



Smith System®

Guide on How to Access Educational Stimulus Funds

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, Congress passed stimulus legislation to help the economy (CARES Act). Included in this Stimulus funding was billions of dollars targeted at education. Since then, new bills have created further funding opportunities in education.

You may ask how are these funds being accessed? While processes may vary State to State, we have put together an easy guide to follow:

Step 1

1

Access your State LEA's (Local Education Agency) Website.

Step 2

2

Most states will have a COVID-19 section dedicated to their website. You may find funding information either here or in the grant section for your LEA.

Step 3

3

Once on the funding section for your state, there will be directions for accessing funds. Some states require an application to be filled out. Follow any steps outlined.

Step 4

4

As with anything, if you experience any roadblocks, our Dealer partners and Regional Sales Managers are happy to help work you through any hurdles you may come across.



CARES Act

The CARES Act included an Education Stabilization Fund, which contains two major sources of emergency funding for K–12 schools: the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund and the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund.

ESSER

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund designated \$13.2 billion of the CARES Act for K–12 schools. ESSER funds are grant based with ninety percent of state ESSER funds being distributed to districts based on each district’s share of Title I, Part A funds.

ESSER funds can be spent by districts on a range of activities, services, and goods (outlined in the legislation Section 18003(d)):

- COVID-19 preparedness efforts
- Education technology
- Mental health services
- Summer-learning and after-school programs
- Cleaning supplies
- Programs to meet the unique needs of special student populations, including English Learners, children with disabilities, and children with socioeconomic disadvantages.

GEER

The GEER Fund gives governors a flexible source of federal funding to meet local educational needs resulting from the pandemic. GEER grants can be awarded to districts, higher-education institutions, and/or other educational entities, such as nonprofits, libraries, and state agencies.



CRRSAA/ESSER II

In December 2020, Congress enacted a second round of federal stimulus with the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA). Often referred to as “CARES Act II,” this legislation authorized \$54.3 billion more for the ESSER Fund, now called “ESSER II.”

ESSER II funding can be used for the same activities as described in ESSER legislation, with an additional focus on addressing learning loss, preparing schools for reopening, and projects to improve air quality in school buildings.



American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

Most recently in March 2021, Congress passed a third stimulus bill entitled the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The law disperses roughly \$125 billion for the K-12 education system and nearly \$40 billion for the higher education system.

The plan follows the same structure as the CARES Act and maintained by the 2020 year-end COVID-19 relief bill. The American Rescue Plan Act will disburse roughly \$165 billion through a modified Education Stabilization Fund that includes two main funding streams: the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER III) and the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEER III).