Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Fund Grant Program Authorized Under American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Updated: 9/19/22

If the program must operate 10 hours per week, is there a requirement for how many weeks must be provided?

There is no requirement for a number of weeks, but the program is intended to serve students through the school year. It would not be permissible to provide 10 hours per week for only a few weeks out of the school year.

If programming is provided during winter and spring break, can those hours make up for weeks with less than 10 hours during the rest of the school year?

No. The 10 hour per calendar week requirement is the minimum number of hours found to be necessary to receive positive outcomes.

Programming can be offered during breaks to provide additional supports and services.

How do CBOs determine which tier of funding they are eligible for?

If CBOs are working with a small district they can use the district's enrollment numbers.

If a CBO is partnering with a school or multiple schools in the district and plans to serve at least 20 percent of students from each of those schools, they can use the enrollment for each partner school.

If a CBO is providing city or community wide programming, partnering with multiple schools for less than 20 percent of the school's enrollment, they should determine the estimated number of students to be served.

How does the consortium application work?

LEAs can partner together to apply for a grant, choosing one LEA to be the applicant and fiscal agent.

CBOs can partner together to apply for a grant, choosing one CBO to be the applicant and fiscal agent.

LEAs and CBOs cannot be consortium partners due to the funding source differences.

Can sparsity aid eligible LEAs and non-sparsity aid eligible LEAs apply together as a consortium?

Yes, they must choose one to be the applicant and fiscal agent. They will be considered in the round of funding commensurate with the applicant agency's status.

Can an LEA grantee contract with their CBO partner?

Yes, the LEA can contract with their CBO partner and other agencies to provide services and supports to the out-of-school time program.

Can a CBO grantee contract with their LEA partner?

Yes, The CBO can contract with their LEA partner and other agencies to provide services and supports to the out-of-school time program.

Can a CBO be a partner to multiple LEAs?

Yes, if they are able to provide support to each of the LEA partners.

If a CBO is contracted to manage sites from multiple LEAs, the CBO must be able to implement each partner LEA's action plan.

What is the purpose of the ESSER III Out-of-School Time (OST) grant?

Award funding through a competitive grant process for the development and implementation of evidence-based Out-of-School Time programs to address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on students. Out-of-School Time (afterschool) programs must address academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of identified students.

Who can apply?

	Round 1: $15.4 million	Round 2: (if funds remain from Round 1 $15.4 million)	Round 3: $5 million
Eligible applicants	Wisconsin Local Education Agencies (LEAs) (Districts and Independent Charter Schools) eligible for Sparsity Aid under Wis Stat 115.436	All Wisconsin Public School LEAs (Districts and Independent Charter Schools)	Wisconsin LEAs (Districts and Independent Charter Schools) Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

Since there are two sources of funding will there be two different grant competitions?

No. There will be one grant competition.

All applications will be sorted by eligibility status.

1. Sparsity Aid eligible LEAs,
2. Non-Sparsity Aid eligible LEAs, and
3. CBOs.

All applicants will receive an average score. Applications must receive at least a 3.0 average score to be considered for any funding.

In Round 1, only Sparsity Aid eligible LEA applications will be ranked by average score. Funding from the $15.4 million set aside will be awarded to the applicants from the highest average score through the list of applications until all 3.0, or higher, applications are funded or until no funding of the $15.4 million remains.

If funding remains from the $15.4 million set aside from Round 1, the competition enters Round 2.

In Round 2 the only eligible applicants are non-Sparsity Aid LEAs. Sparsity Aid eligible schools are not eligible for round 2. These applications will be ranked based on the average score. The funding that remains from the Round 1 will be awarded in this round to the highest scoring eligible applications through the applications scoring 3.0 or until the $15.4 million is expended.

In Round 3, the $5 million appropriated by Motion 57 will be awarded. All LEAs scoring a 3.0 or higher that did not get funded in Round 2 will move to this round. The average scores of the LEAs will be ranked, along with the average scores of the CBO applicants. Funding will be awarded to the highest scoring applicants through applications scoring at a 3.0 or until the $5 million is expended. Sparsity aid eligible LEAs are not eligible for Round 3.

Can private or school choice schools apply?

No, private and choice schools are not eligible to apply.

Can applicants receive funds from both the $15.4 million set aside and the $5 million Motion 57 allocation?

No. Once an applicant is recommended for funding in a particular round, they no longer continue to compete for the remaining funds.

Can Sparsity Aid Eligible LEAs compete for Round 2 and Round 3 funds.

No. Sparsity Aid LEAs will be awarded funding in Round 1 only. Sparsity Aid eligible LEAs scoring a 3.0 or higher will be funded first.

What if there are no funds left after Round 1?

If there are no funds remaining after Round 1, the competition will then move to the $5 million funding source and will be awarded as noted above.

Are there any programming requirements?

- Yes. Applicants must have a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic and Time specific) goal addressing academic needs AND social, emotional, and mental health needs of students.
- Programs must create a plan that includes all elements of an evidence-based after-school program (Peterson & Vandell 2021).
- Grantees must use Evidence Based Program Improvement strategies (EBIS) that meet the ESSA Criteria of Evidence.
- LEAs must have a community partner.
- CBOs must have an LEA partner.
- Programs must operate at least 10 hours per week.

How much can eligible applicants request?

Applicants can request an amount from an available range, based on the student enrollment of the LEA or the number of students to be served by the CBO. Applicants may request less than their funding tier but not less than $80,000.

Is the ESSER III grant program and competition the same as the Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) grant program competition?

No. This is a different federal grant program and competition. The 21st CCLC grant program has many programming and reporting requirements. The programming and reporting requirements for the ESSER III grant program are not the same as the 21st CCLC grant.

Can 21st CCLC grantees apply?

Yes. Current and previous 21st CCLC grantees can apply, however, applications are submitted by an LEA, or a Community-Based-Organization for the entire agency. Grantees will be the agency rather than a single site. Funds can be used to expand an existing site or to start a new site.

Can applicants apply for funds to support activities that are currently being implemented or to purchase materials and equipment for after-school activities?

Yes. There is no "supplement not supplant" language in the authorization of this funding. DPI recommends, however, that applicants align all of their funding streams to ensure that they are making the best use of funds.

Are before school and weekend programming allowable using these funds?

Yes. Out-of-School Time programming refers to structured programming that does not occur during or compete with instructional time. This can include before school, after school, weekends, and lunch periods. The only exception being summer programming, as there is a separate grant competition for this purpose.

Are the specific days or hours that a program must operate?

No. As long as the programming is provided for at least 10 hours per week.

May the funds be used to support summer programming?

No. There is an additional competitive grant opportunity for summer programming.

Must transportation be provided for student participants?

There is no requirement to provide transportation, however, the grantees are expected to address any barriers to participation that may impact the students targeted for out-of-school time support. Grantees should determine if transportation will be a barrier to participation for students. Grant funds can be used to pay for transportation so that students can attend.

Are there staffing requirements for the funded programs?

There are no staffing requirements, however, DPI recommends having a dedicated program coordinator to manage day-to-day operations, manage staff, and coordinate partnerships and program activities.

Grantees will be required to provide a primary contact to DPI.

Are there any activities that are unallowable?

All activities must be reasonable and necessary and are subject to the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) and the federal Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG).

When do funds have to be expended?

September 30, 2024.

Will grantees receive the same amount of funding each year?

No. This is a one-time funding allocation. The amount received is for the grant period of 12/2/2022 - 9/30/2024. Grantees will have until September 30, 2024, to spend the funds.

Will grantees need to submit a budget each year of the grant period?

No. Grantee budgets will be in WISEgrants and can be updated as necessary, during the project period.

Will grantees be able to carryover funds not spent by September 30, 2024?

No. There is no carryover option available.

Can applicants apply for this grant and the ESSER III summer program grant?

Yes. Applicants will be required to submit each application separately. DPI encourages applicants to align grant plans, when choosing to apply to both grants.

What are allowable activities and practices?

- Programs that build skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
- Mentoring programs.
- Remedial education activities.
- Tutoring services.
- Service learning programs.
- Activities that enable students to be eligible for credit recovery.
- Literacy education programs.
- Mathematics education programs.
- Arts and music programs.
- Counseling programs.
- Financial literacy programs.
- Environmental literacy programs.
- Nutritional education programs.
- Regular, structured physical activity programs.
- Services for individuals with disabilities.
- Programs for English Learners.
- Cultural programs.
- Telecommunications and technology education programs.
- Expanded library service hours.
- Parenting skills programs that promote parental involvement and family literacy.
- Programs that provide assistance to students who have been truant, suspended, or expelled.
- Drug and violence prevention programs and counseling programs.
- Staff salaries and benefits.
- Training costs for after-school staff.
- Evidence-based social and emotional learning curriculum and programs.
- Comprehensive school based mental health programs such as stigma reduction, mental health literacy, student led programs, counseling staff, mental health literacy training for staff and families.
- Staff training.

What are unallowable expenses?

- Subrecipients must follow the cost principles in the UGG (2 CFR 200, Subpart E). See the Allowable Costs Checklist for more information.
- Programs must meet federal criteria for "evidence-based" and support the needs of students.
- All programs, practices, and staff funded through the grant must be connected to and working on the grant plan submitted with the application.

Are there any requirements regarding the number of students attending or the grades served?

No.

Are there any requirements about the minimum number of hours of programming provided?

Yes. Grantees must provide a minimum of 10 hours of programming per week.

Is there technical assistance to help us implement a quality after-school program?

Yes. You can contact DPI with questions regarding the competition. Please see the contact email on the ESSER III OST Grant page.

The Wisconsin Afterschool Network also offers webinars, community of practice opportunities, and consultation about the implementation of high-quality, evidence-based out-of-school time programs.

Is there a supplement but not supplant requirement?

No.

What are the reporting requirements?

Grantees will submit an End of Year Report in June 2023 and June 2024.

For data to be collected see Grant Guidelines pages 10 and 11.

Is the program allowed to charge participants a fee for participation?

No. Collecting program income or fees for attendance is not permitted.

What is the application process?

Applications will be submitted using the Qualtrics portal no later than 4:00 p.m. on October 14, 2022. Only applications submitted in this portal will be considered for funding. A Microsoft Word copy of the grant application, grant guidance and scoring rubric can be found on the ESSER III OST Grant page.

Do applicants need to submit a budget with the application?

Applicants will provide a budget narrative in the grant application. Awarded grantees will then be required to submit a budget through WISEgrants. After the award is made, all budget modifications and approvals will occur in WISEgrants.

Can the application be submitted as a consortium?

Yes. A consortium of eligible applicants may apply. When applying as a consortium, the applicant is the fiscal agent. All consortium partners will be reimbursed for grant expenses from that fiscal agent.

Can a Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) apply for a consortium of districts?

Yes.

What is required in the budget narrative?

Since applicants will not be submitting an itemized budget form with the application, the Budget Narrative section on the application provides the external and internal reviewers with the information needed to determine if the applicant has a plan for using the grant funds that meets all financial requirements.

The budget narrative should provide information about the following:
- Salaries and fringe.
- Contracts.
- Curriculum, programs, supplies.
- Training for staff.
- Costs for family and student events.

The budget cannot include salaries and fringe for staff not working with the out-of-school time program. All items in the budget must align with the Action Plan submitted.

All costs must be reasonable and necessary.

What counts as out-of-school time hours?

Out-of-school time refers to structured programming that does not occur during or compete with instructional time. This can include before school, after school, weekends and lunch periods.

Can community-based organizations apply for grant funds for out-of-school time programming that occurs at a private school location?

ARP ESSER funds may be used to support a CBO's evidence-based out-of-school time program that is located in a non-public school facility, if the primary purpose and operation of such program is to serve public school students. However, it would be inconsistent with the purpose of the ARP Act to use State Education Agency (SEA) Reserve funds to support a program that is exclusively for the benefit of non-public school students.

Are community and LEA partnerships required?

Yes. Applicants must include a partner. CBO applicants must include a partnership with an LEA. LEA applicants must include a partnership with a community partner. Letters of commitment must be submitted with the application (a minimum of one letter, maximum of three letters).

Can an agency be both an applicant (fiscal agent) and a partner with another agency submitting an application?

Yes. In the example below, Appleview School District is awarded a grant. They will be working with the YMCA and will contract with them to provide OST programming at two schools. At the same time, YMCA was awarded a grant and will be partnering with Appleview School District to provide OST programming at two locations, including one at the CBO's building.

When LEAs and CBOs are both a fiscal agent and a partner with one another, the funding they receive should not fund the same programs/students.

Fiscal Agent	Partner	Sites
Appleview School District	YMCA	Pinecone elementary Roosevelt Middle School
YMCA	Appleview School District	Logan elementary Southwest YMCA