

# **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund – Education Equity Grant Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

## **General**

- Q. Is this presentation available as a power point to use as we complete the application?
- A. Yes, the PowerPoint can be found here:  
<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-5236-528117--,00.html>.
- Q. Who is the main ESSER – Education Equity contact at the State?
- A. The MDE has a team of staff supporting both the ESSER Formula and ESSER-Education Equity Grant. To receive support email [MDE-CARES@michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-CARES@michigan.gov) and the email will be routed to the appropriate team member for response.
- Q. If we are not applying does the district still need to initiate the application and click refuse funds?
- A. No, districts do not need to initiate the application and click refuse funds, unless your district would like this level of documentation.
- Q. Will the ESSER - Education Equity approvals happen on a rolling basis as applications are received or will nothing be approved until October as outlined in the tentative timeline?
- A. Because of the competitive nature of the grant applications MDE will not be able to review applications all together until October as outlined in the tentative timeline.

## **Eligible Applicant**

- Q. Must the schools listed as highest need/priority compete for the grant funds?
- A. Yes, as a competitive grant application highest need/priority districts must complete the grant application to be reviewed for funding approvals.
- Q. Are ISD's able to apply for these funds, as they do serve students?
- A. No, ISD's are not eligible applicants for these dollars.
- Q. Can we service pre-k students with these funds or is this just K-12?
- A. Yes, pre-k students can be served.

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- Q. If a district is 100% free and reduced meals, do they still need to meet the 85% economically disadvantaged criteria?
- A. Yes, in order to be listed as a priority district for the purpose of this grant program, a district must meet one of the following criteria:
- Over 85% economically disadvantaged
  - At least one school in the district is over 85% economically disadvantaged
  - The district is over 20% students with disabilities
  - The district is over 10% English learners

“Economically Disadvantaged” Students are identified in three ways:

1. Supplemental Nutrition Eligibility (SNE) - This is free/reduced lunch
2. Direct Certification
3. Categorical Eligibility:
  - a. Migrant
  - b. Homeless

- Q. Will there be any awards to districts that do not quite meet the 4 priority requirements?
- A. It is possible, depending on the amount of funds requested by the priority districts and the priority districts review status. All grant applications will be considered with priority going to priority districts.
- Q. Where can we find the list of the 332 schools to see if we are considered one of those schools?
- A. A list of the 332 districts identified with the most disadvantage student population can be found at: [https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-81376\\_51051-127227--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-81376_51051-127227--,00.html).
- Q. Can only priority districts apply?
- A. No, all LEAs and PSA’s are eligible and will be reviewed with the same criteria. However, priority districts will receive priority ranking.

**MEGS+ Application**

- Q. Is this asking how many students ‘currently’ have devices or how many students ‘need’ devices?

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- A. The field is asking for the district to anticipate the number of students that will be receiving either a device, connectivity, or services as an outcome of receiving these dollars.
- Q. If two districts wanted to form a consortium for purchasing opportunities, what is the best way to indicate that in the application? Would it be through the narrative?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Do we attach the Equitable Services worksheet in the MEGS+ Application?
- A. No, but it must be available upon request in the event of monitoring visit or audit.

**Equitable Services**

- Q. Are there equitable shares for privates?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Are all the educational grant funds under the CARES Act eligible for equitable services?
- A. Yes, ESSER Formula, ESSER – Education Equity, and GEER funding is all under the same CFDA number from a federal grant source standpoint. Thus, all applicable regulations apply to all of them. There may be differences in the criteria (eligibility, etc.), but the standards are the same in regard to equitable services.
- Q. At which calculation Title I or Title II?
- A. Title I at this time, in order to ensure no over payment. If this changes MDE will notify all grantees.
- Q. Equitable share - since LEAs were allowed to choose what method they'd use to allocate to Private Non-profit (PNP) vs a state decided upon method for ESSER-formula, has MDE set a method of allocation to PNPs for this grant? or is this an LEA decision like ESSER-formula?
- A. MDE suggests using the Title I formula for allocating to the in-district private schools.

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- Q. If districts determine their private share and the pending lawsuit generates a different outcome, will districts be allowed to amend the grant?
- A. At this time, US Education Attorneys have emphasized we must follow the new/current rules. If a ruling is determined on the lawsuit that has a different outcome, MDE will provide guidance to districts regarding modifications to their grant. If the LEA use the Title I formula there is no concern of overpayment.
- Q. I didn't see an Equitable Service Worksheet attached to the new funds. Will one be provided?
- A. Yes, it is attached in the MEGS+ application.
- Q. Can you please clarify the worksheet calculation for nonpublic? Is it title I or title II?
- A. It is currently Title I. If this changes for any reason, MDE will notify recipients.
- Q. Public School Academies (PSAs) are not required to provide equitable services to private schools, is this correct?
- A. That is correct. PSA's do not have responsibilities to provide services to private schools.
- Q. What is the difference between the first 2 categories on the Equitable Service checklist page of the MEGS+ Application?
- A. The first category is for districts that do not have non-public schools in their geographic service area. The second category is for those districts that have non-public schools within their services area, but those non-public schools are not participating in any of the Title activities.
- Q. What if we serve only students from non-public schools outside of the LEA?
- A. Then the district has no responsibility for equitable services for the CARES Act.

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- Q. Do districts need to ask non-public schools if they want to participate in this ESSER – Education Equity application? Or do we use the results from our CA for 19-20?
- A. Yes, districts need to ask non-public schools again and document their response.
- Q. Will we be able to reimburse PNP's for items they have already purchased?
- A. Back payments to non-public schools can only be paid to a vendor and not to the private school directly. A reimbursement to an individual is allowable.

**Funding**

- Q. Can we take indirect costs from this grant?
- A. Yes, districts may, but are not required to take an indirect rate. The MEGS+ Budget Summary page provides a space to enter an amount less than the districts negotiated indirect rate.
- Q. Should you see the districts allocation in the application?
- A. No, because the grant is competitive and not formal, district's must enter their estimated allocations amount. The estimated allocation can be found at: [https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-81376\\_51051-127227--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-81376_51051-127227--,00.html), click on Estimated ESSER Education Equity Fund for All Agencies.
- Q. After applying, when would we expect to hear if our district was awarded the grant?
- A. Anticipated announcement will be made to districts on October 19, 2020.
- Q. If a district budgets to purchase devices with these funds but are not awarded the grant or the entire amount asked for, can the district amend the ESSER-Formula funds to then purchase the devices.
- A. Yes, the ESSER Formula grant can be amended if required.
- Q. If approved, will these funds come through state aid or will it be a reimbursement basis?

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- A. The ESSER - Education Equity grant will be approved and available to draw on a reimbursement basis from the Cash Management System (CMS).
- Q. What is the Grant Code and Grant number for these funds?
- A. The Grant number and code are different: grant number is the six-digit identifier in CMS, grant code is three digits and used in districts' accounting and year-end financial reporting. The Grant Code is 800. The Grant Number is 203720. Both numbers will be found on the Grant Award Notification document inside MEGS+ upon approval of funding and MEGS+ Grant Application Status Change to Grant Funds Available.
- Q. Can you explain the difference between the 2 different allocation spreadsheets on the MDE program allocation website?
- A. The Estimated ESSER Education Equity Fund for Highest-Need School Communities only lists the 332 districts identified for priority. The Estimated ESSER Education Equity fund for All Agencies lists all eligible applicants.
- Q. Can we service Non-graded students with IEP's with these funds?
- A. Yes.
- Q. If eligible items were purchased after March 13 but before the proposal was submitted, are those eligible for reimbursement if awarded?
- A. Yes, those expenditures can be reimbursed.
- Q. Is there a list of function codes?
- A. Allowable function codes are in the MEGS+ budget page.
- Q. How do you back date to FY20 when FY20 is closed and will we be able to reimburse PNP's for items they have already purchased?
- A. Eligible expenditures incurred in FY20 that this grant (recognized in FY21) later covers should appear on your FY21 audit/SEFA. These funds will not impact or require restatement of FY20 reporting.
- Q. We can only apply up to 20% of our ESSER formula grant correct?
- A. Yes, that is correct. Unless the district did not receive a Title I – ESSER Formula allocation. In that case, those districts have an estimated allocation calculated at a rate of \$87.34 per the districts 2019-20 pupil membership.

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- Q. Is there a supplement/supplant with these funds?
- A. Yes, state funds cannot be used to supplant federal funds.

### **Allowable Expenses:**

- Q. What are allowable expenditures for the category of devices and connectivity, as defined by the following description: "Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the local educational agency that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and students with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment."
- A. Allowable expenses could include but are not limited to:
- a. Student-level devices (computers and/or wi-fi hot spots)
  - b. Classroom technology serving remote learning (teacher devices, web cameras, wi-fi hot spots)
  - c. Software and licenses supporting student/teacher interaction and learning (LMS, filtering, video conferencing)

Non-allowable expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- d. Warranties
- e. Any purchase made outside the window for allowable expenses

Please note that all expenditures must be linked back to an applicant's statement of need.

- Q. What are allowable expenditures for the category of mental health services for students and educators?
- A. Allowable expenses could include but are not limited to:
- a. Screeners/Assessments
  - b. Innovative platforms for making mental health more accessible to all students, such as:
    - a. [BH-Works](#)
    - b. [Class Catalyst](#)
    - c. [Trusst App](#)
  - c. Building a network of coaches and school professionals by training them in evidence-based practices such as [cognitive behavioral therapy \(CBT\) and mindfulness](#)
  - d. Adding BA or MA level providers such as counselors, behavior interventionists/specialists, nurses or social workers to provide Tier 1 support within their scope of practice



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- a. delivering evidence-based curriculum to classrooms and large groups
  - b. administering student screeners
  - c. triage support
  - d. making referrals to qualified providers
  - e. skill building group activities
- e. Adding licensed providers that can seek Medicaid match funding for all eligible mental health and support services, such as:
- A physician or psychiatrist
  - A licensed master’s level psychologist
  - A limited licensed master’s level psychologist, under the supervision of a licensed master’s level psychologist
  - An MDE credentialed master’s level school psychologist
  - A licensed master’s level marriage and family therapist
  - A board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA)
  - A board-certified assistant behavior analyst (BCaBA), under the supervision of a BCBA
  - A licensed master’s level professional counselor
  - A limited licensed master’s level professional counselor, under the supervision of a licensed master’s level professional counselor
  - A licensed master’s level social worker
  - A licensed master’s level school social worker
  - A limited licensed master’s level social worker, under the supervision of a licensed master’s level social worker
- Q. Do you have to request both tech and mental health, or if you feel one is of greater need for your district can you just move in that area?
- A. An applicant may request funding for one or both options.