

CREATED OCTOBER 2021 + UPDATES

# ARP+ K-12 INFO HUB

Resources for using ARP, CARES,  
and CRRSA federal investments  
to remodel K-12 education

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A collaborative, living document from the  
Partnership for the Future of Learning



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**FUTURE of  
LEARNING**

## Overview

Welcome to the [Partnership for the Future of Learning's](#)

It has stories and messaging that have been crowdsourced from our network partners and their knowledge.

This toolkit builds on the *ARP+ K-12 Info Hub* with resources for using ARP, CARES, and CRRSA federal investments to remodel K-12 education. This hub serves as a resource for partners working to ensure that public funds are used effectively so that schools are centers of opportunity and healing.

**This is a collaborative effort, with many partners having contributed analysis and links to materials.** It provides easy access to materials from over forty agencies/organizations.



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## I. Federal Funding Streams

### A. The Main K-12 Stream: ESSER Funds and Requirements

Congress passed several COVID-19 relief packages, including three that provide funding to K-12 school districts to assist them to reopen schools safely and help students recover lost learning time and address additional pandemic-related challenges. The funds also offer an opportunity to reimagine public education to address persistent inequities and foster student-centered systems and policies.

The three COVID-19 relief packages that provide funding for public K-12 schools are:

- [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act](#) or CARES Act, approved March 2020
- [Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act](#) or CRRSA Act, approved December 2020
- [American Rescue Plan Act](#) or ARP Act, approved March 2021

The CARES Act established the [Education Stabilization Fund](#), which is made up of four new grant programs:

1. [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund](#) or ESSER fund. Most funds for public K-12 schools in the three COVID-19 relief bills are allocated to the ESSER fund. In total, \$190.6 billion has been directed to the ESSER fund.
2. [Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund](#) (GEER),
3. Education Stabilization Fund Discretionary Grants, and
4. [Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund](#) (HEER).

Additional money targeted to students with disabilities and students experiencing homelessness was included in the ARP. The ARP also contains funding for internet connectivity and technology through the Emergency Connectivity Fund. More information about these funds is provided in a subsequent section.

The next section provides an overview of federal dollars allocated to the ESSER fund under the three COVID-19 relief packages.

#### ESSER Funds in the CARES, CRRSA & ARP Acts

The ESSER fund has a similar structure under the CARES, CRRSA and ARP Acts. For example, each act allocates funds to states based on the proportional amount of Title I, Part A money they receive under the Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA).<sup>1</sup> Title I provides districts with funds to meet the additional needs of low-income children. Using the Title I formula to distribute ESSER funds to states and districts helps ensure that this money flows to students in communities with the highest needs.

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<sup>1</sup> The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was first enacted in 1965. Congress passed the most recent iteration in 2014 and titled it the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

There are also key differences between the three relief packages. A notable one is the **Maintenance of Equity** requirement included in the ARP Act. This new requirement aims to prevent states from imposing disproportionate cuts on high need districts or cutting funding for those districts with the highest portion of low-income students. A similar mandate is imposed on districts to prevent disproportionate cuts to high poverty schools. Table 1 provides an overview of the similarities and differences in the packages.

**Table 1: Overview of ESSER Funds and Requirements in the CARES, CRRSA & ARP Acts**

	<b>CARES Act-ESSER I</b>	<b>CRRSA Act-ESSER II</b>	<b>ARP Act-ESSER III</b>
<b>Total Amount</b>	\$13.2 billion	\$54.3 billion	\$122.8 billion
<b>Allocation to States</b>	Grant to SEAs based on proportion of Title I, Part A funds of the ESEA received in <b>FY 2019</b>	Grant to SEAs based on proportion of Title I, Part A funds of the ESEA received in <b>FY 2020</b>	Grant to SEAs based on proportion of Title I, Part A funds of the ESEA received in <b>FY 2020</b>
<b>Distribution to Districts</b>	SEAs required to distribute a minimum of 90% to LEAs. District grants based on proportion of Title I, Part A funds received in <b>FY 2019</b> .	SEAs required to distribute a minimum of 90% to LEAs. District grants based on proportion of Title I, Part A funds received in <b>FY 2020</b> .	SEAs required to distribute a minimum of 90% to LEAs. District grants based on proportion of Title I, Part A funds received in <b>FY 2020</b> .
<b>SEA Funding Use</b>	No required action by SEAs. Maximum of 0.5% of state CARES allocation can be used for administrative costs.	No required action by SEAs. Maximum of 0.5% of state CRRSA allocation can be used for administrative costs.	SEAs required to spend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 5% of total state ARP allocation on evidence-based activities to address learning loss</li> <li>● 1% of total allocation on summer enrichment programs</li> <li>● 1% of total allocation on afterschool programs</li> </ul> Maximum of 0.5% of state ARP allocation can be used for administrative costs.
<b>LEA Funding Use</b>	Districts have considerable flexibility in using CARES Act funds including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● any activity allowed under ESEA, IDEA, and the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act</li> <li>● activities to address the unique needs of low-income students</li> </ul>	Districts have considerable flexibility in using CRRSA funds including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● any activity allowed under ESEA, IDEA, and the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act</li> </ul>	Districts must spend 20% of ARP funds to address learning loss through evidence-based activities. Remaining funds can be used flexibly including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● any activity allowed under ESEA, IDEA, and the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act</li> <li>● activities to address the unique needs of low-income students and those who have disabilities, are English</li> </ul>

	<p>and those who have disabilities, are English learners, racial or ethnic minorities, in foster care, or experiencing homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purchasing educational technology</li> <li>• providing mental health services</li> </ul> <p>SEAs and state legislatures may not limit how ESSER funds are used.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activities to address the unique needs of low-income students and those who have disabilities, are English learners, racial or ethnic minorities, in foster care, or experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• purchasing educational technology</li> <li>• providing mental health services</li> </ul> <p>SEAs and state legislatures may not limit how ESSER funds are used.</p>	<p>learners, racial or ethnic minorities, in foster care, or experiencing homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purchasing educational technology</li> <li>• providing mental health services</li> </ul> <p>Districts must post plan to return to in-person instruction on their websites within 30 days of receiving ARP funds. Districts must develop and submit a plan to use ARP funds to their SEAs. They must engage in meaningful consultation with community stakeholders in developing their plan. SEAs and state legislatures may not limit how ESSER funds are used.</p>
<b>Equitable Services Requirement</b>	Districts required to provide equitable services to students in private schools located in their boundaries. This differs from the equitable services provision under Title I, which requires districts to provide services to low-income students in private schools, not all students.	No requirement.	No requirement.
<b>Maintenance of Effort Requirement</b>	States must maintain support for elementary and secondary education in <b>FYs 2020 and 2021</b> at the amount that is the average state support for FYs 2017, 2018, and 2019.	States must maintain support for elementary and secondary education in <b>FY 2022</b> at the proportional level relative to the state’s overall spending averaged over FYs 2017, 2018, and 2019.	States must maintain support for elementary and secondary education in <b>FYs 2022 &amp; 2023</b> at the proportional level relative to the state’s overall spending averaged over FYs 2017, 2018, and 2019.
<b>Maintenance of Equity Requirement</b>	No requirement.	No requirement.	States may not reduce per-student state funding for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any high-need LEA by an amount greater than any</li> </ul>

<b>for States</b>			<p>overall reduction in state funding across all LEAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any highest-poverty LEAs below the amount of per-pupil state funding these LEAs received in FY 2019.</li> </ul> <p><b>Applies in FYs 2022 &amp; 2023</b></p>
<b>Maintenance of Equity Requirement for Districts</b>	No requirement.	No requirement.	<p>Districts may not reduce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combined state &amp; local per-student funding for any high-poverty school by an amount greater than any overall reduction in combined state &amp; local funding for all schools in the district.</li> <li>Number of FTE staff per-pupil in any high-poverty school by an amount that exceeds the total reduction in of FTE staff per-pupil in all schools in the district.</li> </ul> <p><b>Applies in FYs 2022 &amp; 2023</b></p> <p>Districts are exempt from the MoEquity requirement if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have fewer than 1,000 students</li> <li>Operate a single school</li> <li>Server all students in each grade span in a single school</li> <li>Demonstrate an exceptional or uncontrollable circumstance as determined by USED</li> </ul>
<b>Deadline to Obligate Funds<sup>2</sup></b>	September 30, 2022	September 30, 2023	September 30, 2024

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<sup>2</sup> The CARES, CRRSA, and ARP legislation set deadlines to obligate funds of one year earlier in each instance (e.g. September 30, 2021 for the CARES Act). However, these deadlines are extended under the Tydings provision, which is a feature of many federal grant programs.

## ESSER Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education

The U.S. Department of Education has released an array of documents that provide detailed information on the federal dollars allocated to the ESSER funds in the three COVID-19 relief packages. Many can be accessed through USED's main [ESSER page](#) and include:

- [ESSER Fund Frequently Asked Questions](#), which provides information on the ESSER fund after its initial formation under the CARES act.
- [Guidance on Maintenance of Effort Requirements and Waiver Requests under the ESSER Fund and the GEER Fund](#), which contains MOE requirements under the CARES act, CRRSA act, and the ARP act.
- [Frequently Asked Questions: Maintenance of Equity Requirements](#) explains the application of this new requirement on states and districts.
- [Fact Sheet: American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund](#) highlights key elements of the ARP ESSER funds.
- [Fact Sheet: Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund II, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act](#), highlights key differences in using ESSER funds under the CARES and CRRSA Acts.
- [Using ARP Funding to Support Full-Service Community Schools & Related Strategies](#) explains how ARP funds can be used to launch and expand community schools.
- [Providing Equitable Services to Students and Teachers in Non-Public Schools Under the CARES Act Programs](#) outlines districts' requirements for offering services to students in private schools located within their boundaries.

USED's [Strategies for Using American Rescue Plan Funding to Address the Impact of Lost Instructional Time](#) emphasizes engaging students, families, school staff, and community partners in meeting student needs. It provides extensive guidance on assessment and notes, "As we work to better understand where students are and what is needed to advance their progress, educators should take an asset-based approach that supports student growth across a learning progression." (p.22)

## State ESSER Plans and Funding Figures

States' plans for using ARP ESSER funds are available from USED [here](#). Disbursement of ESSER funds by USED can be tracked [here](#).

The National Conference of State Legislatures also maintains helpful data:

- [Elementary and Secondary Education Relief Fund Tracker](#) provides a snapshot of the amount of ESSER funds each state received and highlights from their plans to spend them.
- This [larger package of information](#) on CARES, CRRSA, and [ARP funds](#), including a tracker for GEER funding, state action related to relief funds, and other issues.

## B. Beyond ESSER: Other K-12 Education Funds

While ESSER is the primary source of federal pandemic relief funding for K-12 schools, additional financial support is also available to states and districts through the GEER fund and under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act as well as the McKinney-Vento Act. The ARP Act also includes funds to support remote instruction through the Emergency Connectivity Fund.

### GEER Fund

The Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund is one of the grant programs within the Education Stabilization Fund created by the CARES Act. Nearly \$3 billion was allocated to the GEER Fund under the CARES Act. An additional \$4 billion was directed to it through the CRRSA Act. More than half of these additional funds--\$2.75 billion--went to Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools (EANS) grants. The ARP also included money to boost the EANS fund, another \$2.75 billion.

Governors have considerable flexibility in using GEER funds, which can be directed to LEAs, institutions of higher education (IHEs), or other education-related organizations that are “most significantly impacted by coronavirus.” Education-related organizations include:

- Non-public and for-profit elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools
- Charter management organizations
- State agencies that oversee/provide early childhood education or vocational rehabilitative services
- State mental health agencies
- Childcare centers

GEER I funds are available for obligation by governors or sub-grantees until September 30, 2022 and GEER II funds until September 30, 2023.

GEER resources from USED include:

- [Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund II Fact Sheet](#), which outlines core components of GEER I under the CARES Act and GEER II under the CRRSA Act.
- [GEER I Awards](#), which includes links to initial reports on how GEER I funds were used
- [Geer II Methodology and State Allocations including EANS Allotments](#)

EANS funds can be used by non-public schools that serve “[a significant percentage of low-income students and are most impacted](#)” by COVID-19 for a variety of purposes to protect student and staff health and safety, provide instructional and support services, and address issues that emerged from disruptions in services. The establishment of the EANS fund eliminates the need for school districts to provide equitable services with ESSER funds under the CRRSA and ARP Acts. More information about the EANS fund is available [here](#).

### Funding for Students with Disabilities and those Experiencing Homelessness

While ESSER I and II funds under the CARES and CRRSA Acts can be used for activities allowed under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act and the McKinney-Vento Act, dollars were not

allocated specifically for students served by these programs. The ARP Act dedicated funding for both of these student groups: \$3 billion for students with disabilities, and \$800 million for students experiencing homelessness.

#### ARP – IDEA

The ARP Act provides more than \$3 billion in supplemental IDEA funds for Fiscal Year 2021:

- \$2.58 billion in Part B Grants to States
- \$200 million in Part B Preschool Grants
- \$250 million in Part C Grants for Infants and Families

Part B Grants to States is a formula-driven grant to states to provide special education services to students ages 3 to 21.<sup>3</sup> Part B Preschool Grants is also a formula-driven grant to states to provide special education services to children ages 3 to 5.<sup>4</sup> Part C Grants for Infants and Families is also a formula-based grant program to states to provide early intervention services to children with disabilities from birth to age 2 through a statewide system of coordinated, interagency action.

These supplemental funds for IDEA are available for obligation between July 1, 2021 and September 30, 2023. They must be used in accordance with existing IDEA requirements. State allocations are available [here](#). Additional information, including an [ARP-IDEA fact sheet](#), is available on USED's [website](#).

#### ARP – Homeless Children and Youth

The ARP Act sends \$800 million to states to meet the needs of students who are homeless through the ARP-Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) fund. State allocations of ARP-HCY funds are based on their portion of Title I, Part A funds under the ESEA. SEAs received 25 percent of their [total ARP-HCY allotment](#), referred to as ARP-Homeless I, in April. They will receive the remaining 75 percent, ARP-HCY II, later in 2021. SEAs are required to submit an application for ARP-Homeless II funding by July 20, 2021 and a state plan for using ARP-HCY funds by September 7, 2021.

SEAs must distribute at least 75 percent of ARP-Homeless II funding to LEAs. Grants to LEAs will be based on a formula that uses the LEAs' allocation of Title I funds and the number of homeless children and youth in either the 2018-2019 or the 2019-2020 school year, whichever is greater. This differs from the formula normally used to distribute funds under the McKinney-Vento Act, which allocates funds through a competitive process.

Additional information about ARP-HCY, including state allocations, is available on USED's website [here](#).

#### Emergency Connectivity Fund

The ARP Act created the [Emergency Connectivity Fund](#) (ECF) to support students who may rely on remote instruction during the 2021-2022 school year. Nearly \$7.2 billion has been allocated to the ECF

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<sup>3</sup> Part B Grants to States is authorized under Section 611 of the IDEA and is sometimes referred to as Part B, Section 611.

<sup>4</sup> Part B Preschool Grants is authorized under Section 619 of the IDEA and is sometimes referred to as Part B, Section 619.

to enable schools and libraries to buy laptops, hotspots, and broadband for students who lack these tools.

There is a short timeline for applying for ECF funds. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released the ECF [application](#) on June 29, 2021. **Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. ET on August 13, 2021.** If funds remain after the initial application period, the FCC will provide additional information. [Eligible schools](#) and libraries [may apply](#) for funds to purchase eligible equipment and services between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. Applicants must also certify that all funds will support students and staff who would otherwise lack sufficient internet and technology.

The FCC has provided webinars, [FAQs](#), and other [resources](#) to help schools and libraries apply.

### Federal COVID Relief K-12 Funding: Summary

In total, over \$2 billion is directed or available to assist K-12 schools in helping students recapture lost learning time and accelerate their progress academically and non-academically in the wake of pandemic-disruptions.

**Table 2: Total Federal COVID-19 Relief Funds for K-12 Education**

Fund	Amount
ESSER I	\$13.2 billion
ESSER II	\$54.3 billion
ESSER III	\$122.8 billion
GEER I*	\$2.95 billion
GEER II (excludes EANS funds)*	\$1.3 billion
Supplemental IDEA	\$3.03 billion
Supplemental McKinney-Vento	\$800 million
Emergency Connectivity Fund**	\$7.2 billion
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$205 billion</b>

\* Can also be used for higher education and early learning/childcare

\*\* Can also be used by libraries

The ARP Act also includes [\\$100 million for the Institute for Education Science](#) to conduct research related to the effects of the pandemic and supporting recovery for students.

### C. State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

The ARP Act established the [Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds](#), which sends \$350 billion to states, local, territorial, and tribal governments to help them recover from the effects of the pandemic. The U.S. Treasury Department, which is administering the funds, provides detailed information about them [here](#), including a [fact sheet](#) and [interim final rule](#). The U.S Treasury Department clarified uses of funds for addressing the teacher shortage in two one-page guidances [ARP SLFRF Uses to Address Educator Shortages](#) and [ARP ESSER GEER & HEERF Uses to Address Educator Shortages](#).

Funding amounts by government type are:

**Table 3: State & Local Recovery Fund**

Government Type	Amount
<a href="#">States</a>	\$195.3 billion
<a href="#">Counties</a>	\$65.1 billion
<a href="#">Metropolitan Cities</a>	\$45.6 billion
Tribal Governments	\$20.0 billion
<a href="#">Territories</a>	\$4.5 billion
Non-entitlement Units of Local Government	\$19.5 billion

Allocations to states and other governments are available from the Treasury Department [here](#).

Fiscal Recovery Funds can be used to mitigate the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on low-income families and communities of color, including harmful effects on students including:<sup>5</sup>

- “Addressing educational disparities through new or expanded early learning services, providing additional resources to high-poverty school districts, and offering educational services like tutoring or afterschool programs as well as services to address social, emotional, and mental health needs.”<sup>6</sup> (More detailed information on how Fiscal Recovery Funds can be used to support students is available in the [Interim Final Rule, see page 11.](#))

<sup>5</sup> The Treasury Department has identified five broad areas for fund use: 1) support public health expenditure; 2) address negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency; 3) Replace lost public sector revenue; 4) Provide premium pay for essential workers; and 5) Invest in water, sewer, and broadband internet.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Treasury. (2021, May 10). Fact Sheet: The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Will Deliver \$350 Billion for State, Local, Territorial, and Tribal Governments to Respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic and Bring Back Jobs. Retrieved from <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRP-Fact-Sheet-FINAL1-508A.pdf>

- “Promoting healthy childhood environments, including new or expanded high quality childcare, home visiting programs for families with young children, and enhanced services for child welfare-involved families and foster youth.”<sup>7</sup>

Fiscal recovery funds used for these purposes must be provided within a Qualified Census Tract (one identified as low-income by the U.S. Department of Housing), by a Tribal government, or to other populations or areas disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

In addition, the funds can be used to:

- Prevent or mitigate the spread of the virus in schools
- Provide premium pay for essential workers including school staff
- Provide school-based social-emotional support and other mental health services
- Establish a broadband infrastructure to deliver service to unserved or underserved communities, specifically those that lack a connection that delivers a minimum speed of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload.

The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities laid out [priorities](#) for using Fiscal Recovery Funds.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

## II. Research, Recommendations, and a Game to Guide Spending

The federal relief funds provide needed resources to help schools reopen as centers of opportunity and healing. They also offer a unique opportunity to reconsider how and what types of learning experiences are provided to students – particularly students of color, low-income students, and other historically marginalized students – and to remodel systems to advance racial equity and meaningful learning.

A first step in this process is bringing student, parent and other community voices into discussions about how these funds are spent, so that their needs, hopes and ideas shape decisions. This section links to materials on this foundational step, community engagement. It then links to materials on programmatic approaches to advancing racial equity and meaningful learning, including cultivating a diverse and strong educator profession and building/expanding community schools.

### A. Community Engagement

State Education Agencies and school districts are required to develop plans to use ARP funds. In doing so, they must “engage in meaningful consultation with students; families, school and district administrators (including special education administrators); and teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff, and their unions” as well as other key community stakeholders according to [rules](#) established by USED. Districts are also required to develop a plan to return to safe in-person instruction. This plan must be posted on their websites and updated every six months. Districts must solicit input from community members for these six month updates.

The short deadlines for state and local plans, while important for moving funds quickly, constrained community engagement opportunities. However, the requirement that they revise their in-person instructional plans every six months may provide community members an opportunity to engage district leaders and school board members in discussions about use of ARP funds more broadly.

Three reports from USED offer strategies local and state educational leaders can use to engage students, parents, and other community members. They also include language community members can cite in advocating inclusion.

- [ED COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 1: Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)
- [Strategies for Community Engagement in School Turnaround](#)
- [Strategies for Using American Rescue Plan Funding to Address the Impact of Lost Instructional Time](#), which notes, “schools and school districts should also conduct active and specific engagement with historically underserved students and families. ... This engagement should begin early in the decision-making process and should be ongoing, meaningful, collaborative, and accessible to individuals with disabilities and limited English proficiency.” (p.5)

A few states have been out front in expecting and supporting robust engagement.

- *Oregon Department of Education*: created community engagement tools
  - [Oregon Department of Education Decision Tools for SY2020-2021](#)
  - [Student Investment Account Community Engagement Toolkit](#), which is modeled on and informed by the [Spectrum of Family & Community Engagement For Educational Equity](#)
- *State of Nevada*: identified [priority areas](#) to guide allocation of ARP funding as well as community input tools, which can serve as a model for other states.

Several organizations have shared resources on facilitating the community engagement:

- *National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement* outlines opportunities to engage and incorporate input from students, families, and community members in district and state plans to use ARP funds.
  - [Equity, Relationships, and Learning: Opportunities for Family, School, and Community Engagement within the American Rescue Plan](#)
  - [Guide to Family, School, and Community Engagement in State ARP/ESSER Applications](#)
- *Alliance for Resource Equity*: [Education Resource Equity Communications Toolkit](#) offers strategies for effectively communicating with community members about equitable funding. The Alliance has additional [tools](#) for community members to examine educational equity. The tools are not specific to ESSER funds but could be used to facilitate discussion about their use.
- *EdTrust*: developed several documents to inform and aid parent and community engagement
  - [5 Questions to Ask Districts About How They Will Use New Federal Funding to Support Students](#), which provides an overview of ARP funds, outlines action districts should take, and questions they should answer
  - [Family Engagement is Key to Student Success During COVID-19 Recovery and Beyond](#) highlights the importance of connecting to families and includes links to other resources
- *Center for American Progress*: [Elevating Student Voice in Education](#) describes the value of incorporating student input in the formation of their learning experiences as well as strategies schools and districts can use to do so. This 2019 report predates the pandemic but may be a useful resource for coalition members in encouraging district and school leaders to engage students in meaningful ways.

- Boston Public Schools launched a public engagement process to hear from students, families, educators, staff, and community members on the best way to invest [2021 federal relief funds](#).
- Georgia Budget and Policy Center conducted two surveys on use of ARP funds with school districts and community members.
  - [New GBPI Poll Shows Georgians Want American Rescue Plan Dollars to Support Health, Economic Recovery, Education](#) was conducted through the University of Georgia’s School of Public Affairs Survey Research Center to ask Georgians how they would like the state to spend the nearly \$4.9 billion in emergency funding available.
  - [Districts Turn to Federal Money to Fill Holes Made by the State: Results from GBPI’s 2021 School District Survey](#) found that “the overwhelming majority of district leaders (93 percent) reported that they planned to use CARES I, II and/or American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to meet the basic functions of the school that have gone unmet due to the loss of state dollars”.

## B. Effective Use of Funds (General Guidance)

**Learning Policy Institute** (LPI) has a [COVID-19 resource page](#) that contains links to fact sheets, blogs, reports and other materials the LPI team has produced including:

- [Learning in the Time of COVID](#) blog series by, including:
  - [Accelerating Learning As We Build Back Better](#) by Linda Darling-Hammond and Adam K. Edgerton
  - [An Unparalleled Investment in U.S. Public Education: Analysis of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#) by Michael Griffith, which summarizes components of the ARP Act and offers recommendations on using ARP funds
- Factsheets on How States and Districts Can Use Federal Recovery Funds Strategically
  - [Supporting the Educator Pipeline](#)
  - [Expanded Learning Time](#)
  - [Investing in Community Schools](#)
- [Overview of ARPA education funding and timing](#) (Michael Griffith, Learning Policy Institute, for Partnership for the Future of Learning event 4/23/21).

**WestEd** has created a series of briefs on effective use of federal relief funds:

- [Meeting the Moment: How Education Leaders Can Maximize Federal COVID Relief Aid to Support More Equitable Student Learning](#)

- [Adapting a Cardinal Rule of Finance: Five Strategies for Using One-Time Federal Funding on School Staffing](#)
- [Three Strategies for Investing One-Time: Federal Relief Aid to Make a Lasting Difference](#)
- [High-Quality Tutoring: An Evidence-Based Strategy to Tackle Learning Loss](#)

IDRA has worked with communities to create resources:

- [Building Supportive Schools from the Ground Up](#) draws from listening and learning sessions with parents, students, and other advocates. It recommends using ARP funds to build authentic relationships with students and families, mental health and wellness services, supportive and culturally-sustaining school climate, and programs for emergent bilingual students; and to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline and address the digital divide.
- [Learning Goes On: A COVID Resource for Education](#) is a site with educator training and policy resources.

**Education Resource Strategies** has published a series of [Schools Start Here](#) guides for ESSER spending, scheduling, and staffing. They emphasize choosing doable starting points for the 2021-22 school year, while designing changes with a long-term vision in mind.

Other organizations have developed or compiled resources that may be helpful in understanding ESSER funds and how they may be used, including:

- *Children's Funding Project:* [The Cradle-to-Career Guide to Federal Relief Funding for Kids During and Beyond COVID-19](#) outlines federal dollars directed to children and youth, including funds for K-12 students.
- *Education Trust:* [The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 – What's in It for Equity](#)
- *Education Counsel:* summarizes education funding in the CARES, CRRSA and ARP Acts including resources for higher education and early childhood. It also traces other key investments in children and youth. [Education Counsel's summary](#)
- *Center for Budget and Policy Priorities:* [American Rescue Plan Act Will Help Millions and Bolster the Economy](#), which provides a concise overview of education, health, housing, and other provisions. The center offers an overview of K-12 funding in ARP in this [brief](#). It also highlights infrastructure needs in elementary and secondary schools, which the pandemic has made more urgent, in this [report](#).
- *Southern Regional Education Board:* Summarizes the CARES, CRRSA, and ARP Acts in briefs available on its [website](#).
- *Science of Learning and Development (SoLD) Alliance:* [Using ARP Funds to Redesign Schools for Whole Child Equity: Early State and Local Policy Recommendations from the Science of Learning and Development](#).

- *KnowledgeWorks Foundation*: [Common Sense Guide to Using Federal Education Funds](#) provides approaches and ideas on how school district leadership can use federal funds to create more equitable learning environments.
- *EducationCounsel*: [Toolkit for Effective and Supportive Transitions for Children, Families, and Educators in Fall 2021 and Beyond](#). Although more focused on early childhood education, it clearly connects its findings to K-3.

### C. Building a Strong & Diverse Teaching Profession

The Partnership for the Future of Learning’s playbook, [Building a Strong and Diverse Teaching Profession](#), offers comprehensive and specific strategies to attract and support a diverse educator workforce.

The U.S Treasury Department clarified uses for the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds program in [ARP SLFRF Uses to Address Educator Shortages](#) and [ARP ESSER GEER & HEERF Uses to Address Educator Shortages](#). The guides emphasize how funds can be used to address educator shortages and increase the number of teacher candidates prepared to enter the teaching profession.

Multiple organizations have identified ways to use ARP funds to support and strengthen the educator workforce as well as broaden pathways into the profession for people of color. They include:

- *Learning Policy Institute*: Developed several resources on the educator workforce:
  - [The American Rescue Plan-Federal Funding Opportunities and Building a Strong and Diverse Teacher Profession](#) (slide deck) presents strategies to use federal relief funds to support the educator workforce.
  - A [fact sheet](#) on using ESSER funds to bolster the educator workforce.
  - A [blog](#) highlighting how the pandemic has increased strain on the teacher pipeline.
  - A three part [blog](#) series with suggestions for tackling the teacher shortage.
- *Bank Street College of Education*: highlights how ESSER funds can be used to support teacher residencies, including how they can be sustained after funding is gone.
  - [Prepared to Teach-Using ESSER Funds to Support Teacher Residencies](#)
  - [Teacher Residencies-An Equity-Focused, Viable Long-term Investment of ARP ESSER Dollars](#)
- *Education Trust*: [5 Things to Advance Equity in Access to Strong and Diverse Educators](#) provides an overview of steps different stakeholders can take to cultivate a diverse and highly-skilled educator workforce.
- *Educators Rising*: [Growing the Teaching Profession-A Blueprint to Establishing a Place-Based Grow Your Own Program](#)

- *New America*: Has created multiple resources to support Grow Your Own initiatives including a [scan](#) of state policies and briefs that describe local and state GYO programs, which are available on its [website](#).
- *National Board of Professional Teaching Standards*: [Using COVID-Relief Funding to Expand Student Access to National Board Certified Teachers](#) describes multiple strategies to increase the number of highly-skilled NBCT teachers working with students with the greatest needs.
- *National Education Association* published [How Federal Funds Can Ease ESP Shortages](#) illustrating how the pandemic has exacerbated Teacher and ESP shortages across the country yet several states are attempting to ameliorate shortages via federal funds.
- *EducationCounsel* published [Strong Pipelines, Strong Principals: A guide for leveraging federal sources to fund principal pipelines](#) co-authored with Policy Studies Associates and the Wallace Foundation.
- FutureEd published an analysis [How Local Educators Plan to Spend Billions in Federal Covid Aid](#) which highlights “More than half of school districts and charter schools across the country are planning to put their Covid relief funds toward hiring or rewarding teachers, academic specialists and guidance counselors.”

## D. Community Schools

ESSER funds can be used to establish community schools, which can be particularly effective in addressing the array of challenges many students face, which the pandemic worsened. USED released a [FAQ](#) on using ARP Act funds to support community schools.

The Partnership for the Future of Learning’s [Community Schools Playbook](#) offers a comprehensive framework to understand and design community schools, including links to additional resources.



The [Community Schools Playbook](#) elevates the research case for community schools and lays out a range of policy strategies that can be implemented to grow and sustain them.



The [Community Schools Finance Brief](#) is a companion to the Playbook, introducing a framework for financing community schools that reflects tested practices.

Other resources include:

- *Learning Policy Institute*: Offers several information [resources](#) to support the design and [implementation](#) of community schools, including a comprehensive [review](#) of the research on their effectiveness.
- *American Federation of Teachers*: Prepared various [tools](#) to support the development of community schools including case studies that explore how different school districts and communities have collaborated to create them.
- *National Education Association*: Offers [resources](#) it created, including a community schools toolkit and model state legislation and local school board policy.
  - [What Does the American Rescue Plan Mean for Educators and Students?](#) includes a guide to state's american rescue plan education funding
- *National Center for Community Schools*: Has multiple [resources](#) to tap including:
  - [Building Community Schools-A Guide for Action](#) offers detailed steps for establishing community schools

- [Lessons from the Pandemic and Implications for the Future](#), which documents the collaborative work of a group of nonprofits to serve children and youth in the summer and fall 2020 and outlines key lessons learned.
- *The Forum for Youth Investment and Education Redesign Lab*: Often in collaboration, [the Forum](#) and [Redesign Lab](#) have created resources to implement community-wide children’s cabinets, which can facilitate the development of community schools and other initiatives to align community resources to benefit children and youth.

## E. Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline

- *The Sentencing Project*:
  - [State Action to Narrow the School-To-Prison Pipeline \(Part One\): A Review of State Plans for Allocating the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief \(ESSER\) Fund](#)
  - [State Action to Narrow the School-to-Prison Pipeline \(Part Two\): Encouraging Examples from State Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund \(ESSER\) Plans](#)

## F. Additional Strategies for Advancing Racial Equity and Meaningful Learning

The infusion of ESSER funds creates an opportunity to foster student-centered and equitable learning experiences. Particular attention is needed to address the needs of historically marginalized students including students of color and indigenous students, those with disabilities or experiencing homelessness, low-income students, and those who are not native English speakers. Resources include:

- *Learning Policy Institute*: Highlights opportunities to re envision schools and how students are engaged and supported in them in [Accelerating Learning As We Build Back Better](#)
- *Southern Education Foundation*: [Districts Advancing Racial Equity \(DARE\) Tool](#), which outlines steps, including specific questions and indicators, district leaders can use to foster equity across organizational domains.
- *Black Education Research Collaborative, Teachers College*: [Black Education in the Wake of COVID-19 and Systemic Racism](#) examines the experiences of Black students, parents, and educators coping with the effects of the pandemic and the ongoing harm of systemic racism and lays out recommendations to address them.
- *SchoolHouse Connection*: [How to Use American Rescue Plan Act K-12 Education Funds to Identify and Support Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness](#) identifies strategies SEAs and school districts can use to respond to the needs of these students.

- [American Rescue Plan-Homeless Children and Youth \(ARP-HCY\)](#)
- *Education Trust*: Created a variety of resources on effectively supporting students with particular attention to addressing equity including:
  - [Strategies to Solve Unfinished Learning](#)
  - [Action Guide: Targeting Resources from the American Rescue Plan to Address the Needs of English Language Learners](#) (produced in collaboration with [Next100](#) and [UnidosUS](#))
- *Education Trust, National Urban League, Education Counsel, Alliance for Excellent Education, TeachPlus, UnidosUS, National Center for Learning Disabilities, SchoolHouse Connection, and Education Reform Now*: [Recommendations for State Leaders to Advance Equity Using American Rescue Plan Act Funds](#) identifies key action steps states can take to promote equity and accelerate student learning.
- *Mass Budget and Policy Center*: Created [Envisioning Equity](#) which illustrates their broad vision for antiracist budget reform, economic security for all, inclusive democracy and tax justice as racial justice.
- Schott Foundation: Created [American Rescue Plan: Organizing for Equity](#), a collaborative page with a variety of ARP resources.
- *The National Education Policy Center* developed a guide [Opportunity to Learn Indicators: Why They Matter More Than Ever Right Now](#) .which emphasizes the importance of OTL indicators.

## G. Other Materials to Support Effective ESSER Fund Use

Organizations have also examined additional ways to use ESSER funds to support students as well as processes for determining how these dollars should be spent.

USED released [volume two of its ED COVID-19 Handbook](#).

Other resources include:

- *Southern Regional Education Board*: Offers [multiple resources](#) for local and state educational leaders including a [roadmap](#) for using ESSER funds with specific steps to move from focusing on immediate needs to systemic improvement.
- *PACE (Policy Analysis for California Education)*: A joint initiative of the Schools of Education at UC-Berkeley & Davis, Stanford, and the University of Southern California, PACE has developed several resources and tools available [here](#). These include [Restorative Restart: The Path Toward Reimagining and Rebuilding Schools](#), which outlines specific actions to foster more equitable and engaging schools.

- *Annenberg Institute for School Reform*: has created a series of briefs that summarize research on key areas related to the impact of the pandemic on students, which are located at [EdResearch for Recovery](#).
- *Education Policy Initiative and the Urban Institute*: [Historic Crisis, Historic Opportunity: Using Evidence to Mitigate the Effects of the COVID-19 Crisis on Young Children and Early Care and Education Programs](#) examines the pandemic's impact on young students including those in K-2 and offers recommendations for aiding them.
- *Alliance for Excellent Education*: In partnership with the College in High School Alliance, Everyone Graduates Center, Linked Learning Alliance, and National College Attainment Network, the Alliance released [Using Federal COVID-19 Relief Funds to Support Student Transitions from High School to Higher Education](#), which outlines strategies to keep high school students on track and move into postsecondary programs.
- *Center for Budget and Policy Priorities* published an [analysis](#) of state use of Fiscal Recovery Funds (FRF) for equitable education services and programs. The piece notes some uses of funds that undermine education equity, and offers recommendations for allocating the remaining \$93.5B in FRF.

## H. Spent It On Schools (Interactive Tool)

[Spend It On Schools](#) is an interactive tool that helps to reimagine public education by making big numbers easily accessible. It allows people to compare funding in different areas of major annual spending alongside \$125 billion in federal relief funds and prioritize funds towards different expenses that can improve public education for students, educators, and families.



The graphic features the Partnership for the Future of Learning logo, which consists of a circular icon divided into four colored segments (green, blue, orange, yellow) with a white star in the center. To the right of the icon, the text reads "PARTNERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE of LEARNING". Below the logo, the main title "Spend It On Schools" is displayed in large white font, followed by the subtitle "How would you reimagine public education?" in a smaller blue font. A prominent yellow box contains the text "You have:" above a white box with the large number "\$125,400,000,000.00", and "to spend on education" below it.

*Spend It On Schools is a project of the [Partnership for the Future of Learning](#) with the [National Education Policy Center](#), made possible by the generous support of [Voqal](#) and other foundations. Cost estimates by [Mark Weber](#), Special Analyst for Education Policy at the New Jersey Policy Perspective, and an Instructor of Public School Finance at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and [Kevin Welner](#), Director of the National Education Policy Center at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Special thanks to Holly Kurtz for providing the original concept. Software development by [Skylight](#). Graphic design by [Jennifer Kotting LLC](#). Produced by [Root + All](#).*

### III. Local and State Campaigns on Using Federal Relief Funds Strategically

While specific to their states, coalition platforms and advocacy materials offer ideas and language for advancing shared values.

- **AL:** [Alabama Arise toolkit on the American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\)](#) although not entirely focused on education, this frames the need to invest ARP funds in transformative change.
- **AR:** [Advocating For A Fair And Effective Use Of Historic K-12 Funding](#) Arkansas's ARP plan prioritizes "supporting students with mental and emotional health needs" and "addressing the loss of instructional time."
- **CA:** [Reimagine and Rebuild California Schools: Restarting School with Equity at the Center](#) from a broad coalition of groups, including the California Partnership for the Future of Learning
  - [Racial Justice Equity Recovery Plan](#) (The Equity Alliance for LA's Kids)
  - [Record American Rescue Plan Funding for Schools \(\\$13.6B\): How Is Your District Planning to Spend It?](#) provides a clear perspective for community advocates (Public Advocates (CA))
- **GA:** [Letter to State Superintendent regarding ARP use of funds](#) (Fund Georgia's Future)
- **GA:** [State of Education Funding \(2022\)](#). This report emphasizes the importance of stable state funding and the use of federal funds to support students in poverty.
- **ID:** [Idaho School Funding: Long-Term Challenges and Opportunities to Put Students First](#) (Idaho Center for Fiscal Policy)
- **KS:** [The American Rescue Plan Act: What does it mean for Kansas?](#) states "the American Recovery Plan Act is a great start, but Kansans need and deserve better tax policy." (Kansas Action for Children)
- **KY:** [What to Know About Kentucky School Funding as Kids Head Back to School](#) provides an overview of how the state is using ARP and other resources (Kentucky Center for Economic Policy)

- **MA:** [The American Rescue Plan Act and Federal Relief Funds for K-12 Schools in Massachusetts](#) provides an overview of how the state is using ARP and other resources (Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center)
  - [New Federal Spending Makes It Crucial to Add State Funds for Education and Transportation.](#)
- **MA:** [MTA Voices Strong Support for ARPA Legislation.](#) As a part of the campaign unionized educators submitted photos in an “effort to persuade the Legislature to allocate a portion of the \$5 billion in federal funding that the state received to address critical health and safety needs in public schools and colleges.” See some of the photos published in [MTA Today](#).
- **MN:** [American Rescue Plan dollars to work for Minnesota: Major funding sources to state and local governments.](#) (Minnesota Budget Project)
- **NJ:** [U.S. Education Department orders New Jersey to restore millions in state aid cuts to comply with American Rescue Plan](#) (Education Law Center New Jersey).
- **NY:** [NY State Organizing Guide](#) (The Alliance for Quality Education (NY))
- **OH:** [ARPA can stem the teacher shortage and keep schools open](#) provides suggestions on how federal funds can be used to mitigate the teacher shortage and school closing crises occurring across the state.
- **PA:** [What the American Rescue Plan means for PA schools](#) (Education Voters PA)
- **RI:** [ESSER Community Fact Sheet](#) (English) and [Hoja Informativa De La Comunidad](#) (Español), developed by a set of community groups to support community engagement to support district decisions about how to utilize their ESSER funds.
- **VA:** (Fund Our Schools VA)
  - [Local-Level Advocacy Guide for Making the Most of New Federal School Funding](#)
  - [Memorandum](#) on recommended uses for the state portion of ARP funding
  - [One-pager](#) on top four priorities
  - **VA:** [Use of ARPA Funds a Step Forward, More to be Done to Build a Just Future](#) lays out key uses of funds, and what should happen in the next budget (Commonwealth Institute VA)
- **WV:** [American Rescue Plan Act’s Education Funds Can Address Inequity in West Virginia’s Public Schools](#) (West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy)

## IV. Frequently Used Acronyms & FAQs

### Acronyms

**ARP Act:** American Rescue Plan Act, federal COVID-19 relief package passed in March 2021

**ARP-HCY:** American Rescue Plan-Homeless Children and Youth refers to funds for students experiencing homeless in the ARP

**CARES Act:** Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, federal COVID-19 relief package passed in March 2020

**CRRSA Act:** Corona Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, federal COVID-19 relief package passed in December 2020

**EANS:** Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools, a portion of funds within the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund allocated to non-public K-12 schools.

**ESEA:** Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which provides federal funding for low-income students. The most recent iteration of the ESEA is the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

**ESF:** Education Stabilization Fund, a fund created by the CARES Act to provide additional resources to the K-12 and higher education sectors

**ESSER:** Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, the main grant program for K-12 schools and districts within the ESF.

**ESSER I:** Funds for K-12 schools in the CARES Act

**ESSER II:** Funds for K-12 schools in the CRRSA Act

**ESSER III:** Funds for K-12 schools in the ARP Act

**GEER:** Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund

**HEER:** Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund

**IDEA:** Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, which provides federal funding for students with disabilities

**LEA:** Local Education Agency, commonly referred to as school district

**SEA:** State Education Agency

**USED:** United States Department of Education

## FAQs

Question	Answer
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<p>How is Maintenance of Effort monitored at state and local level? Is there any public reporting required?</p>	<p><i>USED <a href="#">guidance</a> specifies the data it will collect to determine compliance with MOE and deadlines for SEAs to submit the data. It does not indicate how MOE compliance will be reported.</i></p>
<p>Are there resources/cheat sheets listing allowable expenses for ESEA, Perkins &amp; IDEA?</p>	<p><i>Some states &amp; districts have created guides using federal funds. Here is <a href="#">one</a> for Title I, Part A from the SC Department of Education. Here is a <a href="#">guide</a> for using IDEA funds, and <a href="#">one</a> regarding Perkins funds from the AZ Department of Education.</i></p>
<p>Will any of the ARP education funding be going to community organizations/nonprofits that support community schools?</p>	<p><i>Not directly though SEAs and LEAs can direct funds to these groups to support community schools. Support for community schools also appears to be an allowable expense for state and local fiscal recovery funds if the students and families served are within eligible groups (e.g. identified census tracts)</i></p>
<p>Is there non-ed funding available for facility and safety expenses?</p>	<p><i>Funds for public health purposes are available in state and local fiscal relief programs of the ARP.</i></p>