

## **MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (MDE)**

### ***Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) - Education Equity Fund Program Important Information***

THE FOLLOWING COMPETITIVE GRANT IS ANNOUNCED AND AWARDS ARE CONTINGENT ON THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS. GRANT APPLICATIONS WILL BE COLLECTED USING THE MICHIGAN ELECTRONIC GRANTS SYSTEM *PLUS* (MEGS+).

#### ***Part I: General Information***

##### ***INTRODUCTION***

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund, part of the United States Education Department's (USED) Educational Stabilization Fund Program awards grants to state educational agencies (SEAs) for the purpose of providing local educational agencies (LEAs), including charter schools, with emergency relief funds to address the impact that Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation. Nine and a half percent (9.5%) of the Michigan SEA ESSER fund is being designated to create an education equity fund to provide targeted funding to reduce the digital divide and support student mental health in Michigan's highest need school communities. Districts will be eligible to apply for an amount up to 20 percent of their ESSER Formula allocation for the purpose of:

1. Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the local educational agency that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and students with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.
2. Providing mental health services and supports.

##### ***ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS***

While all school districts and public-school academies will be able to apply for these funds, priority will be given to districts identified as having high disadvantaged student populations by the following criteria (as reported during school year (SY) 2019-2020).

- Over 85% economically disadvantaged
- At least one school in the district is over 85% economically disadvantaged
- The district is over 20% students with disabilities
- The district is over 10% English learners

A list of the 332 districts identified as having high disadvantaged student population can be found

at: [http://michigan.gov/documents/mde/ESSER\\_Education\\_Equity\\_Funds\\_HNSC\\_6\\_98226\\_7.xlsx](http://michigan.gov/documents/mde/ESSER_Education_Equity_Funds_HNSC_6_98226_7.xlsx)

While the 332 highest need districts will be the ones automatically eligible for these funds, other districts may need and want to apply for funds to use for devices, connectivity, and/or mental health. Other districts will be able to “make a case” with the understanding that they may not be awarded funds and that funding is dependent on the number of the 332 districts who apply and are awarded funds.

## **NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS PARTICIPATION**

LEAs must provide equitable services to students and teachers in non-public schools as required under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act).

## **REQUIRED COMPONENTS**

The ESSER – Education Equity application consists of assurances, certifications, and narrative statements on the use of funds. Eligible applicants must initiate an application in the MEGS+ and either accept or refuse ESSER – Education Equity funds. Only a MEGS+ Authorized Official (Level 5) may initiate and submit the grant application. To compete and accept ESSER – Education Equity funds, an applicant must:

(1) check the box indicating acceptance of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) – Education Equity Fund;

(2) certify agreement to all assurances and certifications;

(3) enter brief (3,500 character maximum) statement on how the most important education equity needs due to COVID-19 specific to closing the digital divide and supporting student mental health were determined;

(4) enter a list of community partners the district will work with to address the district’s identified needs;

(5) enter the district’s anticipated impact/outcome as related to the identified need (at least one anticipated impact/outcome is required);

(a) Number of students with devices

(b) Number of students with connectivity

(c) Number of households with connectivity

(d) Number of students receiving mental health services

(6) enter brief (800 character maximum) statement on equitable access to students, staff, and parents/families;

(7) certify participation of nonpublic/private schools;

(8) complete budget page information, including budget detail, associated with intended use of ESSER – Education Equity funds and;

(9) save and submit application. To refuse ESSER -Education Equity funds, the applicant must check the box indicating refusal of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds and save the page.

For an applicant to qualify for ESSER – Education Equity funds, the application must be submitted on or before September 30, 2020.

### **TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE - \$37,030,554**

While all Michigan districts are eligible to apply for the ESSER - Educational Equity Funds, priority will be given to the 332 districts identified above and as defined in MDE's Approved Federal CARES Act Grant Proposal as serving the most disadvantaged student populations. Districts may apply for up to 20 percent of their ESSER Formula allocation. Districts that did not receive an ESSER formula fund allocation because the districts did not receive a Title I, Part A allocation during school year 2019-2020 will be eligible to receive an allocation up to \$87.34 per pupil from their 2019-20 state membership.

Estimated allocations for all districts are found on the MDE's webpage at [https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-81376\\_51051-127227--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-81376_51051-127227--,00.html).

### **USE OF FUNDS**

ESSER – Education Equity allocations are federal grant monies and subject to any and all applicable federal spending, accounting, and reporting requirements. ESSER – Education Equity funds may be used for any purposes listed below, as outlined in section 18003(d) of the CARES Act:

1. Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students who are served by the local educational agency that aids in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and students with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.
2. Providing mental health services and supports.

## **EQUITABLE SERVICES**

USED provided guidance on providing equitable services to students and teachers in non-public schools under the CARES Act Programs on April 30, 2020 (<https://oese.ed.gov/non-public-education-faq/>). An equitable services calculation worksheet is provided to assist districts in determining the proper amount of equitable services that must be provided from the ESSER funding. USED's April 30, 2020 equitable services guidance has been questioned relative to typical distribution of Title I Part A funds, and is currently under review by USED. If USED changes its guidance on Equitable Services districts may have to recalculate, as it may change the district allocation.

## **DUE DATE**

Applications can be submitted at any time after the application is available in MEGS+; however, applications must be submitted using MEGS+ no later than September 30, 2020 for review.

## **TENTATIVE TIMELINE**

The tentative time frame for the operation of this grant program includes these major milestones:

- August 4, 2020 - Application available in MEGS+
- September 30, 2020 - Applications due
- October 2, 2020 – Grant Review
- October 19, 2020 – Grant Awards Announced
- October 22, 2020 – Awards made via CMS
- September 30, 2021 - Grant ending date\*
- November 29, 2021 – Final Expenditure Report due

Additional quarterly reports may be required. Notification of these dates, if any, will be announced as soon as final guidance is issued by the U.S. Department of Education.

## **LENGTH OF AWARD**

\*Expected grant period is March 13, 2020 - September 30, 2021. Eligible entities will only use funds for allowable costs incurred on or after March 13, 2020.

## **REJECTION OF PROPOSALS**

The MDE reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received as a result of this announcement.

## **Part II: Review Process Information**

### **REVIEW PROCESS:**

The MDE will use an internal review panel comprised of MDE, program office subject matter experts (SME) in the areas of educational technology, mental health, and equitable services when reviewing the competitive nature of the grants. The Office of Systems, Evaluation, and Technology (OSET) and the Office of Financial Management (OFM) – Grants Coordination Unit will conduct an administrative review to ensure all grant requirements have been met and the budget does not exceed the 20 percent ESSER Formula allocation cap. The OSET and OFM will also supervise the competitive review process.

Award selection for competitive grants will be based on priority, merit, and quality, as determined by the review criteria provided below. All funding is subject to approval by the State Superintendent. All applicants will be notified of the Superintendent's action regarding their application via MEGS+.

### **REVIEW CRITERIA:**

#### *Administrative Review*

The administrative review will consist of:

1. Identifying district priority
2. Checking the status of the applicants Accept/Refuse ESSER – Education Equity Fund page
3. Verifying Equitable Access responses are complete
4. Confirming Participation of Private Schools responses
5. Verifying budget requests are no more than 20 percent of the districts ESSER Formula allocation or the \$87.34 per pupil allocation
6. Categorizing application's Area of Need to assign program office SMEs for competitive review

## Competitive Review

The rubric below will be used by the MDE internal review team to determine funding allocations.

<b>Demonstration of Education Equity Needs Assessment</b>		
<i>Not recommended for funding</i>	<i>Recommended for funding at a reduced budget request</i>	<i>Highly Recommended for funding at full funding request</i>
<i>The application:</i>	<i>The application:</i>	<i>The application:</i>
does not provide a description of how the LEA has determined its most important need specific to closing the digital divide and/or supporting student's mental health.	provides a description of how the LEA has determined its most important need specific to closing the digital divide and/or supporting mental health, but the description is missing one or more of the following components: data and comparative statistics; connects to qualitative data; highlights the gap that is being addressed.	provides a clear and concise description of how the LEA will or has determined its most important need specific to closing the digital divide or supporting student mental health that provides supporting data and comparative statistics, it connects to qualitative data, and highlights the gap that is being addressed.
does not provide a list of community partners.	provides a list of community partners, but there doesn't appear to be a connection to the need (closing the digital divide and/or supporting mental health).	provides a list of community partners that support the efforts to address the districts most important need (closing the digital divide and/or supporting mental health), it is clear to MDE's SME's that the partnership(s) will address closing the digital divide and/or support mental health.
does not provide the anticipated outcome/impact data (i.e. number of students with devices, number of students with connectivity, number of households with connectivity, number of students receiving mental health services).	provides anticipated outcome/impact data (i.e. number of students with devices, number of students with connectivity, number of households with connectivity, number of students receiving mental health services), but the anticipated outcome/impact data does not align with the described need or is not realistic based on the description of need or the budget.	provides anticipated outcome/impact data (i.e. number of students with devices, number of students with connectivity, number of households with connectivity, number of students receiving mental health services), that aligns to the needs statement and is realistic to be achieved.

<b>Budget</b>		
<i>The application:</i>	<i>The application:</i>	<i>The application:</i>
provides budget detail that does not align to or will not address the identified need (closing the digital divide and/or supporting mental health).	provides budget detail that aligns to the identified need (address closing the digital divide and/or supporting mental health) but is over the allotted allocation and/or does not align to the identified impact data submitted.	provides clear and concise budget detail with evidence of alignment to addressing the identified need (closing the digital divide and/or supporting mental health) and the identified impact data submitted.

Districts identified as serving a high percentage of disadvantaged students by the following factors:

- Entire district over 85% economically disadvantaged
- At least one school in the district is over 85% economically disadvantaged
- The district is over 20% students with disabilities
- The district is over 10% English learners

**Part III: Funding and Reporting Information**

**GRANT NUMBER**

203720

**PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

Upon receipt of a Grant Award Notification from MDE, the grantee may claim reimbursement through the Cash Management System (CMS) in accordance with the grant award start date.

**REPORTING**

The State of Michigan is required to submit quarterly reports to the USED for all ESSER grant programs. The USED has decided to accept the monthly reporting requirements of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA), Pub.L. 109-282, as amended by the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act), Pub.L. 113-101. School districts will not have to submit separate data to fulfill the quarterly reporting requirement.

## **FINANCIAL REPORTING**

ESSER – Education Equity Funds must be accounted for and tracked separately than other federal funding received by the district. Revenue should be recorded under Major Class Code 414, Suffix Code 0250. Expenditures should be recorded with Grant Code 796. A final expenditure report (FER) will be required within the CMS 60 days of the expenditure of all funds or within 60 days of the grant ending date, whichever comes first. Deviations of 10 percent or more between the approved MEGS+ budget and the FER will require a justification.

## **ASSURANCE OF ACCURACY**

If, during the implementation of any funded project, MDE establishes that inaccurate or false information was provided in the application, the grant may be rescinded.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY**

In keeping with accountability, transparency, and reporting requirements, any and all portions of a district's ESSER – Education Equity application and reports on the use of funds may be publicly posted.

## **MONITORING VISITS**

All subgrantees are subject to onsite or virtual grant review from state or federal auditors. Recipients must maintain and make available, in the event of a monitoring visit, evidence and documentation to support all expenditures.

## **QUESTIONS**

Questions regarding how an allocation was determined should be directed to Shoua Vang, Financial Manager, in the Office Educational Supports by email to VangS1@michigan.gov, or by phone at 517-335-0909. Any questions regarding this grant's effect on state aid should be directed to Phil Boone of the State Aid and School Finance Unit by email to BooneP2@michigan.gov, or by phone at 517-335-4059. All other questions should be directed to the Grants, Contracts and School Support unit by email to MDE-CARES@michigan.gov or to Amanda Stoel, Department Specialist, Office of Systems, Evaluation, and Technology at stoela@michigan.gov. General question can be submitted to MDE-CARES@michigan.gov.

## **RESOURCES**

The U.S. Department of Education frequently posts updated information about the ESSER Program on its website – [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov). ESSER guidance is also available on the following website: <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/education-stabilization-fund/elementary-secondary-school-emergency-relief-fund/>