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TOPIC: ESEA Consortia

Definitions

Consortia are partnership agreements in which the participating members pool their funds for a common purpose. A consortium is typically formed to meet the intent of a specific title when individual participating local education agencies (LEAs) lack sufficient resources or expertise to adequately provide the program or services alone. Consortia are allowed for the following formula-driven ESEA programs:

- Title II Part A
- Title III Part A (must generate a consortium allocation of at least \$10,000)

When an LEA decides to enter into a consortium agreement, it turns over its entire program allocation to the consortium and in return receives the programs or services allowable under the law and consensually agreed upon by the consortium participants.

Although participating LEAs do not submit separate applications for funds, they are responsible for ensuring the requirements for receiving the funds are adhered to and federal ESEA goals are met.

ESEA Consortia and the ESEA Electronic Application

LEA Responsibilities

An LEA wishing to enter into a consortium for specific titles under ESEA may do so by selecting the “join a consortium” option for each program budget on the “Management Funds” screen in the ESEA application. By selecting this option, the LEAs elect to surrender their entire program allocation to the consortium. The district must sign a consortium verification form stating they understand the programs and services it will receive from the consortium. The LEA also is responsible for meeting the equitable participation requirements for private schools. The school district must submit a written affirmation from each private school serving students who reside in the public school attendance area. This affirmation assures that the private schools are provided meaningful consultation and indicates the titles in which a private school wishes to participate. The school district and consortium fiscal agent must work together to ensure that the participating private schools receive their equitable share of program services.

Fiscal Agent Responsibilities

The consortium fiscal agent is responsible for submitting consortium program goals, including activities and services, and a budget detailing projected expenditures. The program plan will reflect budget items for all participating districts. At the close of the fiscal year, any unexpended funds will be considered carryover funds for the consortium into the next fiscal year. The fiscal agent is responsible for submitting all reimbursement claims to DPI. The fiscal agent should work with each participating district to ensure the equitable participation rights of private school children are met.

Consortia that flow funds back to the participating districts

In the case of a consortium arrangement where a portion of the funds is returned by the fiscal agent to the LEA to control and spend for local use, a local budget describing how these funds will be spent must be approved by DPI. In this type of consortium arrangement, each participating district's local use of funds must also be approved by DPI. The fiscal agent is responsible for tracking the expenditures of all funds at the local and consortium levels. Fiscal agents and participating LEAs should agree on how carryover funds will be allocated to member districts prior to the start of the fiscal year. Claims for reimbursement must be submitted by the consortium.

All budget revisions must be submitted to DPI by the consortium. If the local district budget is amended, the consortium must resubmit the local budget along with the consortium budget for approval.

For more information on being a fiscal agent, see the Department of Public Instruction Fiscal Agent Policy at <http://sfs.dpi.wi.gov/files/sfs/doc/fisagnt.doc>.

Specific questions related to this bulletin should be directed to:

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