**Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA)**

**Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER II) Fund:**

**Quick Reference Guide – Fund Code 115**

**The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSA), was signed into law on December 27, 2020 and provides supplemental funding for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II Fund) to help K-12 educational entities prevent, prepare for, and respond to impacts of COVID-19.**

**ESSER II Fund: General Information**

Although ESSER II funds are distributed to districts based on Title I, Part A allocations, they are not Title I, Part A funds. ESSER II is its own program intended to help with the COVID-19 response. ESSER II Funds may support any allowable activity listed in the CRRSA law itself, as well as any allowable activity authorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). ESSER II funding will remain available through September 30, 2023.

**ESSER II Funds ALLOWABLE Activities:**

The purpose of the ESSER II fund is to provide districts with emergency relief funds to address the impact COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools that are providing educational services and is intended to help school districts safely reopen schools, and with a focus on acceleration rather than remediation. Funds may be used for a wide variety of purposes, including but not limited to:

***Academics and Instruction: Evidence-based approaches to address unfinished teaching and learning.***

* High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), using [CUrriculumRAtings by TEachers (CURATE)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/) and High Quality professional development for district staff, including culturally responsive practices
* Early literacy programming, including Early Literacy tutoring (before and after school): high-dose tutoring with clear guardrails in literacy and math, including valid and reliable early literacy screening assessments
* K-12 math skill-building, including high-dose tutoring for elementary, middle, and early high school students
* Planning and implementing summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs
* Providing principals and other school leaders with resources to address individual school needs

***Social Emotional Supports, Parent and Student Engagement: to address student mental health and wellbeing and engagement in learning.***

* Evidence-based activities, parent engagement, tracking attendance, and improving student engagement
* Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children, students with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth, including outreach and service delivery
* Maximize capacity for coordination to connect students to behavioral and mental health supports and services **NOTE: A minimum of $10,000 must be committed to student mental health services and supports**

***Operations: to address on-going planning, coordinating, and provision of services related to COVID-19.***

* Educational technology (connectivity, hardware, devices, software, technology support services, etc.)
* Supplies and services that enable remote learning (printing, telephonic support, translation services, etc.)
* School ventilation system improvements; sanitizing district facilities
* COVID-19 testing, PPE, and other supplies/services to implement public health protocols
* Planning for and coordinating during long-term closures, including how to provide meals, technology for online learning, guidance for carrying out IDEA requirements, and providing educational services.
* Other activities necessary to maintain district operations and services and to continue to employ existing district staff, including training on minimizing the spread of infectious disease when school resumes

***Please note: This is not an exhaustive list.*** ***Contact*** ***our office for more specific, situational, and fiscal guidance as needed.***

**ESSER II Funds UNALLOWABLE Activities:**

The US Department of Education has noted that districts may not spend ESSER II funds on:

* Bonuses, merit pay, or similar expenditures, unless related to disruptions or closures related to COVID-19
* Subsidizing or offsetting executive salaries and benefits of individuals who are not district employees
* Expenditures related to state or local teacher or faculty unions or associations.

**Reporting Requirements for ESSER II**

Under the CRRSA Act, each State must submit a report to USED that contains a detailed accounting of the use of ESSER II funds. This accounting includes:

* How funds are being used to measure and address learning loss among students disproportionately affected by the coronavirus and school closures.
* Other ESSER II spending details, which will be collected via an annual supplemental survey.

**Equitable Services for Private Schools**

Districts are not required to provide equitable services to private schools under ESSER II. The CRRSA Act included a separate program to provide emergency assistance for private schools.

**Supplement not Supplant**

The CRRSA Act ESSER II fund does not have a supplement not supplant requirement.

**Mental Health Services and Supports**

To build capacity of public-school districts and communities to facilitate integrated coordination of school and community-based resources, DESE is providing an additional $10,000 to each district for student mental health services and supports.

**A minimum of $10,000 must be committed to student mental health services and supports.**

**CARES Act Fiscal Waivers**

In addition to providing ESSER and ESSER II funds, the U.S. Department of Ed. has **waived** certain fiscal requirements for **ESSA** grant programs:

* **The carryover limit for 2019-2020 (FY20) Title I, Part A Funds.** Districts are not limited in how much FY20 Title I, Part A funds they carryover from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021.
* **The period of availability to spend 2018-2019 (FY19) funds** for the following ESSA programs. Districts have an extra year (until September 30, 2021) to spend the FY19 funds. The programs covered by this waiver are:
	+ Title I, Part A (Improving Basic Programs),
	+ Title I, Part C (Migrant Education),
	+ Title I, Part D, Subpart 1(Neglected and Delinquent),
	+ Title II, Part A (Supporting Effective Instruction),
	+ Title III, Part A (English Language Acquisition)
	+ Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Achievement),
	+ Title IV, Part B (21st Century Community Learning Centers),
	+ Title V, Part B Subpart 2 (Rural and Low-Income School Program), and
	+ McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program

**FY21 Title IV, Part A flexibility**

* **The requirements for districts that receive $30,000 or more in Title IV, Part A funds** to conduct a needs assessment. Districts will not have to amend the needs assessment in 2020-2021
* **The requirement for districts that receive $30,000 or more in Title IVA funds to spend funds in three areas (well-rounded education, activities to support safe and healthy students, and effective use of technology).** This waiver allows districts to spend any FY21 funds on any allowable Title IVA activity rather than having to spend across all three areas.
* **The limit on spending TIVA funds on technology infrastructure**. Districts are not limited on how much they spend on technology infrastructure.

***Please contact your*** [***DESE federal grants liaison***](http://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/liaisons.xlsx) ***for further guidance on CARES Act ESSA waivers.***