

## ESSER/GEER Extra, Volume 19

This week's [ESSER/GEER Extra](#) includes information about PDE Office Hours for ARP ESSER applications, information on school district compliance with the ARP Act's Maintenance of Equity requirement, a reminder of the new 2022 state procurement thresholds and their application in procurement with ESSER funds, and a refresher on unallowable costs under Uniform Guidance.

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

### ARP ESSER Application Deadline for School Districts and Charter Schools

School districts and charter schools still working on their ARP ESSER applications are encouraged to complete and submit applications to PDE as soon as possible. **Federal law requires PDE to make all ARP ESSER awards to school districts and charter schools by March 24, 2022**, one year from the date PDE received these funds. 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.

### ARP ESSER Office Hours

PDE will offer regular virtual Office Hours for school districts and charter schools to ask questions and get feedback from PDE staff prior to submitting their ARP ESSER applications. Office Hours will be held every **Monday from 1-2 PM** and every **Thursday from 9-10 AM through Thursday, March 17**. Registration is required in advance. [Register for PDE Office Hours](#).

### ARP ESSER Maintenance of Equity for School Districts

The ARP Act requires school districts receiving ARP ESSER funds to adhere to a new Maintenance of Equity (MOEquity) requirement. The MOEquity requirement applies to both 2021-22 and 2022-23 and applies only to school districts; it does not apply to other LEAs or entities.

Under the MOEquity requirement **school districts** cannot disproportionately reduce state and local per-pupil funding or the number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) staff per pupil in high-poverty schools (schools identified in the top quartile of low-income student enrollment).

The ARP Act exempts all school districts that 1) enroll fewer than 1,000 students, 2) operate only one building, or 3) have only one building per grade span. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) has provided an additional exemption for school districts that did not and will not implement an aggregate reduction in combined state and local per-pupil funding in FY 2022 [school year 2021-2022] (i.e., is not facing overall budget reductions).

**PDE will email school district superintendents and business managers from the ARP ESSER RA account on with instructions for indicating an exemption in eGrants.** If your school district indicates that no exemption applies for 2021-22, PDE will reach out directly to assist with MOEquity requirements.

USDE requires PDE to submit information regarding school district exemptions from, or compliance with, MOEquity requirements by March 31, 2022.

## **2022 State Procurement Thresholds**

State procurement thresholds were updated earlier this month. The 2022 state threshold for written/telephonic bids is \$11,800, while the 2022 state thresholds for public bids and separate bids is \$21,900. [Access the PA Bulletin.](#)

The relationship between these state procurement thresholds and federal procurement rules for the use of ESSER funds is important. The federal procurement thresholds under Uniform Guidance are more stringent than state thresholds for micro-purchases (\$10,000) and for small purchases (\$10,000); however, the state threshold of \$21,900 applies when it comes to the use of sealed bids under Uniform Guidance. [Access a table outlining the Uniform Guidance thresholds and requirements for purchases with federal funds.](#)

## **Reminder on Unallowable Costs**

As we start the new year and the clock ticks down to award ARP ESSER funds to school districts and charter schools, it's an opportunity for a quick refresher on unallowable costs under Uniform Guidance. The following table outlines the costs that are unallowable uses of ESSER (and all federal) funds pursuant to Uniform Guidance requirements. Expenses such as lobbying costs, advertising and public relations costs, and donations and contributions are unallowable. [Access a table outlining unallowable costs under Uniform Guidance.](#)

## **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).