

SSER/GEER Extra, Volume 20

This week's [ESSER/GEER Extra](#) includes information about the ARP Act's Maintenance of Equity (MOEquity) requirement, the U.S. Department of Education's (USDE) revised ESSER data collection template, reminders about ARP ESSER office hours, the ARP ESSER application submission deadline, ARP ESSER Health and Safety Plan updates, and clarification about the submission of prior approval forms.

All editions of [ESSER/GEER Extra](#) are archived on PDE's website, along with FAQs from previous editions of [ESSER/GEER Extra](#).

MOEquity Information Sent to School Districts

School district superintendents and business managers should have received a targeted email on Thursday, January 27, regarding the ARP Act's MOEquity requirement. The email, from the ARP ESSER RA account (ra-edarpesser@pa.gov), indicates how a school district can certify the existence of a relevant exemption to MOEquity requirements, if applicable. The deadline for school districts to report a relevant exemption to PDE (via eGrants) is February 28, 2022.

Please reach out to ra-edarpesser@pa.gov if you have questions about MOEquity.

ESSER Data Collection Template Revised

USDE has again revised its ESSER data collection template for states. Issued just before the new year, USDE's updated template contains many of the revisions suggested by states and others during the public comment periods and addresses some of the concerns raised by PDE.

The template requires LEAs and other entities receiving ESSER funds (under the CARES Act, the CRRSA Act, and/or the ARP Act) to report detailed information about how the funds were spent, how much of the funds were spent, and how much of the funds are remaining, in addition to information about the student populations who participated in some of the programs developed or expanded with the funds.

USDE is expected to release the final reporting template and submission deadline soon. Meanwhile, PDE is developing a process to collect the required information from LEAs and other entities to be able to complete the USDE report.

Stay tuned for more information on how PDE will collect this information and [access the USDE template for ESSER data collection](#).

REMINDER: ARP ESSER Office Hours

PDE will continue to offer regular virtual Office Hours for school districts and charter schools to ask questions of 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** to allow for questions and follow-up as necessary. Registration is required in advance. [Register for PDE Office Hours](#).

REMINDER: 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—**by no later than March 1, 2022**—to ensure that PDE has adequate time to conduct reviews and issue approvals. 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.

REMINDER: Review and Post Health and Safety Plans

The ARP Act requires LEAs that receive ARP ESSER funds to develop a Health and Safety Plan and post this plan on the LEA's website. These Plans were originally required to be posted on LEA websites by July 31, 2021, as applicable. [Access information about LEA Health and Safety Plans.](#)

The ARP Act requires LEAs to review Health and Safety Plans at least every six months during the ARP ESSER grant period. Additionally, the ARP Act requires LEAs to review and update their Plans whenever there are significant changes to the CDC recommendations for K-12 schools. While LEAs are not required to submit revised Plans to PDE, these revisions and/or formal acknowledgement of review of the Plans in compliance with the ARP Act must be posted on the LEA's website. Finally, like the development of the Plan, all revisions must be informed by community input and reviewed and approved by the governing body prior to posting on the LEA's publicly available website.

Prior Approval Forms

LEAs are required to obtain prior approval for certain expenditures in accordance with federal Uniform Guidance. [See 2 CFR §200.407 for a list of items that required prior approval.](#) For purposes of ESSER, LEAs must obtain prior approval from PDE to use ESSER funds for construction, capital expenditures (including equipment with a per-unit cost of \$5,000 or more), buildings, and land. [Access PDE's FAQs for more information.](#)

For ESSER funds, the PDE prior approval can come at any time in the project timeline until the reimbursement using ESSER funds occurs, and there is no requirement to have approved vendors or completed RFPs before submitting prior approval forms. Where possible, your prior approval form should be completed and submitted with your ARP ESSER application in eGrants. If your LEA needs to submit a prior approval form after submitting your ARP ESSER application, please reach out to your [regional coordinator](#).

Contact Us

If you have an ESSER-related question or comment, please send your inquiries to ra-edarpesser@pa.gov.