

This week's volume of [ESSER/GEER Extra](#) includes a reminder about the deadline for school districts and charter schools to complete and submit their ARP ESSER applications, a new U.S. Department of Education (USDE) ESSER FAQ, and more information about maintenance of equity requirements.

All editions of [ESSER/GEER Extra](#) are archived on PDE's website.

### **Submit ARP ESSER Applications ASAP**

School districts and charter schools still working to complete their ARP ESSER applications (i.e., to receive their share of \$4.5 billion in federal COVID relief funding available to Pennsylvania schools), are encouraged to complete and submit their applications to PDE as soon as possible. Federal law requires PDE to make all ARP ESSER awards to school districts and charter schools one year from the date PDE received the funds, which was March 24, 2021. School districts and charter schools must submit their applications as soon as possible to provide PDE enough time to review, approve, and award funds prior to the deadline.

School districts and charter schools **may continue to adjust** their ARP ESSER plans after awards have been made. Changes must be submitted in writing, via email, to your PDE Division of Federal Programs Regional Coordinator.

Due to the volume and complexity of ESSER applications, the timeline for review and approval continues to increase. Please take this into account as you complete your ARP ESSER applications; we want to ensure that all ARP ESSER applications are awarded by the deadline.

**ARP ESSER Office Hours:** To assist with the completion and submission of your ARP ESSER applications, PDE will offer weekly virtual Office Hours to provide LEAs with an opportunity to ask questions and get feedback from PDE staff prior to submitting applications. These Office Hours will be held on **Tuesdays from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.** and on **Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.** They will begin **Thursday, January 13 and will run through Thursday, March 17.** We will send out a registration link early next week; registration in advance will be required.

### **USDE Issues New FAQs on ESSER Use**

On December 29, 2021, USDE issued an ESSER/GEER Use of Funds FAQs Supplement on the use of ESSER funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. USDE clarifies the flexibility surrounding this essential component of the three-part test, indicating that an LEA can use funds to address an issue arising from or exacerbated by the pandemic or to ensure that the LEA emerges stronger from the pandemic.

[Access the new USDE FAQs on the use of ESSER funds to prevent, prepare, and respond to COVID-19.](#)

### **Maintenance of Equity Proposed Requirement Open for Public Comment**

The ARP Act's Maintenance of Equity (MOEquity) requirement continues to evolve. On January 3, USDE published a revised proposed requirement for MOEquity implementation. Under the new proposal, PDE would be required to publish information about LEA compliance with the requirement by March 31, 2022, for the 2021-2022 school year and by November 1, 2022, for the 2022-23 school year. The proposal also provides additional flexibility in year two of the MOEquity application. These changes were made in response to public comments received on the first version of this requirement. There is a 30-day public comment period on the revised proposed requirement and comments are due to USDE by February 2, 2022. [Access the revised USDE proposed MOEquity requirement.](#)

Additionally, USDE provided an update to its MOEquity FAQs. The only FAQ updated is #32, and the revised version contains additional flexibility in terms of potential exemptions for LEAs for MOEquity applications in 2022-23. [Access the revised USDE MOEquity FAQs.](#)

Next week, PDE will provide more guidance to school districts, the only LEAs that must comply with the ARP Act's MOEquity requirement. The guidance will include how to certify that your school district qualifies for an exemption for 2021-22. Stay tuned for more information.

**Contact Us**

If you have an ESSER-related question or comment, please send your inquiries to [ra-edarpesser@pa.gov](mailto:ra-edarpesser@pa.gov).