reported on. Actually, I think there's like a [UEI lookup tool](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/). You can see it online. You know, what entity is associated with that UEI number? That is, it's a good question. I don't know a lot about the UEI. I know that you had to apply for it, but I don't know if certain municipalities said, you know, this is just for all of us or if certain municipalities said, Well, we're going to do one for the town and one for the district and one for another department. Would you know whatever I think it might, it might be different. So, I'm sorry, probably couldn't be more helpful than that. I’m not an expert on the UEI process.

Here's another one, Matt. Is there something that defines the allowable uses for the 20% reserve for learning loss? I just want to make sure our expert expenditures comply. Oh, yeah, so here, I'll even share my screen. So, first of all, I think you know, it's important to note that whatever's in your approved ESSER 3 grant application is probably the first place that you should be going because in there you had to, when you applied for these funds, you said, well, this is what we're going to be using. And we asked for that 20%. So that's the first place that I would go to in the federal grant programs website, in the [Coronavirus relief programs](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/esser/default.html), and go to if you go to the [ESSER 3 fund](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/esser/esser3.html). Yeah, we have all kinds of stuff. The quick reference guides. These are like the 1 or 2-pagers that we publish, that have all the need-to-know information in them. This this quick reference guide will have all of the, you know, definitions of what that what that 20% in entails or doesn't entail, almost everything in that academic slash social, emotional learning category is likely to fall into learning loss. There are others that are probably more, you know, shades of gray but really any services that are that are helping kids recover from the pandemic with respect to their academics or social emotional learning is probably going to fit into that 20%.

We have another one: if none of your activities meet the definition of the 7, do you have any data to input. No, you just click no. It's interesting. The Feds are just doing this for those 7 activities. I don't know if they want to like, publish some kind of report after COVID, and say, like, you know of these 7 activities, that these are how many students across the nation participated, and ESSER helped fund them. Whatever they're thinking is, they're only focused on those 7 for the Cross Act. And it's almost like a sub. It's in a way, it's almost like a supplemental data collection that they've narrowed in on those on those 7. But if you didn't have any of those activities. you know. Then you just click no for those and finish out that survey. You still have to complete the Cross Act survey if you had any ESSER 2 or 3 expenditures in FY23, right? You got to do the survey that Cross Act survey? Some of those questions upfront were, you might have spent money, but just for those 7, if you didn't then then you click. No, and that's your answer. It's only when you click yes to those that that then okay, they're asking how many students, and from what groups.

I think that is all the questions that we have so far. Okay, alright. Then, I will let us wrap up with one more slide from the slideshow. As you saw, it's already on the website. So, you might not even need the email. But we will send an email out to all registrants and probably broader than that. We've got to get a lot of districts in through this process. We want to make sure that everyone who wasn't able to attend these webinars can get in. So, this will have all the links to all of the surveys. Remember, you got to access using your 4-digit district code. In that survey summary spreadsheet, that's really the best place to start, what remains to be reported. Those Microsoft Word versions of each of the data collection surveys is probably going to be helpful. This PowerPoint will be helpful and, as I said here, as soon as possible, we'll have all these resources posted to the our website. Most of them are already up there. But we'll work on getting this webinar and transcript up and any other questions.

I just want to thank you for your time. I know that this is a challenge every single spring. This isn't easy, and I know the Feds have added information this year. We've tried to subtract away some information to reduce that burden. So, this is the job, we're here to support you. Let us know how we can help. And again. Thanks for thanks for all you do every day for all of our students, and special thanks to Dessi and to Michelle and all my colleagues, really, for helping out with this. So, thanks, have a great weekend and we'll be in touch.