



ESSER Bulletin

October 2023 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)



ESSER II critical dates:

- [Cash Requests](#) are due by September 25th, 2023.
- [Final Expenditure Reports \(FERs\)](#) are due by October 25th, 2023.
- Dept. Of Education May 5, 2023: Notice of [updated technical FAQs for liquidation extensions](#) and an updated CRRSA [liquidation extension request template](#).

OPI ESSER Review/Monitoring Process: As part of [federal ESSER compliance](#) OPI is performing several monitoring activities. OPI has been assisting LEAs in mitigating risks to avoid audit findings by **reviewing requests for funding** and providing **assistance with compliance**. From June through December, we will be contacting schools to conduct monitoring assessments and helping to strengthen ESSER documentation. Part of this process will include a Self-Monitoring Assessment Survey. This survey was developed through feedback from the ESSER Review Committee (LEA and OPI staff), review of other state monitoring processes, and direction provided by the [Department of Education ESSER Monitoring](#). The Monitoring survey will open September 15, 2023 and close November 30, 2023. The survey is required as part of the ESSER II Final Expenditure Report process in November 2023. Please include your school LEA/LE number (four digit number used in E-Grants) in the title of your ESSER Self-Assessment Monitoring Excel File. For challenges uploading the ESSER Self-Assessment Monitoring Excel File or any additions questions contact Wendi Fawns, ESSER Director for assistance (wendi.fawns@mt.gov)

Monitoring Office Hours are available on September 21st from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through zoom link <https://mt.gov.zoom.us/j/89483788550?pwd=V25SZjNtZ3BSQUVyNFZYZnY1WVhkQT09>

[Affordable Connectivity Program](#) (internet access) offers qualifying families \$30-\$75 per month for internet services. Broadband project and funding reports include [Digital Opportunity Plan](#) and [Broadband 5 Year Action](#)



[Plan](#). Contact Allison Agostino (406 202-7685) for details. The States [Digital Opportunity Plan](#) is open for public comment. Please send all comments to Connectmt@mt.gov

ESSER ELO (Extended/Expanded Learning Opportunity) Grant:

There will be a final round of the [ESSER ELO](#) (Extended/Expanded Learning Opportunity) Grant funding available for the 2023-24 School Year (Afterschool) and Summer 2024.

- The E-Grants application for ELO 23-24 will be open by August 15th.
- The deadline for submission will be September 29, 2023, at 5pm or until the funding is depleted whichever comes first.
- **Math and/or Reading Literacy** will continue to be the major areas of focus for ELO 23-24.
- The current ELO Grant must be **fully closed out** before applying for the upcoming ELO 23-24 grant.

All ELO grant funding will end in September 2024. The ELO 23-24 grant will be the final round of ELO funding. If you have any questions about the ELO 23-24 Grant, please contact Allison Agostino at allison.agostino@mt.gov or visit the [ELO Website](#).

E-Grants Budget and Cash Request Descriptions must be reviewed to ensure there is adequate detail provided. For more information and specific guidance, please click here:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MTOPI/bulletins/310cc35>

Please **review budget items** and ensure all descriptions include the following:

- Include **specific details** of each expenditure – What is being purchased, student gain, and how expenditure **prepares for, prevents, or responds** to the effects of COVID-19.
 - For staff/faculty members, what grade level(s) do they serve? How many FTE are represented? What subjects are being taught?
 - What is the supply/material/program title? Who is the publisher/provider?
 - If a budget item includes a digital subscription/software/license purchase, what is the **time period** being paid for? (Reminder that ESSER funds cannot be used past the grant deadlines)

If you have questions, contact one of the [ESSER team members](#).

- [Amendment](#) questions, please contact Rebecca Brown at rebecca.brown@mt.gov
- [Cash Request](#) questions, please contact Steve Morgan at steven.morgan@mt.gov

Office Hours and System of Support. The ESSER Team is available through extended-hour coverage between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Feel free to reach out with your questions to any [ESSER Team Member](#) by phone or email.



District Monthly Status Reports view of allocated and expended funds can be found on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#).

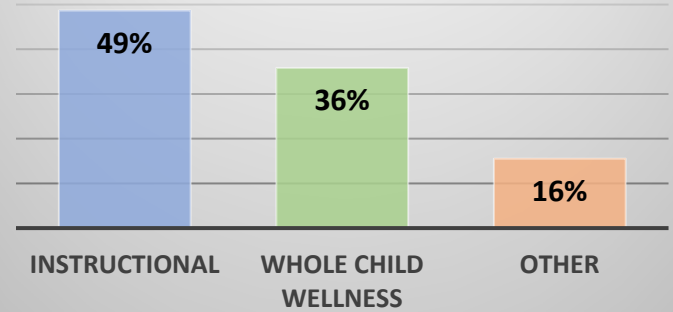


ESSER Grants Use of Funds

ESSER II, III, Afterschool & Summer Summary

Instructional Needs	Expended	%
Address Learning Loss	\$86,330,918.00	28.38%
Dedicated Learning Devices	\$4,869,475.00	1.60%
Home Internet for Students	\$93,434.00	0.03%
Supplemental Learning	\$37,339,506.00	12.28%
Technology	\$19,353,095.00	6.36%
Instructional Needs Subtotal	\$147,986,428.00	48.65%
Whole Child Wellness		
Mental Health	\$8,289,064.00	2.73%
Minimize Spread of Infection	\$91,859,116.00	30.20%
Supplemental Services	\$8,824,428.00	2.90%
Whole Child Wellness Subtotal	\$108,972,608.00	35.83%
Other		
Indirect Cost	\$4,205,765.00	1.38%
Other	\$43,013,076.00	14.14%
Subtotal	\$47,218,841.00	15.52%
Total	\$304,177,877.00	100.00%

ESSER II, III, Afterschool & Summer Enrichment Use of Funds



Many **resources** are available on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#) including but not limited to:

- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)
- All previous Compass newsletters ([2021-22](#)) ([2023](#))
- [Broadband Modernization](#) project information

For further information please contact:

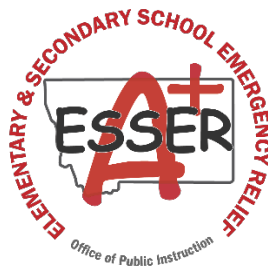
Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov (406) 437-8595

Rebecca Brown, ESSER Program Manager at rebecca.brown@mt.gov (406) 444-0783

Allison Agostino, Project Communication Specialist at allison.agostino@mt.gov (406) 202-7685

September 2023 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)



Looking Ahead:



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL JB 2023

[Affordable Connectivity Program](#) (internet access) offers qualifying families \$30-\$75 per month for internet services. Broadband project and funding reports include [Digital Opportunity Plan](#) and [Broadband 5 Year Action Plan](#). Contact Allison Agostino (406 202-7685) for details. The States [Digital Opportunity Plan](#) is open for public comment. Please send all comments to Connectmt@mt.gov

ESSER II critical dates:

- [Cash Requests](#) are due by September 25th, 2023.
- [Final Expenditure Reports \(FERs\)](#) are due by October 25th, 2023.
- Dept. Of Education May 5, 2023: Notice of [updated technical FAQs for liquidation extensions](#) and an updated CRRSA [liquidation extension request template](#).

OPI ESSER Review/Monitoring Process: As part of [federal ESSER compliance](#) OPI is performing several monitoring activities. OPI has been assisting LEAs in mitigating risks to avoid audit findings by **reviewing requests for funding** and providing **assistance with compliance**. From June through December, we will be contacting schools to conduct monitoring assessments and helping to strengthen ESSER documentation. Part of this process will include a Self-Monitoring Assessment Survey. This survey was developed through feedback from the ESSER Review Committee (LEA and OPI staff), review of other state monitoring processes, and direction provided by the [Department of Education ESSER Monitoring](#). The Self Monitoring survey made available in September 2023 is required to be completed by the Final Expenditure Report process for ESSER II in November 2023. Contact Wendi Fawns, ESSER Director for assistance (wendi.fawns@mt.gov)

ESSER ELO (Extended/Expanded Learning Opportunity) Grant:

There will be a final round of the [ESSER ELO](#) (Extended/Expanded Learning Opportunity) Grant funding available for the 2023-24 School Year (Afterschool) and Summer 2024.

- The E-Grants application for ELO 23-24 will be open by August 15th.
- The deadline for submission will be September 29, 2023, at 5pm or until the funding is depleted whichever comes first.
- **Math and/or Reading Literacy** will continue to be the major areas of focus for ELO 23-24.
- The current ELO Grant must be **fully closed out** before applying for the upcoming ELO 23-24 grant.

All ELO grant funding will end in September 2024. The ELO 23-24 grant will be the final round of ELO funding. If you have any questions about the ELO 23-24 Grant, please contact Allison Agostino at allison.agostino@mt.gov or visit the [ELO Website](#).

E-Grants Budget and Cash Request Descriptions must be reviewed to ensure there is adequate detail provided. The increase in detail is needed in response to OPI audit findings.

If you see cash requests/amendments being returned to your district more frequently, please look through your descriptions and make sure it ties to what your original grant application states, and includes adequate detail.

For more information and specific guidance, please click here:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MTOPI/bulletins/310cc35>

Please **review budget items** and ensure all descriptions include the following:

- Include **specific details** of each expenditure – What is being purchased, student gain, and how expenditure **prepares for, prevents, or responds** to the effects of COVID-19.
 - For staff/faculty members, what grade level(s) do they serve? How many FTE are represented? What subjects are being taught?
 - What is the supply/material/program title? Who is the publisher/provider?



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL JB 2023

- If a budget item includes a digital subscription/software/license purchase, what is the **time period** being paid for? (Reminder that ESSER funds cannot be used past the grant deadlines)

If you have questions, contact one of the [ESSER team members](#).

E-Grants [Amendments](#) and [Cash Requests](#) are processed in the order they are submitted to the OPI.

Cash Requests must be submitted by the 25th of each month in order to be paid by the 10th of the next month.

ESSER II [Amendments](#) and [Cash Requests](#) will be prioritized over ESSER III, due to the **September 30th deadline** approaching for ESSER II.

- [Amendment](#) questions, please contact Rebecca Brown at rebecca.brown@mt.gov
- [Cash Request](#) questions, please contact Steve Morgan at steven.morgan@mt.gov

Office Hours and System of Support. The ESSER Team is available through extended-hour coverage between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Feel free to reach out with your questions to any [ESSER Team Member](#) by phone or email.



District Monthly Status Reports view of allocated and expended funds can be found on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#).

Many **resources** are available on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#) including but not limited to:

- [Quick Start Guide](#) for new Superintendents and Clerks
- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)
- Department of Education [Labor Shortages and ESSER](#) funding allocations
- Montana [District list of ESSER Plans](#)
- All previous Compass newsletters ([2021-22](#))
- [Broadband Modernization](#) project information

For further information please contact:

Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov (406) 437-8595

Rebecca Brown, ESSER Program Manager at rebecca.brown@mt.gov (406) 444-0783

Allison Agostino, Project Communication Specialist at allison.agostino@mt.gov (406) 202-7685

August 2023 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL JB 2023



Looking Ahead:

[Affordable Connectivity Program](#) offers qualifying families \$30-\$75 per month for internet services. Broadband project and funding reports include [Digital Opportunity Plan](#) and [Broadband 5 Year Action Plan](#). Contact Allison Agostino (406 202-7685) for details. The States [Digital Opportunity Plan](#) is open for public comment through July 31st. Please send all comments to Connectmt@mt.gov

The **Safe Return and ARP Plans** are due for the last time – June 2023. Please be sure plans have been updated in the past six months and are in compliance. May 10, 2023 email sent by Jessika.bol@mt.gov gives more detail.

- **No cash requests or Final Expenditure Reports (FERs) will be processed in July.** Submissions in July will be processed in August. Please review training on [Final Expenditure Reports](#) and guidance on [ESSER II Close-Out](#) for more information.

ESSER II critical dates:

- [Cash Requests](#) are due by September 25th, 2023.
- [Final Expenditure Reports \(FERs\)](#) are due by October 25th, 2023.
- Dept. Of Education May 5, 2023: Notice of [updated technical FAQs for liquidation extensions](#) and an updated CRRSA [liquidation extension request template](#).

E-Grants Budget and Cash Request Descriptions must be reviewed to ensure there is adequate detail provided. If you have questions, contact one of the [ESSER team members](#).

Office Hours and System of Support. The ESSER Team is available through extended-hour coverage between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Feel free to reach out with your questions to any [ESSER Team Member](#) by phone or email.

OPI Review Process: OPI is assisting LEAs in mitigating risks to avoid audit findings by **reviewing requests for funding** and providing **assistance with compliance**. From June through August, we will be contacting schools to conduct monitoring assessments and helping to strengthen ESSER documentation. Contact Wendi Fawns, ESSER Director for assistance (wendi.fawns@mt.gov)





District Monthly Status Reports view of allocated and expended funds can be found on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#).

New Faces:

Allison Agostino has joined the ESSER Team as the **Project Communication Specialist**.

Allison is a Montana native who grew up in Stevensville Montana on a small family farm that her parents still run. In Glendive Montana, Allison started her career as a Drug and Alcohol Prevention Specialist learning the world of public health and community development. She has spent the last four years building relationships, leading community groups, putting down roots, and never saying no to a challenge. Allison has invested a lot of time in community work, she has served as President of her local Rotary Club, active Chairman of her community coalition, board member of the Montana Prevention Certification Board, Chairman of a local recreational group, and more. Allison also works with her local schools as much as possible helping with Suicide Prevention Campus Walks, Mental Health Murals, community service projects, basketball tournaments, and assistant Speech and Debate Coach. She enjoys painting, graphic design, video games, and a good book when she not spending time with her family and a small army of dogs.

Many **resources** are available on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#) including but not limited to:

- [Quick Start Guide](#) for new Superintendents and Clerks



- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)
- Department of Education [Labor Shortages and ESSER](#) funding allocations
- Montana [District list of ESSER Plans](#)
- All previous Compass newsletters ([2021-22](#))
- [Broadband Modernization](#) project information

For further information please contact:

Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov (406) 437-8595

Rebecca Brown, ESSER Program Manager at rebecca.brown@mt.gov (406) 444-0783

Allison Agostino, Project Communication Specialist at allison.agostino@mt.gov (406) 202-7685

July 2023 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

Looking Ahead:

No cash requests or Final Expenditure Reports (FERs) will be processed in July due to fiscal year-end closing. Submissions in July will be processed in August. For more information, click [here](#).



ESSER II critical dates:

- [Amendments](#) preferred to submit by July 31st, 2023
- [Cash Requests](#) due by September 25th, 2023
- [Final Expenditure Reports \(FERs\)](#) due by October 25th, 2023
- Guidance on ESSER II Close-Out is here: <https://youtu.be/D2avWDWg6xo>



Requests for extensions may be considered. Please see below for more information.

- Dept. Of Education May 5, 2023: Notice of [updated technical FAQs for liquidation extensions](#) and an updated CRRSA [liquidation extension request template](#).

E-Grants Budget and Cash Request Descriptions must be reviewed to ensure there is adequate detail provided. The increase in detail is needed in response to OPI audit findings.

If you see cash requests being returned to your district more frequently, please look through your descriptions and make sure it ties to what your original grant application states. If changes are needed to your application, please submit an amendment before creating another cash request.

For more information and specific guidance, please click here:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MTOPI/bulletins/310cc35>

July's ESSER Guidance Sessions will occur between July 11-13 via Zoom virtual meeting. This month will be focusing on ESSER Grant Reviews and Monitoring.

More information will be sent out as we get closer to these guidance sessions. All past Guidance Sessions have been recorded and posted on the [OPI ESSER Webpage](#).

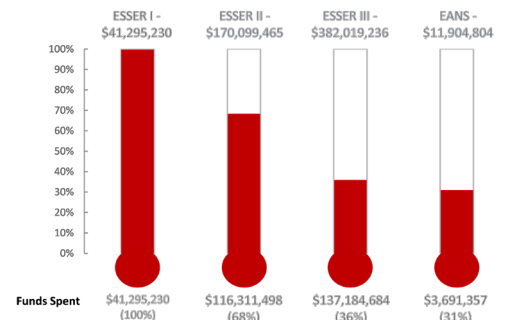
OPI Review Process: OPI is assisting LEAs in mitigating risks to avoid audit findings by **reviewing requests for funding** and providing **assistance with compliances**. During June through August, we will be contacting schools to conduct monitoring assessments and helping to strengthen ESSER documentation. Contact Wendi Fawns, ESSER Director for assistance (wendi.fawns@mt.gov)



Looking Back and Viewing Updates:

The thermometer image showing Montana ESSER/EANS spend-down can be viewed on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#). Let's keep up the great work as we finish out ESSER CRRSA II and ESSER ARP III!

As of 6/1/2023 there were 77 LEAs who had over 51% of their ESSER II funds remaining to be spent.



District Monthly Status Reports view of allocated and expended funds can be found on the OPI ESSER webpage [here](#).

New Faces:

Allison Agostino has joined the ESSER Team as the **Project and Communications Specialist**.

Allison Agostino is a Montana native who grew up in Stevensville Montana on a small family farm that her parents still run. Now living in Glendive Montana, Allison started her career as a Drug and Alcohol Prevention Specialist learning the world of public health and community development. She has spent the last four years building relationships, leading community groups, putting down roots, and never saying no to a challenge. Allison has invested a lot of time in community work, she has served as President of her local Rotary Club, active Chairman of her community coalition, board member of the Montana Prevention Certification Board, Chairman of a local recreational group, and more. Allison also works with her local schools as much as possible, helping with Suicide Prevention Campus Walks, Mental Health Murals, community service project, basketball tournaments, and as an assistant Speech and Debate Coach. She enjoys painting, graphic design, video games, and a good book when she's not spending time with her family and small army of dogs.

The **Broadband Modernization** project information can be found here: <https://opi.mt.gov/COVID-19-Information/ESSER/Broadband>

ESSER Safety Security Reimbursement Request: In compliance with ESSER requirements and in supporting school safety, OPI is making available \$200 reimbursement to schools for performing Safety/Security needs assessments. Compliances of reimbursement are [here](#). If interested in receiving the \$200 assessment reimbursement please submit a request with documentation (certification) into the portal [here](#).



OPI is committed to a **system of support** for school districts, students, and parents throughout Montana that provides an array of services. Individual district consultation on ESSER funding is available upon request. Please reach out to Wendi Fawns at wendi.fawns@mt.gov to schedule a time for your district.

Many **resources** are available on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#) including:

- [Quick Start Guide](#) for new Superintendents and Clerks
- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)
- Department of Education [Labor Shortages and ESSER](#) funding allocations
- Montana [District list of ESSER Plans](#)
- All previous Compass newsletters ([2021-22](#))

For further information please contact:

Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov

Rebecca Brown, ESSER Program Manager at rebecca.brown@mt.gov

June 2023 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL JB 2023



Looking Ahead:

ESSEER Grant Compliance and Grant Management: No cash requests or Final Expenditure Reports (FERs) will be processed in July due to fiscal year-end closing. Submissions in July will be processed in August.

ESSEER II critical dates:

- [Final Expenditure Report](#)
 - Amendments due by June 31st, 2023
 - Cash Requests due by September 25, 2023
 - Guidance on ESSEER II Close-Out is [here](#)

Requests for extensions may be considered. Please see below for more information.

- Dept Of Education May 5, 2023: Notice of [updated technical FAQs for liquidation extensions](#) and an updated CRRSA [liquidation extension request template](#).

ESSEER Safety Security Reimbursement Request: In compliance with ESSEER requirements and in supporting school safety, OPI is making available \$200 reimbursement to schools for performing Safety/Security needs assessments. Compliances of reimbursement are [here](#). If interested in receiving the \$200 assessment reimbursement please submit a request with documentation (certification) into the portal [here](#).

OPI Review Process: OPI is assisting LEAs in mitigating risks to avoid audit findings by **reviewing requests for funding** and providing **assistance with compliances**. During June through August, we will be contacting schools to conduct monitoring assessments and helping to strengthen ESSEER documentation. Contact Wendi Fawns, ESSEER Director for assistance (wendi.fawns@mt.gov)

Just a reminder that **OPI ESSEER Team will be reviewing School Plans during June 2023**. Information was emailed to Authorized Representatives and Business Clerks on May 10th with guidance. If you did not receive this contact Jessika Bol (Jessika.bol@mt.gov).

June's ESSEER Guidance Sessions will take place on June 12th - 15th at the MASBO Conference in Fairmont. All past Guidance Sessions have been recorded and posted on the [OPI ESSEER Webpage](#).

Many **resources** are available on the [OPI ESSEER webpage](#) including but not limited to:

- [Quick Start Guide](#) for new Superintendents and Clerks
- Department of Education [ESSEER FAQ](#)
- Department of Education [Labor Shortages and ESSEER](#) funding allocations
- Montana [District list of ESSEER Plans](#)

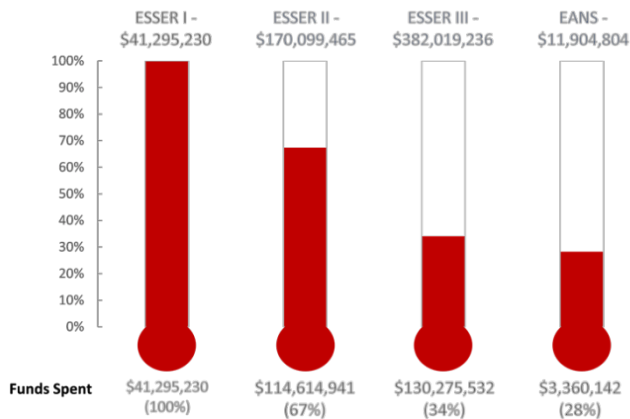


- All previous Compass newsletters ([2021-22](#))



Looking Back and Viewing Updates:

The thermometer image showing Montana ESSER/EANS spend-down can be viewed on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#). Let’s keep up the great work as we finish out ESSER CRRSA II and ESSER ARP III!



District Monthly Status Reports view of allocated and expended funds can be found on the OPI ESSER webpage [here](#).

The **Broadband Modernization** project information can be found here: <https://opi.mt.gov/COVID-19-Information/ESSER/Broadband>

OPI is committed to a **system of support** for school districts, students, and parents throughout Montana that provides an array of services. Individual district consultation on ESSER funding is available upon request. Please reach out to Wendi Fawns at wendi.fawns@mt.gov to schedule a time for your district.

For further information please contact:

Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov

Rebecca Brown, ESSER Program Manager at rebecca.brown@mt.gov

May 2023 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)





Thank you to everyone involved in submitting the ESSER Annual Report Year 3 files by April 14th. We truly appreciate your support. We are currently validating the data submitted, and may be contacting you for minor clarifications. We had 97% completion on time and really appreciated your help in this process!

The **ESSER Data Collection/Annual Report** Process for schools took place in April 2023. The process included:

- District input data (excel), and
- District portal submission of excel file (google form).

Thank you to all our Montana districts for your focused efforts in this ESSER grant compliance.

Looking Ahead:

ESSER Grant Compliance and Grant Management:

- [Final Expenditure Report](#) (FER) due at end of each grant cycle
- **Deadlines for ESSER II**
 - Amendments due by July 1, 2023
 - Cash Requests due by September 25, 2023
- **Deadlines for ESSER III**
 - Amendments due by July 1, 2024
 - Cash Requests due by September 25, 2024

Currently, there will be **no extensions** for the ESSER II or ESSER III grants. The OPI ESSER Team encourages your district to **review all budget descriptions and allocated amounts** in E-Grants, to determine whether any changes are needed.

May's Virtual ESSER Guidance Sessions will take place on **May 15th - 19th**. The focus of these sessions will be Transition Planning (ESSER-related staff leaving or onboarding and recruitment/retention) and Closing Out the ESSER II grant. All sessions will be recorded and posted on the [OPI ESSER Webpage](#). More information and updates will be sent out as we get closer to those sessions.

OPI Review Process: OPI is assisting LEAs in mitigating risks to avoid audit findings by **reviewing requests for funding** and providing **assistance with compliances**. Projects/items over the threshold purchased with ESSER funds must meet Federal and State capital asset requirements and Grant allowable/reasonable guidelines. Board approval and OPI review assist in meeting these compliances. OPI Guidance is available on the ESSER Website [here](#). Contact Wendi Fawns, ESSER Director for assistance (wendi.fawns@mt.gov)

Additional Allocations: Some allocations have been updated in E-Grants for ESSER II and III. (More information can be found [here](#)). Schools must **create an E-Grants Amendment in ESSER II and ESSER III** so that the updated allocation will populate in the corresponding E-Grants budget pages.



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL JB 2023

Thank you to the Department of Education for releasing an [Updated FAQs Guidance Document](#) which is posted on the OPI ESSER Webpage.

OPI is committed to a **system of support** for school districts, students, and parents throughout Montana that provides an array of services. Individual district consultation on ESSER funding is available upon request. Please reach out to Wendi Fawns at wendi.fawns@mt.gov to schedule a time for your district.

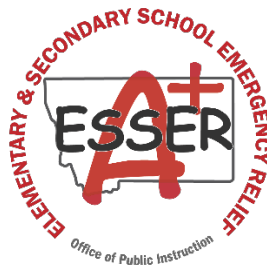
For further information please contact:

Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov

Rebecca Brown, ESSER Program Manager at rebecca.brown@mt.gov

April 2023 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)



Looking Ahead:

ESSER Grant Compliance and Grant Management:

- [Annual Federal Data Collection](#) (how funds were used, amounts, etc) – March – April 2023
- 2 Plans: [Safe Return and ARP ESSER Plan](#) reviewed at least every 6 months, posted on District website after [public/meaningful stakeholder engagement](#)
- [Final Expenditure Report](#) (FER) due at end of each grant cycle
 - **Deadlines for the ESSER is September 30, 2023**
 - Amendments due by July 1, 2023
 - Cash Requests due by September 25, 2023
 - Deadline for ESSER III September 30, 2024
 - Amendments due by July 1, 2024
 - Cash Requests due by September 25, 2024

At this time, there will be **no extensions** for the ESSER II or ESSER III grants. The OPI ESSER Team encourages your district to **review all budget descriptions and allocated amounts** in E-Grants, to determine whether any changes are needed.

The **ESSER Data Collection/Annual Report** Process takes place in March/April. The process will include:

- District review of previously submitted data (excel),
- District input data (excel), and
- District portal submission of excel file (google form).



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL JB 2023

April's Virtual ESSER Guidance Sessions will be Annual Federal Data Reporting Work Sessions scheduled with each district. Schools should be on the lookout for more Data Collection information coming soon.

OPI Review Process: OPI is assisting LEAs in mitigating risks to avoid audit findings by **reviewing requests for funding** and providing **assistance with compliances**. Projects/items over the threshold purchased with ESSER funds must meet Federal and State capital asset requirements and Grant allowable/reasonable guidelines. Board approval and OPI review assist in meeting these compliances. OPI Guidance is available on the ESSER Website [here](#). Contact Wendi Fawns, ESSER Director for assistance (wendi.fawns@mt.gov)

Additional Allocations: Some allocations have been updated in E-Grants for ESSER II and III. (More information can be found [here](#))

Schools must **create an E-Grants Amendment in ESSER II and ESSER III** so that the updated allocation will populate in the corresponding E-Grants budget pages.

In the amendment description you may use this template language:

- (if the budget description already exists) **BUDGET AMOUNT CHANGE ONLY – additional allocation of \$xx to Object Code xx**
- (if adding a new budget item) **Additional Allocation of \$xx to Object Code xx [for the purpose of xxxxx to prepare, prevent, respond]**

To view the additional funds, scroll down to view **Allocation Remaining** at the bottom-right of each E-Grants budget page.

Determining Maximum Indirect Cost allowed

(A) Total Allocation Available for Budgeting	9,832,962	(F) Total budgeted above	\$9,470,796
(B) Budgeted Property and Equipment Cost (Object 700)	\$545,738	(G) Budgeted Indirect Cost	350000
(C) Allowable Direct Costs (A-B)	\$9,287,224	(H) Total Budget (F+G)	\$9,820,796
(D) Indirect Cost Rate %	3.3400	Allocation Remaining (A-H)	\$12,166
(E) Maximum Indirect Cost (C*(D/1+D))	\$300,168		

A major ESSER requirement is **Meaningful Stakeholder/Community Support**. If the community has a partnership and a vested interest in your district, then the ESSER funding “cliff” won’t pose a threat. When the federal funding ends, the community partnership will continue.

- Be very public with everything ESSER allows you to accomplish - show **student gains/benefits**.
- Publish your ESSER plan, and take progress pictures.
- Host events and give tours, so the public has a chance to come in and **see** your success.
- Bring in the local newspaper, radio station, or TV news station, and show them all that is being achieved.
- Partner with Booster clubs, Parent/Family Committees, Local Guilds or Unions, Mayor’s Office, Chamber of Commerce, Local Churches, Restaurants, Post Offices, Community Centers, Community Bulletin Boards, etc...
- Anywhere people **gather**, visually present ESSER student gains.

Always keep in mind, this is for our **students**. Everything you’re doing with ESSER will benefit the students and give them a better future. Make sure you’re helping your community see that as well.

(More information on Meaningful Stakeholder Input can be found here: <https://youtu.be/cwvzjni4l8MI>)



We want your feedback! Please fill out this short [Google Form](#) to tell us what YOU want to see in our monthly Compass communication. It takes just a minute, and we appreciate your input!

Many **resources** are available on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#) including but not limited to:

- [Quick Start Guide](#) for new Superintendents and Clerks
- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)
- All previous Compass newsletters ([2021-22](#))
- Department of Education [Labor Shortages and ESSER](#) funding allocations
- [CCSSO ESSER Construction Funds](#) guide
- [Department of Education ESSER ARP and IDEA Section 2014](#) Fact Sheet
- Montana [District list of ESSER Plans](#)
- Montana [District list of fund allocations](#)



Looking Back and viewing updates:

The **thermometer image** showing Montana ESSER/EANS spend down can be viewed on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#). Let's keep up the great work as we finish out ESSER CRRSA II and ESSER ARP III! **District Monthly Status Reports** view of allocated and expended funds can be found on the OPI ESSER webpage [here](#). Thank you to the Department of Education for releasing an [Updated FAQs Guidance Document](#) which is posted on the OPI ESSER Webpage. The **Broadband Modernization** project information can be found here: <https://opi.mt.gov/COVID-19-Information/ESSER/Broadband>

OPI is committed to a **system of support** for school districts, students, and parents throughout Montana that provides an array of services. Individual district consultation on ESSER funding is available upon request. Please reach out to Wendi Fawns at wendi.fawns@mt.gov to schedule a time for your district.

For further information please contact:

Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov

Rebecca Brown, ESSER Program Manager at rebecca.brown@mt.gov

March 2023 ESSER Compass Update



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL JB 2023

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)



Looking Ahead:

ESSER Grant Compliance:

- [Safe Return Plan](#) reviewed at least every 6 months, posted on District website after [public/meaningful stakeholder engagement](#)
- [ARP ESSER Plan](#) reviewed at least every 6 months, posted on District website after [public/meaningful stakeholder engagement](#)
- [Final Expenditure Report](#) (FER) due at end of each grant cycle
- [Annual Federal Data Collection](#) (how funds were used, amounts, etc) – February – March 2023

The **ESSER Data Collection/Annual Report** Process will begin the first week in March, with Email reminders going to superintendents and clerks the last week in February. The process will include:

- District review of previously submitted data (excel),
- District input data (excel), and
- District portal submission of excel file (google form).

OPI Review Process: OPI is assisting LEAs in mitigating risks to avoid audit findings by **reviewing requests for funding** and providing **assistance with compliances**. Projects/items over the threshold purchased with ESSER funds must meet Federal and State capital asset requirements and Grant allowable/reasonable guidelines. Board approval and OPI review assist in meeting these compliances. OPI Guidance is available on the ESSER Website [here](#). Contact Wendi Fawns, ESSER Director for assistance (wendi.fawns@mt.gov)

Additional Allocations: Some allocations have been updated in E-Grants for ESSER II and III. (More information can be found [here](#))

Schools must **create an E-Grants Amendment in ESSER II and ESSER III** so that the updated allocation will populate in the corresponding E-Grants budget pages.

In the amendment description you may use this template language:

- (if the budget description already exists) **BUDGET AMOUNT CHANGE ONLY – additional allocation of \$xx to Object Code xx**
- (if adding a new budget item) **Additional Allocation of \$xx to Object Code xx [for the purpose of xxxxx to prepare, prevent, respond]**



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL JB 2023

To view the additional funds, scroll down to view **Allocation Remaining** at the bottom-right of each E-Grants budget page.

Determining Maximum Indirect Cost allowed

(A) Total Allocation Available for Budgeting	9,832,962	(F) Total budgeted above	\$9,470,796
(B) Budgeted Property and Equipment Cost (Object 700)	\$545,738	(G) Budgeted Indirect Cost:	350000
(C) Allowable Direct Costs (A-B)	\$9,287,224	(H) Total Budget (F+G)	\$9,820,796
(D) Indirect Cost Rate %	3.3400		
(E) Maximum Indirect Cost (C*(D/1+D))	\$300,168	Allocation Remaining (A-H)	\$12,166

Deadlines for the ESSER Grants:

- ESSER II expires September 30, 2023 - 7 months to spent down the grant
- ESSER III expires September 30, 2024 - 19 months to spent down the grant

Introducing Jessika Bol – ESSER Administrative Specialist



- Jessika joined the ESSER team in December 2022
- Jessika moved to Montana with the goal of expanding her career through helping others. Her mom has worked for a school district for 20+ years, thus inspiring Jessika to share her passion of helping others through this field. Jessika brings with her a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice. In her free time, you can find Jessika enjoying the great outdoors hunting, fishing, and spending time with her dogs and family.

March's Virtual ESSER Guidance Sessions will focus on the Annual Federal Data Reporting process, with both walkthrough guidance sessions as well as regular office hours. Schools should be on the lookout for more Data Collection information coming soon.

The **Afterschool** and **Summer Enrichment grants** for School Year 2022-23 reopened under the updated name **ESSER Consolidated Special ELO**. These grants will focus on **Math** and **Reading** programming efforts, combined with best practices promoting Social/Emotional Learning. View our site [HERE](#) for more information.

Please make sure your schools' **contact information** is up to date in the [OPI Contacts database](#). For instructions for making this update please click [here](#).

We want your feedback! Please fill out this short [Google Form](#) to tell us what YOU want to see in our monthly Compass communication. It takes just a minute, and we appreciate your input!

Many **resources** are available on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#) including but not limited to:

- [Quick Start Guide](#) for new Superintendents and Clerks
- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)
- All previous Compass newsletters ([2021-22](#))
- Department of Education [Labor Shortages and ESSER](#) funding allocations



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL JB 2023

- [CCSSO ESSER Construction Funds](#) guide
- [Department of Education ESSER ARP and IDEA Section 2014](#) Fact Sheet
- Montana [District list of ESSER Plans](#)
- Montana [District list of fund allocations](#)

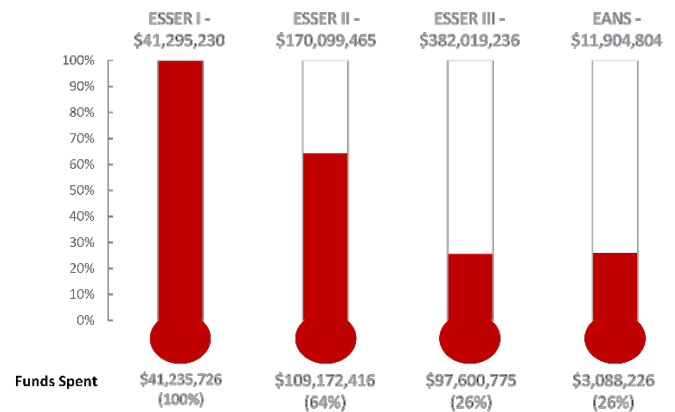
The **Broadband Modernization** project information can be found here: <https://opi.mt.gov/COVID-19-Information/ESSER/Broadband>

OPI is committed to a **system of support** for school districts, students, and parents throughout Montana that provides an array of services. Individual district consultation on ESSER funding is available upon request. Please reach out to Wendi Fawns at wendi.fawns@mt.gov to schedule a time for your district.



Looking Back:

The thermometer image to the right shows how effective Montana schools have been at spending down the ESSER funds. (This visual is updated on a monthly basis and can be found on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#).)



Let’s keep up the great work as we finish out ESSER CRRSA II and ESSER ARP III!

District Monthly Status Reports view of allocated and expended funds can be found on the OPI ESSER webpage [here](#).

Thank you to the Department of Education for releasing an [Updated FAQs Guidance Document](#) which is posted on the OPI ESSER Webpage.



THANK YOU to all who registered and attended the **February ESSER Virtual Guidance Sessions** on **February 16th and 17th**! Videos and slides from all past guidance sessions are posted on the OPI [ESSER Webpage](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

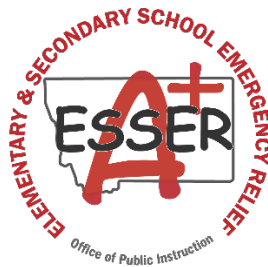
For further information please contact:

Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov

Rebecca Brown, ESSER Program Manager at rebecca.brown@mt.gov

February 2023 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)



Looking Ahead:

ESSER Grant Compliance:

- [Safe Return Plan](#) reviewed at least every 6 months, posted on District website after [public/meaningful stakeholder engagement](#)
- [ARP ESSER Plan](#) reviewed at least every 6 months, posted on District website after [public/meaningful stakeholder engagement](#)
- [Final Expenditure Report](#) (FER) due at end of each grant cycle
- [Annual Federal Data Collection](#) (how funds were used, amounts, etc) – February – March 2023

The **Annual Federal Data Collection process** will begin on February 1st, 2023 and data will be due to the OPI by March 31st, 2023. Be on the lookout for information from OPI regarding your districts' data reporting.

The **ESSER CRRSA II funding cycle** closes on September 30, 2023. You have about 8 months to spend down this grant. Cash Requests should be submitted no later than September 25, 2023. The Final Expenditure Report (FER) should be submitted no later than October 25, 2023.

The **ESSER ARP III funding cycle** closes on September 30, 2024. You have about 20 months to spend down this grant. Cash Requests should be submitted no later than September 25, 2024. The Final Expenditure Report (FER) should be submitted no later than October 25, 2024.

February's **Virtual ESSER Guidance Sessions** will take place on February 16th & 17th.

All sessions will be recorded and posted on the [OPI ESSER Webpage](#). More information and updates will be sent out as we get closer to those sessions.



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL JB 2023

The **Afterschool** and **Summer Enrichment grants** for School Year 2022-23 reopened under the updated name **ESSER Consolidated Special ELO**. These grants will focus on **Math** and **Reading** programming efforts, combined with best practices promoting Social/Emotional Learning. View our site [HERE](#) for more information.

Please make sure your schools' **contact information** is up to date in the [OPI Contacts database](#). For instructions for making this update please click [here](#).

We want your feedback! Please fill out this short [Google Form](#) to tell us what YOU want to see in our monthly Compass communication. It takes just a minute, and we appreciate your input!

Many **resources** are available on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#) including but not limited to:

- [Quick Start Guide](#) for new Superintendents and Clerks
- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)
- All previous Compass newsletters ([2021-22](#))
- Department of Education [Labor Shortages and ESSER](#) funding allocations
- [CCSSO ESSER Construction Funds](#) guide
- [Department of Education ESSER ARP and IDEA Section 2014](#) Fact Sheet
- Montana [District list of ESSER Plans](#)
- Montana [District list of fund allocations](#)

The **Broadband Modernization** project information can be found here: <https://opi.mt.gov/COVID-19-Information/ESSER/Broadband>

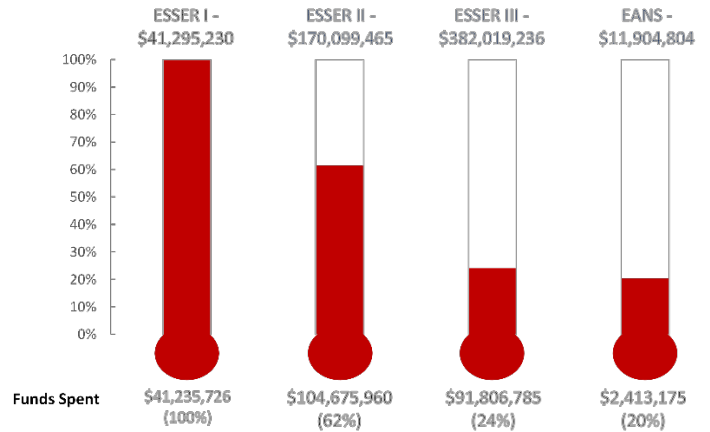
OPI is committed to a **system of support** for school districts, students, and parents throughout Montana that provides an array of services. Individual district consultation on ESSER funding is available upon request. Please reach out to Wendi Fawns at wendi.fawns@mt.gov to schedule a time for your district.



Looking Back:

The thermometer image to the right shows how effective Montana schools have been at spending down the ESSER funds. (This visual is updated on a monthly basis and can be found on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#).)





Let's keep up the great work as we finish out ESSER CRRSA II and ESSER ARP III!

District Monthly Status Reports view of allocated and expended funds can be found on the OPI ESSER webpage [here](#).

Thank you to the Department of Education for releasing an [Updated FAQs Guidance Document](#) which is posted on the OPI ESSER Webpage.

THANK YOU to all who registered and attended the **January ESSER Virtual Guidance Sessions** during the week of January 16th – 20th! Videos and slides from all past guidance sessions are posted on the OPI [ESSER Webpage](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

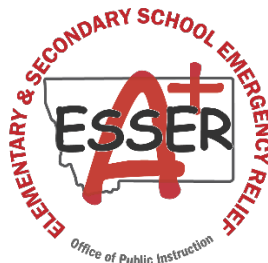
For further information please contact:

Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov

Rebecca Brown, ESSER Program Manager at rebecca.brown@mt.gov

January 2023 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)



Looking Ahead:



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL JB 2023

On January 3rd, 2023, OPI will host a **virtual discussion on the investment in Montana education of the ESSER funds**. The session will be from 11:45am – 12:45pm. You can join the session virtually via this [Zoom link](#).

Topics will include:

- Overview from the Federal Department of Education
- Testimony from key Montana educational leaders

ESSER Grant Compliance:

- [Safe Return Plan](#) reviewed at least every 6 months, posted on District website after [public/meaningful stakeholder engagement](#)
- [ARP ESSER Plan](#) reviewed at least every 6 months, posted on District website after [public/meaningful stakeholder engagement](#)
- [Final Expenditure Report](#) (FER) due at end of each grant cycle
- [Annual Federal Data Collection](#) (how funds were used, amounts, etc) - date to be determined

The **ESSER CRRSA II funding cycle** closes on September 30, 2023. **You have about 9 months to spend down this grant.** Cash Requests should be submitted no later than September 25, 2023. The Final Expenditure Report (FER) should be submitted no later than October 25, 2023.

The **ESSER ARP III funding cycle** closes on September 30, 2024. **You have about 21 months to spend down this grant.** Cash Requests should be submitted no later than September 25, 2024. The Final Expenditure Report (FER) should be submitted no later than October 25, 2024.

January's **Virtual ESSER Guidance Sessions** will take place during the week of January 16-20.

All sessions will be recorded and posted on the [OPI ESSER Webpage](#). More information and updates will be sent out as we get closer to those sessions.

The **Afterschool** and **Summer Enrichment grants** for School Year 2022-23 will be reopening under the updated name **ESSER Consolidated Special ELO**. These grants will focus on **Math** and **Reading** programming efforts, combined with best practices promoting Social/Emotional Learning. To help prepare for these grants, we encourage applicants to actively explore local partnerships to best leverage these funds and improve student outcomes. View our site [HERE](#) for more information.

We want your feedback! Please fill out this short [Google Form](#) to tell us what YOU want to see in our monthly Compass communication. It takes just a minute, and we appreciate your input!

Many **resources** are available on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#) including but not limited to:

- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)
- All previous Compass newsletters ([2021-22](#)) ([2023](#))
- Department of Education [Labor Shortages and ESSER](#) funding allocations
- [CCSSO ESSER Construction Funds](#) guide
- [Department of Education ESSER ARP and IDEA Section 2014](#) Fact Sheet
- Montana [District list of ESSER Plans](#)
- Montana [District list of fund allocations](#)



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL JB 2023

The **Broadband Modernization** website will be updated by January 1st with big changes and more detailed information. The funding available to Montana is significant. Check it out here: <https://opi.mt.gov/COVID-19-Information/ESSER/Broadband>

OPI is committed to a **system of support** for school districts, students, and parents throughout Montana that provides an array of services. Individual district consultation on ESSER funding is available upon request. Please reach out to Wendi Fawns at wendi.fawns@mt.gov to schedule a time for your district.

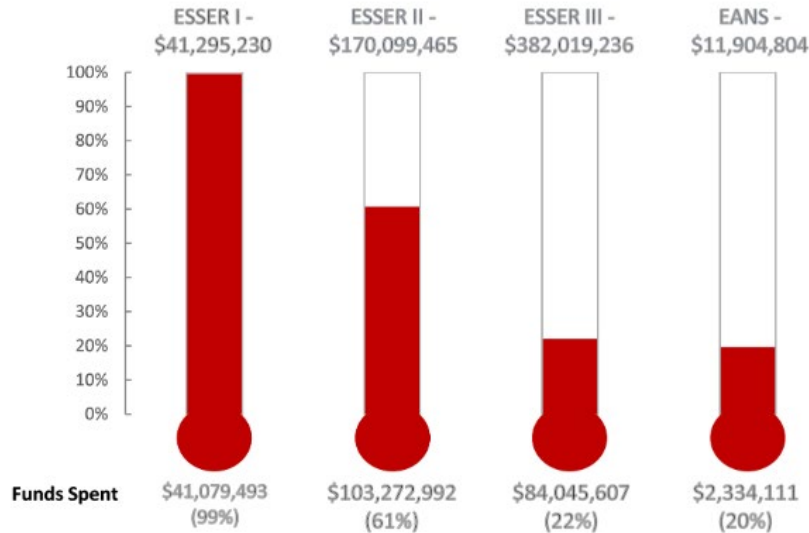


Looking Back:

The **ESSER CARES I funding cycle** closed on September 30, 2022.

THANK YOU to all of the schools who spent down the ESSER I grant. We’ve seen ESSER funds used to support students in so many ways – from ventilation and sanitation, to student technology access, and beyond.

The **thermometer** image below shows how effective Montana schools have been at spending down the ESSER funds. (This visual is updated on a monthly basis and can be found on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#).)



Let’s keep up the great work as we finish out ESSER CRRSA II and ESSER ARP III!

District Monthly Status Reports view of allocated and expended funds can be found on the OPI ESSER webpage [here](#).

Thank you to the Department of Education for releasing an [Updated FAQs Guidance Document](#) which is posted on the OPI ESSER Webpage.



THANK YOU to all who registered and attended the **December** ESSER Virtual Guidance Sessions during the week of **December 12-16**! Videos and slides from all past guidance sessions are posted on the OPI [ESSER Webpage](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

For further information please contact:

Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov

Rebecca Brown, ESSER Program Manager at rebecca.brown@mt.gov



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL JB 2023