



BenQ | White Paper

CARES Funding for Schools

CARES II - The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA)*



* The information contained herein is intended to help explain the CRRSAA and is not intended as legal advice or guidance nor is it intended to guarantee coverage under the Act. BenQ recommends verifying with your admin that expenditures will be made for eligible uses prior to making any purchases using CRRSAA funding.

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The CRRSAA Act (CARES II)

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA)

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA), Public Law 116-260, was signed by President Trump on December 27, 2020. The CRRSAA authorizes nearly \$82 billion for the Education Stabilization Fund, which is in addition to the \$30.75 billion allocated to support education in March 2020 through the Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Public Law 116-136.

\$82 billion provided for the Education Stabilization Fund is broken down as follows:

- \$54.3 billion to K-12 public schools (the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund or “ESSER II”) » vs. the \$13.2 billion allocated to the ESSER I under the original CARES Act.
- \$22.7 billion to higher education institutions (the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund or “HEER”).
- \$4.1 billion to the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund (“GEER II”) for K-12 and higher education, with \$2.75 billion of that reserved for private K-12 schools.
- Distribution for the fund uses the same formula as was used for the CARES Act.

Uses of Funding:

To lessen the impact of the pandemic on learning with investments in solutions to address learning loss, preparing schools for reopening and testing, upgrading projects to improve air quality in school buildings, as well as purchasing educational technology that aids in the regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classrooms instructors.

The ESSER II (CRRSAA) Fund

Award and Distribution of Funds:

ESSER I (CARES Act)

Funds must be awarded within 1 year of receiving them, between April and June 2021, depending on the original award date.

90% must go to local education agencies. States will have 10% to utilize for specific purposes.

ESSER II (CRRSAA)

Funds must be awarded within 1 year of receiving them, January 2022

Same as ESSER I Fund (CARES Act): 90% must go to local education agencies. States will have 10% to utilize for specific purposes.

Spending of Funds:

ESSER I (CARES Act)

State Educational Agencies (SEAs) must spend funds by September 30, 2022.

May be used for pre-award costs dating back to March 13, 2020, when the national emergency was declared.

ESSER II (CRRSAA)

State Educational Agencies (SEAs) must spend funds by September 30, 2023.

Same as ESSER I Fund (CARES Act): May be used for preaward costs dating back to March 13, 2020, when the national emergency was declared.

Reporting of Funds: (Note – Reporting requirements increased for ESSER II.)

ESSER I (CARES Act)

Under the CARES Act, each SEA that receives ESSER I funds must meet the reporting requirements of section 15011 of the CARES Act, which are satisfied through the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting, and other reporting as the Secretary may require (Annual Reporting).

ESSER I funds must be tracked separately from ESSER II funds.

ESSER II (CRRSAA)

Under the CRRSAA, each SEA that receives ESSER II funds must meet the CARES Act reporting requirements that apply to ESSER funds and submit a report to the Secretary within six months of award that contains a detailed accounting of the use of ESSER II funds, that includes how the State is using funds to measure and address learning loss among students disproportionately affected by the coronavirus and school closures.

ESSER II funds must be tracked separately from ESSER I funds.

Additional notes:

- ESSER funds are subject to all provisions of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) and Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG) of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Districts should adhere to their state's processes and will be required to report the use of ESSER funds.
- Private schools can receive funding under GEER II, not ESSER II.

Sources:

- <https://mdrededucation.com/2021/01/06/new-funding-for-schools-through-the-covid-19-economic-relief-bill/>
- <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oep/crrsaa.html>
- https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/01/Final_ESSERII_Factsheet_1.5.21.pdf
- <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/cr/caresact.asp>

What's available?

Overview of the Educational Provisions of the CRRSAA

(Source: <https://www.ncsl.org/ncsl-in-dc/publications-and-resources/covid-19-economic-relief-bill-stimulus.aspx>)

- Provides \$82 billion for an Education Stabilization Fund to remain available through September 30, 2022.
- Provides \$54.3 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund. Schools can use the relief to address learning loss, improve school facilities and infrastructure to reduce the risk of transmitting the coronavirus, and purchase education technology. States must distribute at least 90% of funds to local education agencies based on their proportional share of ESEA Title I-A funds. States have the option to reserve 10% of the allocation for emergency needs as determined by the state to address issues responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Provides \$4.1 billion for the Governors Emergency Education Relief Fund to use for education-related pandemic assistance. \$2.75 billion would be set aside for private schools. Funds are limited to COVID-related needs and cannot be used for vouchers or scholarships for parents.
- Provides \$22.7 billion for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund. \$20.2 billion to be allocated to public and private nonprofit institutions. This allocation formula is a change from the CARES Act, which used only full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment in its allocation formula:
 - 37.5% based on FTE enrollment of Federal Pell Grant recipients.
 - 37.5% based on headcount enrollment of Pell recipients.
 - 11.5% based on FTE enrollment of non-Pell recipients.
 - 11.5% based on headcount enrollment of non-Pell recipients.
 - 1% based on the relative share of full-time equivalent enrollment of students who were Federal Pell Grant recipients and who
 - were exclusively enrolled in distance education courses prior to the qualifying emergency.
- 1% based on the relative share of the total number of students who were Federal Pell Grant recipients and who were exclusively enrolled in distance education courses prior to the qualifying emergency. Provides \$680.9 million to for-profit colleges to provide financial aid grants to students.
- Provides \$1.7 billion to historically black colleges and universities (HBCU), tribal colleges, and minority-serving institutions.
- Provides \$113 million for institutions with the greatest unmet need related to the pandemic or those not served by the primary formula, such as independent graduate students.
- Institutions can use the stimulus money for lost revenue, reimbursement for expenses, technology costs due to the shift to online learning, financial aid for students, and more. The bill directs schools to prioritize grants for students with exceptional needs. Colleges and universities cannot use the funds for recruitment activities, athletics facilities, religious instruction, or senior administrator salaries or bonuses.
- Provides \$819 million to the Bureau of Indian Education-operated and funded schools and tribal colleges and universities.
- Maintenance of Effort (MOE): States must maintain spending on both K-12 and higher education in FY 2022 at least at the proportional levels of such state's support for elementary and secondary education and for higher education relative to such state's overall spending, averaged over FY 2018, FY 2019, and FY 2020. The MOE can be waived by the secretary of education.
- Schools that receive funding would have to continue to pay their employees and contractors during any closures, to the greatest extent practicable.

Additional resources:

- State Funding Tracker: <https://www.ncsl.org/ncsl-in-dc/standing-committees/education/cares-act-elementary-and-secondary-school-emergency-relief-fund-tracker.aspx>

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