

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION

Program Guidelines
2020-2023 ARP ESSER III
Federal Grant Application

Authorized by American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021,
Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III)
Fund

Application Closing Date—5:00 p.m., Central Time
July 27, 2021

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

Grant Compliance and Administration
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Austin, Texas 78701

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Introduction to the Program Guidelines

TEA, as the pass-through entity¹, is the grantee² from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities³ such as local educational agencies (LEAs), including school districts, charter schools, and education service centers, and to a lesser degree institutions of higher education (IHEs), and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) who are the agency's subgrantees⁴. These guidelines apply to all subgrantees of TEA, regardless of whether referenced herein as subgrantee or grantee. For purposes of this document, TEA may use the terms grantee and subgrantee synonymously for its subrecipients.

This part of the request for application (RFA), Program Guidelines, is to be used in conjunction with the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) and the schedule instructions. The Standard Application System (SAS) consists of all schedules (i.e., forms) to be completed in order for the applicant to be eligible for funding. The application to which these instructions refer must be submitted electronically through the eGrants system.

For applicants selected for funding, all guidelines and instructions will be incorporated by reference into the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA).

Requirement for User Name and Password

To access eGrants and apply for this grant, you must have access to the TEA Login (TEAL). Follow these steps to apply for user names and passwords on TEAL:

1. Visit the [TEA Login \(TEAL\)](#) page of the TEA website. Select [Request New User Account](#) to begin the process of applying for a TEAL account online.

¹ Pass-through entity is defined as a non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a federal program. (2 CFR 200.74)

² Grantee is defined as the legal entity to which a grant is awarded and that is accountable to the federal government for the use of the funds provided. The term "grantee" does not include any secondary recipients, such as subgrantees and contractors that may receive funds from a grantee. (34 CFR 77)

³ Non-federal entity is defined as a state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education, or nonprofit organization that carries out a federal award as a recipient or subrecipient. (2 CFR 200.69)

⁴ Subgrantee is defined by TEA to be the same as a subrecipient which is defined as a non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. (2 CFR 200.93) Subgrantee is defined in 34 CFR 77 as the legal entity to which a subgrant is awarded and that is accountable to the grantee for the use of the funds provided.

2. Once you have been assigned a TEA Login (TEAL) account, log into TEAL and under Self-Service select My Application Accounts.
3. The My Accounts tab will open. Select Request New Account and find eGrants in the list and follow the instructions to submit your request.

Application Submission through eGrants

Submit the application for this grant program electronically through the TEA eGrants system. Refer to the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) for more specific information about accessing eGrants and obtaining the required TEA Login (TEAL) user ID and password.

Applications must be submitted as follows:

- Those submitted by public LEAs must be signed electronically by the superintendent of the school district or a designee.
- Applications submitted by regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) must be signed electronically by the executive director or a designee.
- Applications submitted by open-enrollment charter schools must be signed electronically by the chief operating officer of the school or a designee.
- Campuses and campus charter schools must apply through their public school district, and the application must be signed electronically by the superintendent or designee.

Reference to the General and Fiscal Guidelines

The Program Guidelines provide information specifically relevant to this grant program. The [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) provide information relevant to all TEA grant programs. Throughout the Program Guidelines, cross-references are given to applicable sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#). **It is critical that you review all referenced sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) when preparing your application.**

US Department of Education Appropriations

The following is provided in compliance with the US Department of Education Appropriations Act:

Category	Amount
Total funds available for this project	Approximately \$11,176,729,900
Percentage to be financed with federal funds	100%
Amount of federal funds	Approximately \$11,176,729,900
Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources	0%
Amount of nonfederal funds	\$0

Grant Timeline

For all dates related to the grant, including reporting dates, see the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page. If a report due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the report will be due the following business day. All dates except the grant ending date may vary slightly as conditions require.

Grant at a Glance

This section provides fundamental information pertinent to the grant program.

Authorizing Legislation

This grant program is authorized by the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Fund.

Purpose of Program

The intent and purpose of ARP of 2021, ESSER III funding is to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on students.

Eligible Applicants

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Eligibility Requirements.

Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), including Public School Districts and Open-Enrollment Charter Schools.

Eligibility List

The entitlement list is posted on the [Entitlements](#) page.

Shared Services Arrangement

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Shared Services Arrangements.

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are allowed.

Application Funding

See the following sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#):

- Grant Funding
- Continuation Funding
- Fund Management

- Use of Funds

Cost Share or Matching Requirement

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Cost Share/Match Requirement.

There is no cost share or matching requirement for this grant program.

Limitation of Administrative Funds

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Administrative Costs.

NOTE: Administrative funds include **both** direct administrative costs **and** allowable indirect costs.

Direct Administrative Costs

TEA permits applicants to budget reasonable and necessary direct administrative costs for this grant program.

Program evaluation costs must be charged as a direct cost to the grant program.

Indirect Costs

The grantee may claim a maximum for indirect costs equal to their current approved unrestricted indirect cost rate for this federally funded grant.

To calculate the maximum indirect costs that can be claimed for a grant, complete the [Maximum Indirect Costs Worksheet](#), posted on the Administering a Grant page, under the Handbooks and Other Guidance section.

Pre-Award Costs

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Pre-Award Costs.

Pre-award costs are permitted, if requested, from March 13, 2020, to the date the application is certified and submitted to TEA.

Applicant Assistance

The following types of assistance are available to applicants for this grant program.

Contacts for Clarifying Information

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), TEA Contacts.

Program Contact

Natalie Coffey, ESSER State Director
Department of Grant Compliance and Administration
natalie.coffey@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-8992

Funding Contact

Karyn Gukeisen, Grant Manager
Grants Administration Division
karyn.gukeisen@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-8525

Errata Notices

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Errata Notices.

Email Bulletins

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Email Bulletins.

Program Elements

This section provides detailed information about the grant program.

Program Description

The intent and purpose of the ARP Act of 2021, ESSER III funding is to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on students.

Supplement, Not Supplant

For supplement, not supplant guidance, see the Supplement, Not Supplant Handbook on the Grants Administration Division [Administering a Grant](#) page.

The supplement, not supplant provision does not apply to this grant program.

Application Requirements and Assurances

This section describes the two types of requirements that applicants must address in the application (such as with a narrative description, an activity timeline, or a checklist) to be eligible to be considered for funding:

See the following sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#):

- Statutory requirements (requirements defined in the authorizing statute)
- TEA program requirements (requirements defined by TEA program staff)

Statutory Requirements

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Statutory Requirements.

Per Section 22.0834 of the Texas Education Code (TEC), any person offered employment by any entity that contracts with TEA or receives grant funds administered by TEA (i.e., a grantee or subgrantee) is subject to the fingerprinting requirement. TEA is prohibited from awarding grant funds to any entity, including nonprofit organizations, that fails to comply with this requirement. For details, refer to the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Fingerprinting Requirement.

The following requirements are defined in the statute that authorizes this program. The applicant must comply with each of these requirements in the application to be considered for funding:

1. Comply with reporting requirements, which may include:
 - a. Methodology used by the LEA to provide services or assistance to students and staff in public schools; and
 - b. Uses of funds by the LEA or other entities and demonstration of their compliance with Section 2001, such as any use of funds to address required set-aside of at least 20% for learning loss mitigation, including through afterschool, summer school, extended day/year programs, targeted to ESEA subgroups, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care.
2. Complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, “Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying.”
3. Have on file with TEA a set of assurances that meets the requirements of section 442 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232e).
4. Comply with the provisions of all applicable acts, regulations, and assurances; the following provisions of Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 81, 82, 84, 97, 98, and 99; the OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485; and the Uniform Guidance in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.
5. Cooperate with any examination of records with respect to such funds by making records available for inspection, production, and examination, and authorized individuals available for interview and examination, upon the request of (i) the Department and/or its Inspector General; (ii) any other federal agency, commission, or department in the lawful exercise of its jurisdiction and authority; or (iii) TEA.
6. Post your required “Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan” on your LEA website within 30 days of receiving your ESSER III grant NOGA.
7. Implement public safety protocols to safely reopen schools for in-person learning.
8. Meet Maintenance of Equity requirement, receive a waiver from USDE, or document an approved exemption.
9. LEAs must expend a minimum of 20% of their grant funds on—
 - a. Evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning, extended day and comprehensive after-school programs, or extended school year programs; and
 - b. Ensure interventions respond to students’ academic, social, and emotional needs and address disproportionate impact of coronavirus on students’ populations as defined in ESEA Title I, Part A, students experiencing homelessness, and youth in foster care.
10. The LEA assures that it engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders and gave the public an opportunity to provide input in the development of its plan for the uses of ARP ESSER III funds.

11. The LEA assures that it specifically, engaged in meaningful consultation with students; families; school and district administrators (including special education administrators); and teachers, principals, school leaders, other educators, school staff.
12. The LEA assures that it specifically, engaged in meaningful consultation with, and to the extent present in or served by the LEA tribes, civil rights organizations (including disability rights organizations).
13. The LEA assures that it engaged in meaningful consultation with stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English language learners, children experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, migrant students, children who are incarcerated, and other underserved students.
14. The LEA assures that its plan for the uses of ARP ESSER III funds is provided in an understandable and uniform format.
15. The LEA assures, to the extent practicable, the plan is written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable, orally translated; and, upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.
16. The LEA assures that the program schedules to this application, or a separate document containing all the information included in the program schedules, serving as the LEA's plan for the uses of ARP ESSER III funds will be posted to the LEA's website within 30 days of receiving its ESSER III Notice of Grant Award.

TEA Program Requirements

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Program Requirements.

In addition to the statutory requirements, TEA has established the following program requirements. Applicants must address within the application how they will achieve the following:

1. The LEA must document a plan for the expenditure of ESSER III grant funds per the statutorily allowable activities and an estimated timeline of the planned expenditures.
2. The LEA must document how it determined its needs caused by COVID-19.
3. The LEA must document how it prioritized the needs in determining its use of the ESSER III grant funds.

Program-Specific Assurances

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Provisions and Assurances.

The program-specific assurances for this grant program are listed in the SAS. Refer to Schedule CS7000—Provisions, Assurances, and Certifications.

Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

See the [Administering a Grant](#) page for general guidance on allowable activities and use of funds.

Allowable activities and use of funds for this grant may include but are not limited to the following:

Statutorily Allowable Activities:

1. LEA discretion for any activity authorized under:

- a. Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
 - b. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
 - c. Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)
 - d. Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006
2. Coordination of preparedness and response efforts of LEAs with State and local public health departments, and other relevant agencies, to improve coordinated responses among such entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus;
 3. Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth, including how outreach and service delivery will meet the needs of each population;
 4. Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve the preparedness and response efforts of LEAs;
 5. Training and professional development for staff of the LEA on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases;
 6. Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of an LEA, including buildings operated by such agency;
 7. Planning for, coordinating and implementing activities during long-term closures:
 - a. Including providing meals to eligible students
 - b. ...Including providing technology for online learning to all students
 - c. ...How to provide guidance for carrying out requirements under IDEA
 - d. ...How to ensure other educational services can continue to be provided consistent with all Federal, State, and local requirements
 8. Purchasing educational technology (hardware, software, and connectivity) for students ... that aids in regular/substantive educational interaction between students and instructors, including low-income students and students with disabilities (SWD), which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment;
 9. Providing mental health services and supports, including through implementation of evidence based full-service community schools;
 10. Planning and implementing activities related to:
 - a. Summer learning -- providing classroom instruction or online learning during summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, SWD, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care;
 - b. ...Supplemental afterschool programs -- providing classroom instruction or online learning ... addressing the needs of low-income students, SWD, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care
 11. Addressing learning loss among LEA students, including low-income students, SWD, English learners, racial & ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care:
 - a. ...Administering and using high-quality assessments

- b. ...Implementing evidence-based activities to meet the comprehensive needs of students
 - c. ...Providing information and assistance to parents and families on effectively supporting students
 - d. ...Tracking student attendance and improving student engagement in distance education
12. School facility repairs and improvements to enable operation of schools to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs;
 13. Inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, replacement, and upgrade projects to improve the indoor air quality in school facilities, including:
 - a. ...Mechanical and non-mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems
 - b. ...Filtering purification and other air cleaning, fans, control systems
 - c. Window and door repair and replacement
 14. Developing strategies and implementing public health protocols including, to the greatest extent practicable, policies in line with guidance from CDC for the reopening and operation of school facilities;
 15. Other activities that are necessary to:
 - a. Maintain the operation of and continuity of services in the LEA
 - b. ...Continuing to employ existing staff of the LEA

Field Trips

Field Trips may be funded under the grant program.

Field Trips will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the Field Trips Justification form, refer to the [Administering a Grant page](#).

Advisory Council

An advisory council may be funded under the grant program. These costs should be minimal.

Cost of Membership in Any Civic or Community Organization

The cost of membership in any civic or community organization may be funded under the grant program.

- The membership must be in the name of the LEA
- These costs should be minimal

Out-of-State Travel

Out-of-state travel costs are allowable. Out-of-state travel costs should be minimal. Travel costs are allowable as long as the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items are only

incurred by employees on official business of the grantee and follow the grantee’s regular business operations and written travel policy.

Out-of-State Travel will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the Out-of-State Travel Justification form, refer to the [Administering a Grant page](#).

Travel Costs for Officials such as Executive Director, Superintendent, or Board Members

The cost of travel costs for officials such as the executive director, superintendent, or board members may be funded under the grant program.

- These costs must be specific to the grant program.
- These costs should be minimal.

General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

- Stipends for non-employees
- Non-employee employee costs for conferences—while allowable, participant support costs such as these require prior approval from TEA
- Travel for students to conferences (does not include field trips)—while allowable, participant support costs such as these require prior approval from TEA

Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds

In general, refer to the Budgeting Cost Guidance Handbook on the [Administering a Grant](#) page for unallowable costs.

In addition, unallowable activities and use of funds for this grant may include but are not limited to the following:

- Debt service (lease-purchase)
- Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences
- Subsidizing or offsetting executive salaries and benefits of individuals who are not employees of the LEA
- Expenditures related to state or local teacher or faculty unions or associations
- Bonuses, merit pay, or similar expenditures unless specifically related to disruptions or closures resulting from COVID-19

Performance Measures

The applicant agrees to collect data and report on the following mandatory performance measures:

1. Any performance measures, reporting, or evaluation requirements as established by TEA.

Limits on Contracted Evaluators

When a grantee chooses, or is required under a grant, to hire a contracted evaluator, TEA believes that the evaluator must have the capability to remain independent and objective in carrying out the evaluation. “Independent and objective” implies that there is no influence or control, real or perceived, exerted on the evaluator by any person who is involved in the provision of program services. Therefore, the only way in which a contracted evaluator can be truly independent and objective is not to be involved in any manner with the provision of program services or activities. Otherwise, the evaluator is, at least in part, evaluating its own services.

In addition, TEA is aware that some grant writers develop and design the grant program, write the entire grant application, and then wish to evaluate the grant program. TEA also believes that this scenario poses a conflict of interest for the evaluator, in that the evaluator is evaluating the grant program that he or she designed, developed, and wrote. Again, it is not possible for the evaluator to function independently and objectively if the evaluator performed in this capacity. It is certainly acceptable for the grant writer to receive some information from a potential evaluator to include in the evaluation section of the grant application with regard to an appropriate evaluation plan or design, but communication between the grant writer and evaluator should be limited to that specific topic.

Applicants should make every effort to ensure that contracted evaluators be independent and objective.

Program evaluation costs must be charged as a direct cost to the grant program.

Federal Grant Requirements

Equitable Access and Participation

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Equitable Access and Participation.

This requirement does apply to this federally funded grant program.

Private Nonprofit School Participation

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Private Nonprofit School Participation.

This requirement does not apply to this federally funded grant program.

Maintenance of Effort

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Maintenance of Effort.

This requirement does not apply to this federally funded grant program; however, a new Maintenance of Equity requirement does apply to this grant program.

Application Elements

This section describes the requirements and attachments that must be addressed in and included with the application.

Required Attachments

See the following sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#):

- Fiscal-Related Documentation Required to Be on File
- Required Fiscal-Related Attachments
- Required Program-Related Attachments

This section describes the two types of attachments that may be required to be submitted with the application: fiscal-related attachments and program-related attachments.

Required Fiscal-Related Attachments

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), Required Fiscal-Related Attachments, for a general description of fiscal-related documents that can be required as attachments to the application.

For a list of the fiscal-related attachments required for this grant application, refer to the Program Information section of the main eGrants page for this grant. Required attachments are notated “Attachment” in the list of RFA documents provided in the Program Information section.

Required Program-Related Attachments

No program-related attachments are required for this grant program.

Adding Attachments

The instructions in the following sections describe how to attach files to an eGrants application.

General Instructions

The size of each attachment cannot exceed 10MB. If you have a larger file, use a different scanning setting or zip the file to make it take up less space.

Documents only need to be attached once. Do not attach duplicate documents with each amendment. Only attach more than once if the attachment is being revised.

Naming Attachments

Name the files you are going to attach with no spaces (for example, 501C3letter.doc or 501C3_letter.doc). Use a meaningful name that identifies the specific document.

Make sure that each attachment has a file extension (.pdf, .doc, .rtf, .xls, .bmp, .zip, .txt).

Note that attachments with very long names may not be able to be uploaded. If you have difficulty, try renaming the file and starting over.

Scanning Documents

If a document must be scanned to create an electronic copy, use the following hints to ensure that the document size is as small as possible:

- Use an OCR or DPI setting of 200 DPI.
- Try to avoid creating .jpg files. If possible, create PDF documents with the scanner.

Zipping Files

If your files are too large, add them to a zip file to save space ([download a free version of WinZip and find instructions on creating zip files](#)).

Attaching Files to an eGrants Application

1. Ensure that the security level for your internet browser is set to Medium (Tools > Internet Options, Security tab).
2. On the Grant Summary Table of Contents, select the Attach File icon.
3. Consult the instructions for naming files, outlined under Technical Instructions on the Attach File Page.
4. Ensure the document is saved on your computer according to the naming instructions.
5. Enter the Document Title of the attachment.
6. Select the Browse button. A standard Windows browser appears. Find the file.
7. Select Attach.
8. Select Refresh to see the name of the document in the Documents Submitted in This Version pane. If the attachment does not appear, you may have to rename your document with a shorter name and start over.
9. Repeat this process to attach all your documents.