



**Montana**

**Office of Public Instruction**

MASBO Summer Conference  
ESSER Survival for the Long Haul

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**ESSER: Navigating Grant Compliance**

June 16, 2022



# Participant Goals for Attending

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- Why are you attending this session?
- What do you want to walk away with?
- What is your role in relations to ESSER?



# District Advocates and Auditors

*Promoting sustainable use of education funds and supporting Montana students*

Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director [wendi.fawns@mt.gov](mailto:wendi.fawns@mt.gov) (406) 437-8595

Rebecca Brown, ESSER Program Manager (starting July 2022)

- ✓ Oversee ESSER allowable/reasonable process
- ✓ Assist with plans, grants, and resource attainment
- ✓ Maintain and assist with data collection and reporting

**Dr. Marguerite Roza is in Bozeman, on June 20<sup>th</sup> 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.** at the Residence Inn to provide you with key strategies around school finance uses with a concerted focus on the use of ESSER-ARP dollars. Dr. Roza is the nation's foremost expert on school finance. Register today, so you don't miss this very important one day summit, geared for you.

# Montana ESSER Funding

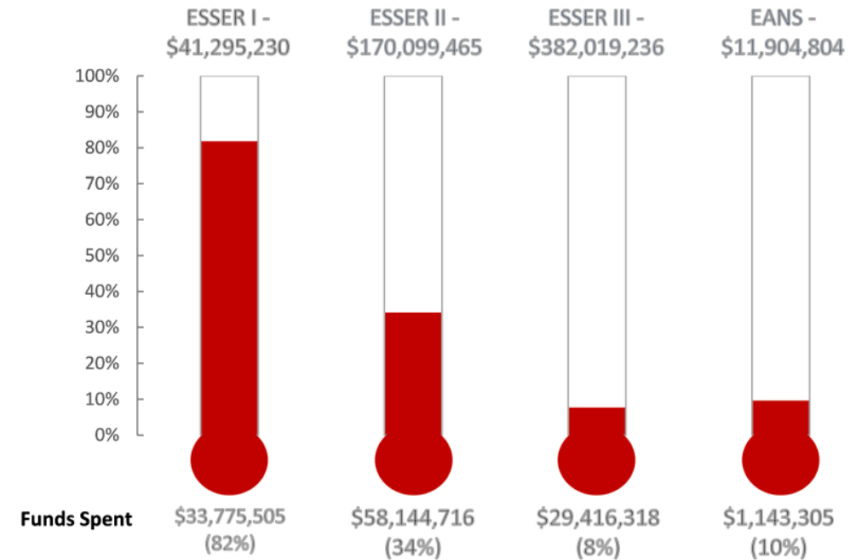
Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER):

- 3 Rounds of ESSER funds have been authorized by Congress in response to COVID-19 pandemic.



## COVID Related Funding Spent

• May 13, 2022 •





# ESSER funds for renovation, teachers, technology, curriculum

## **Includes examples of allowable projects from ED (with citations):**

- Improving school security,
- Improving drinking water including lead remediation,
- Servicing or upgrading HVAC systems,
- Stipends for teachers
- Lap tops, internet routers
- Repairing windows and/or doors so they can open to let fresh air in,
- Fencing and playground equipment
- Professional Development
- Curriculum, text books/online, remote learning
- Field trips

# Grant Cycle - high level summary

**ESSER CARES I, ESSER CRRSA II, and ESSER ARP III  
ESSER ARP Afterschool and ESSER ARP Summer  
ESSER ARP Homeless and ESSER GEERS and.....**



- **DOE administers money > States per Title I type school formula**
- **State distributes funds to districts**
- **Districts develop a plan for use of funds and begin to spend funds**
  
- **Districts continue to spend, track...**



# Session Purpose – Trip & Safe Return

	Road Trip	ESSER Grant Award
<b>Goal</b>	Vacation Paris – fun/memories	Improve Edu and Job
<b>Resources</b>	\$, X, Travel guide/Exp	\$, X, grant expertise
<b>Tools</b>	Map, GPS, hotel/activity guides	DOE FAQ, MT Plans, Fact Sheets
<b>Terminology</b>	Lodging/activity abbreviations	Grant admin & DOE Industry Standard
<b>Remote access</b>	Online/3 <sup>rd</sup> party RULES, portals	<u>Egrants</u> , <u>qualtric</u> , excel, drop box...
<b>Success</b>	Allowable & reasonable balance Repeat if process and outcome positive	Allowable & reasonable Repeat!?

# Emergency – short term vs long term



- **Funds awarded before needs assessment**
- **Funds have strings attached**
- **Administration of grant changing**
- **Transparency required**

- [Apollo 13 square peg](#)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ry55--J4\\_VQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ry55--J4_VQ)





# Pitfalls to Avoid with ESSER Navigation

## Navigator/Map holder and driver NOT on same page

- Amendments, Cash Request, Capital Expenditure Form, Scope ..
- Emails help if they contain...
  - Grant, school, LE# - question topic--Contact name, phone, email
  - specific question and screen shots if applicable
  - **AND E-Grant**
    - Submit application and if returned contact sender if you have any questions at all. Do not just resubmit.
    - 85% of returned lack PPR language or missing student focus
    - Remember this is a “grant” that has required focus and purpose

# Egrant Amendment and Cash Requests

- ✓ From category/amount
- ✓ to category/amount
- ✓ for the purpose of/to purchase xxx
- ✓ in response to/
- ✓ to prevent/
- ✓ to prepare for
- ✓ (how does it relate to student gains).



# Pitfalls to Avoid with ESSER Navigation

## Missing information generates a Return/Start Over

- Amendments, Cash Requests, Capital Expenditures, application...
  - Describe what object code and account from and to
  - **Prepare, Respond, Prevent** language
  - How does the purchase relate to COVID and benefit students

DOE FAQ [https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/05/ESSER.GEER\\_.FAQs\\_5.26.21\\_745AM\\_FINALbocd6833f6f46e03ba2d97d30aff953260028045f9ef3b18ea602db4b32b1d99.pdf](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/05/ESSER.GEER_.FAQs_5.26.21_745AM_FINALbocd6833f6f46e03ba2d97d30aff953260028045f9ef3b18ea602db4b32b1d99.pdf)

DOE Educators <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-cardona-lays-out-vision-support-and-elevate-teaching-profession>

DOE Deadlines <https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/COVID-19/ESSER/rp%20DOE%20Late%20Liquidation%20Letter%20May22.pdf>

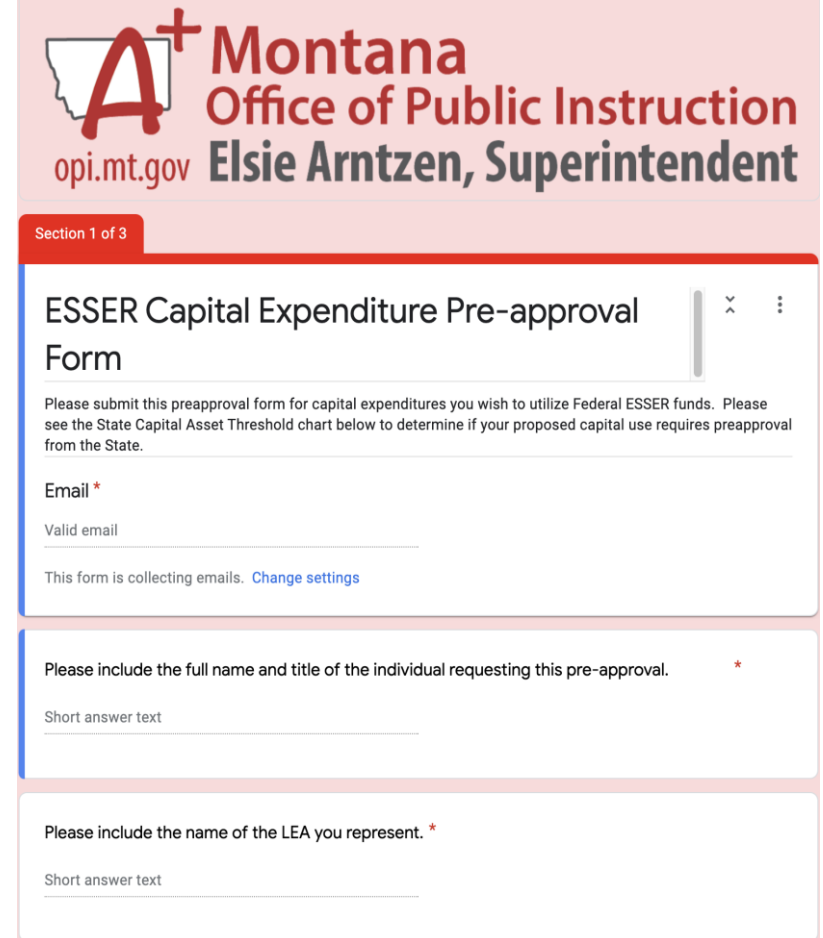
# Exercise – Amendments

- We need to increase the supplies line to include the purchase of a pottery wheel
- Reallocation of funds from benefits to instructional supplies
- We amended \$2329 for SEL Curriculum for the 2022-2023
- Remove the old existing carpet and replacing it with a linoleum/tile
- We will build a small multipurpose room which will provide another dedicated area for students to spread out to eat their lunches & clean up afterward, rather than eating at their desks
- Updated budget detail to reflect expenditures and cash requests

# Focus on Student Gains

## Capital Expenditures

- Describe project as a project not pieces
- Describe as it relates to student gains
- Can contain Scope



**Montana**  
Office of Public Instruction  
Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent

opi.mt.gov

Section 1 of 3

### ESSER Capital Expenditure Pre-approval Form

Please submit this preapproval form for capital expenditures you wish to utilize Federal ESSER funds. Please see the State Capital Asset Threshold chart below to determine if your proposed capital use requires preapproval from the State.

Email \*

Valid email

This form is collecting emails. [Change settings](#)

Please include the full name and title of the individual requesting this pre-approval. \*

Short answer text

Please include the name of the LEA you represent. \*

Short answer text



# Focus on Student Gain

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Generate a Scope document

- **Project name**
- **Time line**
- **Costs (and sources)**
- **Status**
- **Student gains: (including PPR language)**
- **Board document, publicity/engage stakeholders**

# Exercise – allowable/REASONABLE

- Allowable AND Reasonable

From category/amount to category/amount for the purpose of xxx in response to/to prevent/to prepare for....

- Under what circumstances are the items below allowable.
  - Outdoor shed for storing ‘extra’ covid items
  - Tent for outdoor presentations fresh air
  - Lap tops
  - Provide workshops for 4-H and other community partners to develop mentoring fall programming around animal care
  - Provide experienced coaches to guide teachers in the delivery of content.
  - Establish mentoring and/or tutoring program for students.
  - Establish a collaborative team of district personnel and stakeholders to create, implement, and review action plans around system preparedness.



# Pitfalls to Avoid with ESSER Navigation

## Missing Specific Details and Gains

- Think backwards from end to beginning
- Data collection
- Future students
- **Community**
  - Community will support successful schools but are unlikely to failing ones





# Pitfalls to Avoid with ESSER Navigation

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## The Road Name Changed

- Every setting changes
- Moving pieces
  - Amendments and Capital Expenditure are complicated, ....



# Reality of the Setting: Driver Warning Road Condition

## Setting generated by ESSER is challenging

- Grant is changing and will continue to change
- different from other grants
- creates stress of the unknown
- stress increases likelihood of errors/mistakes

Call and talk to OPI ESSER Advocate/Auditor  
before submitting and save time for everyone



# ESSER funds for renovation, renovation, and minor remodeling

## **Includes examples of allowable projects from ED (with citations):**

- Improving school security,
- Improving drinking water,
- Servicing or upgrading HVAC systems,
- Repairing windows and/or doors so they can open to let fresh air in,
- Installing air quality tools like filtering, purification, fan, and control systems,
- Roof repairs or replacement to improve indoor air quality,
- Mold, radon, and asbestos remediation,
- Creating outdoor spaces for learning and other activities like eating lunch,
- Replacing carpet with easier-to-clean flooring, and
- Renovations to facilitate physical distancing.

# Allowable Use Test

## Department of Educations FAQ

## Department of Education Fact Sheets

- [DOE Construction and Late Liquidation Letter May 2022](#)
  - [CCSSO memo on ESSER Funds for Construction December 2021](#)
  - [DOE Construction Slides September 2, 2021](#)
  - [DOE Staffing Labor Shortages April 14, 2021](#)
  - [DOE DUN UEI Fact Sheet May 2022](#)
- ✓ **Try to use most restrictive funds first.**
  - ✓ **Cost effective solutions.**
  - ✓ **Greatest gain to student specific outcomes.**





## Various ED guidance documents state that addressing challenges that existed *before* the pandemic can be a reasonable response to the pandemic.

- ESSER and GEER FAQs May 2021
- diverse needs **arising from or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, or to emerge stronger post-pandemic**, including responding to students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs .... p. 9
- Implementing or expanding art programs, sports programs, or clubs. C-3
- Improving existing data systems. C-12
- Sustaining and maximizing enrollment in existing summer programs. C-25
- Continuing to pay existing employees and contractors. D-3
- ED says SEAs and LEAs can use ESSER funds for mental health services and supports for students that were experiencing trauma before the pandemic. C-14
- Curriculum, including related professional development. (ARP Public Safety Guidance, pp.5-6)



# Reasonable Compliance Supplement Addendum

Compliance Supplement Addendum for ESF programs, including ESSER and GEER, is now available

<https://www.cfo.gov/assets/files/Education%20Exchange%20Stabilization%20Fund%20Compliance%20Supplement%20Addendum%201%20PDF.pdf>.

ED has clarified that SEAs, LEAs and schools may use funding under ESSER CARES I, ESSER CRRSA II, and ESSER ARP III to support **a very wide range of activities, including activities indirectly linked to the impact of COVID-19**, as outlined in the ED Volume 2 COVID Handbook, available at <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf>, provided such uses are consistent with statutory requirements and the Uniform Guidance in 2 CFR Part 200.



# ESSER funds for construction, renovation, and minor remodeling.

Allowable uses to “do what they can to address other infrastructure issues, **such as ensuring that preexisting ventilation, roofing, and plumbing needs do not inhibit healthy learning environments.**” (COVID-19 Handbook, Vol. 2, p. 16)

## Capital Expenditure preapproval form

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdp7YZU\\_ksHyOO Fic\\_oHMJgLiGEceAknUYBMacuMCqAgFrChg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdp7YZU_ksHyOO Fic_oHMJgLiGEceAknUYBMacuMCqAgFrChg/viewform?usp=sf_link)

OPI Website:  
**opi.mt.gov**



Welcome to the Montana Office of Public Instruction!

As Graduation Season is upon us, I extend my congratulations to the tremendous and resilient Class of 2021! Montana is so proud of you!

On June 7, 2021, the Montana OPI submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) its State Plan for the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund. This plan recognizes local control, removes obstacles and barriers for schools, and enhances accountability without being overly burdensome.

[VIEW ARP ESSER PLAN](#)

[FIND ESSER INFORMATION](#)

The ARP Act represents the third round of funding to come through the ESSER fund, and Montana's allocation totals more than \$382,000,000. In previous rounds, Montana received more than \$41,000,000 (ESSER I) and \$170,000,000 (ESSER II). Through the Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools (EANS), the state also received nearly \$20 million for home and private schools. Two-thirds of the ESSER III funding has already been released to schools; once USED approves the State Plan, the OPI will be able to release the remaining one-third, or roughly \$126 million. Please check the "Find ESSER Information" on this website for regularly updated information. If your school district has any questions on ESSER, please direct them to [jeffrey.kirksey@mt.gov](mailto:jeffrey.kirksey@mt.gov).

[FIND EANS INFORMATION \(HOME & PRIVATE SCHOOL COVID FUNDING\)](#)

On June 24th and 25th, the OPI will host the Montana Education Virtual Summit & Job Fair supporting our Montana school districts with information and insight on Post-COVID opportunities for students.

[MEET EXECUTIVE STAFF](#)

Work Sessions include:

- The ARPA State Plan and the LEA Plan
- Meaningful Stakeholder Consultation
- What do the Data Tell
- What is the purpose of K-12 Education?
- Reimagining State Assessments

[SEE OPI PRESS RELEASES](#)

Dr. Yong Zhao will keynote the conference and provide support related to: "Avoiding the Learning Loss Trap" and "The Changes We Need."

The event is free to attend; there is a \$50 charge for school districts seeking to participate in the Job Fair and host a virtual recruitment booth. Please see the [registration page](#) for additional details.



# Thank you!



For questions or additional information please contact  
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Rebecca Brown at [Rebecca.brown@mt.gov](mailto:Rebecca.brown@mt.gov)