

Responses to OFERP Office Hours 7/29/21 Webinar Chat Questions

General Information

1. If there are questions who is the best persons to contact and what are their phone numbers?

Fund or Role	Contact Name	Email	Phone
Director	Shelly Chasse-Johndro	Shelly.Chassejohndro@maine.gov	207-458-3180
ARP ESSER (ESSER III)	Monique Sullivan	Monique.Sullivan@maine.gov	207-441-5763
CRRSA ESSER (ESSER II)	Karen Kusiak	Karen.kusiak@maine.gov	207-592-2499
CARES ESSER (ESSER I)	Karen Kusiak	Karen.kusiak@maine.gov	207-592-2499
Reimbursement Fiscal	Maisha Asha Nicole Denis	Maisha.asha@maine.gov Nicole.L.Denis@maine.gov	(207) 816-0204 (207) 530-2161

2. Do you have the site for the NEO help line?

Maine DOE Helpdesk at medms.helpdesk@maine.gov

3. Where can I get a copy of the PowerPoint?

The materials from each office hour are posted on the Office of Federal Emergency Relief Programs (OFERP) under ESSER, "General Information." The link for the ESSER page is:

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/covid-19/fedrelief#esser>

ARP ESSER Application (Use of Funds plan)

4. Does the plan need to be posted before it is approved or after it is approved?

A summary of the plan (ARP ESSER Application) must be publicly available on a SAU's website prior to the ARP ESSER Application submission. The approval process includes verifying that the application (plan for the Use of ARP ESSER funds) is publicly available, and therefore must be posted prior to ARP ESSER Application submission.

5. Does this mean we can still post just the summary, or do we need to post the entire application?

Districts may post at least a summary of the ARP ESSER application (use of funds plans and update it as needed. Items to consider including when posting the ARP ESSER application (use of funds plan); describe the process conducted for meaningful consultation with stakeholder groups, the determination of SAU priorities, and the identification of activities and uses of the ARP ESSER funds to address the impacts of COVID-19 on learning loss.

6. Can we get access to the application while we wait for the superintendent to sign off on the assurances?

Yes, if needed, a pdf version of the ARP ESSER application can be download from GEM and emailed to an ARP ESSER coordinator (See Question 2 for OFERP contact information)

7. Will we be able to adjust these target groups once projects get going? Will we be able to update as the year progresses? What about reporting on student groups with projects not in the 20% reservation?

Yes, SAUs will be able to adjust their targeted student groups. SAUs need to continue to document the projects and target groups that were originally in their plans. It is understood that SAUs will be assessing and monitoring the effectiveness of their projects with target groups and may need to make adjustment based on assessment outcomes. In other words, it is possible that other groups of students may be identified once they are with educators more regularly; gaps and needs may be more readily identified when students and educators are together. The ARP ESSER (III) application may be revised just as the CARES ESSER (I) & CRRSA ESSER (II) applications may be revised as needed.

8. Do we have to do an after-school program?

There is no requirement to offer or conduct after-school programming. The assurances page uses “afterschool tutoring” as an example of an evidence-based intervention. The 20% reservation requirement is for learning loss which may include afterschool programming (or summer school, tutoring, etc.). More information about evidence-based interventions can be found in the [COVID 19 Handbook-Volume 2](#) on the [U.S. Dept of Education’s website](#).

9. It would have been helpful to be able to check more than one evidence-based approach for a single project to address learning loss - Can that be changed to allow that?

It is very likely that the U.S. Department of Education will require State Education Agencies (SEAs) to report on each intervention that is used by SAUs, which is why the ARP ESSER application is requiring SAUs to enter each evidence-based intervention and allowable use activity as separate projects.

10. Lost instructional time—our district is small and our students were in school five days a week last year. How do we address lost instructional time and the required 20% reservation?

While students were attending in-person school for the full school year in some Maine schools, their families may have experienced hardship due to loss of income or inability to visit with extended family and friends, for example. Students therefore may have experienced worry and anxiety as well as having missed opportunities for learning through the activities of daily living in social settings. Consulting with families about their needs – which will partially meet a requirement for “meaningful consultation” - will likely identify ideas for programs the school can arrange for with partner organizations or provide themselves at school. For example, parents may be eager for their students to participate in enrichment activities during or after school or to have access to enhanced opportunities to learn that include using up-to-date books and materials. A good number of ideas for addressing loss during the pandemic are in Vol 2 of the US Department of Education’s *Covid-19 Handbook: Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting the Needs of All Learners*.
<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf>

Fiscal

11. Can the cost of doing the application be paid for by the funds? Like the meaningful consultation, etc.? Yes, however, all costs and activities must be *necessary* and *reasonable* ([Uniform Guidance, 2 CFR Part 200](#)) and permissible under one of the allowable uses of ESSER funds. More information about allowable uses can be found in the [ARP ESSER Interim Final Rule](#)

and [USDE ARP ESSER FAQs](#) documents. Also, it is important to keep in mind how costs and activities are being used to “prevent, prepare for, or respond to the COVID 19 pandemic.”

The following question and answer is from the US Department of Education FAQ document for ESSER and GEER from May 2021:

https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/05/ESSER.GEER_FAQs_5.26.21_745AM_FINALb0cd6833f6f46e03ba2d97d30aff953260028045f9ef3b18ea602db4b32b1d99.pdf (page 49)

E-5. May an LEA use ESSER or GEER funds to defray the costs of administering the program? Yes. An LEA may charge as an expense to the ESSER or GEER fund an amount that is reasonable and necessary to effectively administer the program consistent with the cost principles in the Uniform Guidance. Administrative costs include costs (direct and indirect) involved in the proper and efficient performance and administration of ESSER or GEER funds. For example, an LEA may use ESSER funds to hire personnel to assist in the planning, implementation, and oversight of ESSER fund activities.

12. Are financial services expenses for grant management allowed?

See question #11 above.