

Availability of Funding through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund

As authorized and appropriated by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act

April 15, 2020

On April 14, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) announced that the **nearly \$3 billion for states** under the **Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund** in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act is being made available. Under the CARES Act, these **flexible grants are for Governors** to provide **local educational agencies (LEAs), institutions of higher education (IHEs), and other education-related entities with emergency assistance to respond to the coronavirus.**

The Department has stated that it will post answers to frequently asked questions about the GEER Fund on its website in the coming days.

Timeline:

- **Each state has until June 1, 2020**, to submit a signed certification and agreement (or application) to the Department.
- The **Department expects to obligate the funds within three business days** of receiving a signed certification and agreement from a state.
- **States must provide an assurance that they will use their best efforts to provide grant funding on an expedited basis.** Notably, the Department does *not* require states to release funds to LEAs, IHEs, or other education-related entities within a specific time period (as the CARES Act did not specify a timeline for states to release funds).
 - **Within 45 days of receiving funding, states are required to submit an initial report** detailing the state's process for awarding funds to LEAs, IHEs, or other education-related entities.
 - The report must include the criteria for determining entities that are "most significantly impacted by coronavirus" and/or "essential for carrying out emergency educational services" (see below) and a description of how the state determined the criteria.
 - Regarding timing, the Department also states in the Notice Announcing Availability of Funds, that "states should therefore **ensure grants are made quickly and are as precisely targeted as possible** to address the exigent [or immediate] needs of students, the immediate challenges to the ongoing functionality of LEAs and IHEs, and the other specified statutory purposes, all caused by the COVID-19 pandemic."
- **Each Governor will have one year**, from the date of the state's award, to award funds.

Key Takeaways:

- The Secretary encourages states in its cover letter to Governors, "to focus these **resources on ensuring that all students continue to learn most likely through some form of remote learning.**" Building on this, the certification and agreement specifically asks states to **what extent they intend to use any of the awarded funds to support remote learning for all students.**
 - Specifically, states must:
 - describe whether they considered conducting an assessment of the barriers to implementing effective remote learning for all students, or utilizing an existing assessment, to help target resources toward greatest needs;
 - with respect to LEAs, describe how they intend to help students and teachers adopt or improve remote learning that serves all students, including students with disabilities, students from low-income families, charter school students, and non-public school students; and
 - with respect to IHEs, describe how they intend to focus expenditures to ensure that all institutions – public and private – have the needed supports to continue executing their missions and educating their students.

- States must also provide information on if they intend to use funding to **support technological capacity and access** – including hardware and software, connectivity, and instructional expertise – and to **develop new informational and academic resources and expand awareness of, and access to, best practices and innovations in remote learning**, as well as describe strategies they plan to use to serve low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth.
- States are required to provide an assurance **LEAs in their local applications (to the extent applicable) will describe the steps that they propose to take to assist students and teachers in overcoming barriers to participating in programs** (including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age).
- States will be required to submit quarterly reports to the Department. The Department *may* require states to report on the **specific entities awarded funding and uses of funds by the SEA, LEAs, IHEs, or other educational entities**, including funding to **address the digital divide and related issues in distance learning**, among other reporting requirements to be determined in the future.

Allocation of Funds:

- The Department will award **\$2,953,230,000 to Governors**. Under the CARES Act, states will receive funding based on **60% on their relative population of individuals aged 5 through 24**, and **40% on their relative number of children counted under Title I section 1124(c) of ESEA**.

Use of Funds:

- As authorized by the CARES Act, states may use funds for one or more of the following:
 1. Grants to **LEAs – including charter schools and non-public schools – that the state deems most significantly impacted by the coronavirus** to provide educational services and to support the on-going functionality of the LEA;
 2. Grants to **IHEs that the state deems most significantly impacted by the coronavirus** to provide educational services and to support the on-going functionality of IHEs; and
 3. support **any other LEA, IHE, or education related entity that the Governor deems essential for carrying out emergency educational services to students**, including for child care and early childhood education, social and emotional support, and the protection of education-related jobs, as well as any activity authorized by ESEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (CTE), part of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and the Higher Education Act (HEA), among other federal elementary and secondary education laws.

Additional Resources (as provided by USED):

- [Cover Letter to Governors](#)
- [Certification Agreement/Application for States](#)
- [State-by-State Allocations](#)
- [Notice Announcing Availability of Funds](#)
- [USED Press Release](#)

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