



JANUARY 2024

Office of Federal Emergency Relief Programs (OFERP)

Notes to the Field



PROGRAM NOTES

FY 2023 ESSER Performance Report

We hope to release the **FY 2023 ESSER Performance Report** at the end of January. The FY 2023 ESSER Performance Report is due **April 12, 2024**. All expenditures and activities will reflect the **July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023** performance period for **CARES ESSER I, CRRSA ESSER II, and ARP ESSER III**. The OFERP team will be hosting a FY 2023 ESSER Performance Report office hour on **Tuesday, February 13, 2024** at 10:00am. [Click here to register.](#)

In addition, OFERP will be hosting walk-in, no agenda, open sessions every Wednesday at 11:00am for an hour starting on **February 28, 2024, through April 10, 2024**. [Click here to register.](#) Upon request, one-on-one technical assistance can be provided by the OFERP Team.

LITERACY GRANT

The Mills Administration has announced \$10 million in Literacy Grants for Maine schools. These grants through the Maine Department of Education are intended to build core literacy instruction for students and support instructional components.

Grant funds can be used by schools to compensate educators for participating in evidence-based literacy learning opportunities, to train instructional coaches, and to purchase evidence-based literacy materials. Literacy grants will be allocated to schools based on a formula model. More information is available [here](#).

Subscriptions and Licenses

The Federal Emergency Relief team continues to maintain the view that federal funds can be used for subscriptions, or license fees, only during the active period of the grant. Thus, for ARP, school districts would need to prorate the cost of the subscription through September 30, 2024. Any balance remaining would need to be covered by the district. While a process is in place (from US DOE) for LEAs to request an extension to the typical liquidation timeline, our Federal Emergency Relief team is learning that the process to request the extension will require very specific details both financial as well as written details that justify the extension. Typically, extensions will be awarded only for unanticipated delays in the provision of services or delivery of materials that had been properly obligated.

#TEACHMAINE ARP EDUCATOR SHORTAGES CREDENTIALING SUPPORT FUNDING

Federal funding has been allocated to publicly funded local education agencies (LEA) to support Maine educators currently teaching with an emergency, conditional, and/or waived certification to meet the requirements for a professional teaching credential. The application is available [here](#) with a deadline is February 1, 2024. For more information, please contact Diana Doiron, Educator Workforce Development Specialist, at diana.doiron@maine.gov.



Upcoming Events and Deadlines

- January 1st - Happy New Year! State offices are closed today
- January 15th - Martin Luther King Jr. Day - State offices are closed today
- January 25th -10 a.m. - Fiscal Office Hours for Business Managers and accounting staff - Register [here](#)
- February 1st - 9 a.m. - OFERP Office Hours - Register [here](#)
- February 13th - 10 a.m. - FY 2023 ESSER Performance Report office hour - Register [here](#).
- February 28th - 10 a.m. - FY23 ESSER Performance Report walk-in, no agenda, open session - Register [here](#).



ARE YOU OUT OF COMPLIANCE WITH YOUR INVOICING STATUS?

We are now in the final months of the ARP ESSER III funding and there are several districts who still have 100% of their awarded funds remaining, as well as numerous districts who have not requested reimbursement for any billing period of 2023. SAU's are required to submit invoices at least quarterly for an Invoice Billing Period of 1 to 3 months to be compliant with the conditions of the grant. The Office of Federal Emergency Relief Programs (OFERP) team urges ALL districts to become current with their invoice reimbursement requests as soon as possible. If you are having difficulty submitting invoices, or have any questions, OFERP Team members are available to help. We also hold monthly Office Hours where we share new information, provide clarity to statute requirements, as well as answer any of your questions. You can register for the next OFERP Office Hours which will be held on February 1st at 9 a.m. [here](#).

Reimbursement Payment Glitch

Recently, a system glitch has been identified which caused some approved invoices, supported by the Office of Federal Emergency Relief Programs (OFERP), to have not been through the payment process. Though the invoices were reviewed and approved by DOE on timely manner, they are still missing payments. Our office is actively working with the Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS) to fix this payment issue. We apologize to all of you who are facing this problem and we really appreciate your patience.

NEW OFFICE HOURS FOR BUSINESS MANAGERS AND ACCOUNTING STAFF

Join us on the last Thursday of every month at 10 a.m. as the DOE fiscal teams collaborate to bring you informative sessions and provide a common place for you to get your questions answered, regardless of the Federal funding source. The next session will be held on Thursday, January 25th and you can register [here](#). We hope to see you there!

Are LEAs Using ESSER Awards Responsibly?

ESSER funds can be used to purchase and support a variety of items **if reasonable** and necessary. What does reasonable mean? According to CFR 200.404: "A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost." CFR § 200.313(e) states: When original or replacement equipment acquired under a Federal award is no longer needed for the original project or program or for other activities currently or previously supported by a Federal awarding agency, except as otherwise provided in Federal statutes, regulations, or Federal awarding agency disposition instructions, the non-Federal entity must request disposition instructions from the Federal awarding agency if required by the terms and conditions of the Federal award.

The LEA should be able to demonstrate that the purchase of the item would be more efficient and cost less overall than other means available. For example, if the LEA already has a vehicle that it could use to transport students or a less expensive means to transport the students (e.g., leasing a vehicle or using a private vehicle and reimbursing for the cost of transportation), it would not be reasonable and necessary to use these funds to purchase a vehicle. If, however, the LEA determines that the cost of a vehicle, including related expenses such as fuel and insurance, is less than the cost of alternative means of transportation, the purchase may be considered reasonable and necessary given the circumstances.

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