



Montana

Office of Public Instruction

Leveraging ESSER Funds - Virtual Conference Reporting and Data Compliance

Prepare, Prevent, and Respond

August 9, 2022



Goals For This Session

- ESSER Allocations
- Significance of allocation funding formula
 - Title I source anchor and subset allocations
- ESSER Grant Cycle
- Grant compliance (target focus and outcomes)
 - Allowable and Reasonable per Federal guidelines (FAQ)
 - Transparent and Traceable grant management
 - Safe Return and ESSER ARP (use) Plans
 - Federal Annual Report and Ongoing stakeholder engagement
- ESSER System of Support - Advocate and Auditor

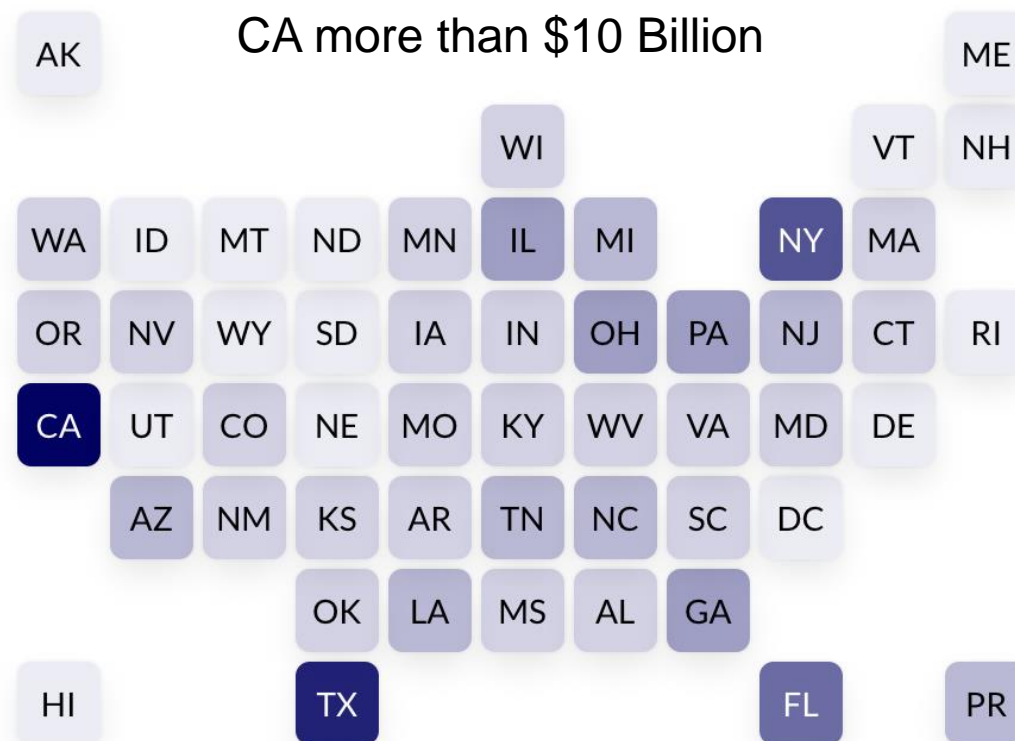
Presenters: **Wendi Fawns**, ESSER/EANS Director
Mindi Askelson, Grant Management Systems Analyst

ESSER Allocations

- ESSER I (CARES) expires 2022
- ESSER II (CRRSA) expires 2023
- ESSER III (ARP) expires 2024



MT less than \$ 1 Billion
WA between \$1-9 Billion
CA more than \$10 Billion





Significance of Funding Formula

Title I and ESSER Connection

- Funds are awarded based on Title I guidelines/proportions
 - Title I and ESSER funds allocation and use are very similar
 - Identified and reported Title I student count matters
- Grant guidelines and reports are similar
 - Participation numbers
 - What funding was spent on
 - Annual data collection
 - Outcomes per grant funds – braiding not blending

Grant Cycle - high level summary

Year 1: 2020 ESSER I (CARES)

Year 2: 2021 ESSER II (CRRSA) and ESSER III (ARP)



- DOE awards funds to States per Title I type formula
- The state distributes funds to districts per Title I type formula
- Districts develop a plan for use of funds and begin to spend funds
- DOE adds grant requirements, plans, data collection, 40% FRL
- Districts continue to spend, track, report... repeat

Short vs Long Term Compliance

- Funds awarded before a needs assessment
- Funds have strings attached
- Administration of grant not fully disclosed
- Transparency required
- Tips for long-term compliance
 - Don't hide behind the computer
 - Manage and document spending
 - Document and measure outcomes
 - Write down your logic for making a decision



Grant Compliance – Allowable/Reasonable

- Grant compliance (target and outcomes)
 - Allowable and Reasonable per Federal guidelines
 - FAQ May 2021
 - Charts comparing grant cycles from DOE and OPI

Department of Education Fact Sheets

- DOE Construction and Late Liquidation Letter May 2022
- CCSSO memo on ESSER Funds for Construction December 2021
- DOE Construction Slides September 2, 2021
- DOE Staffing Labor Shortages April 14, 2021

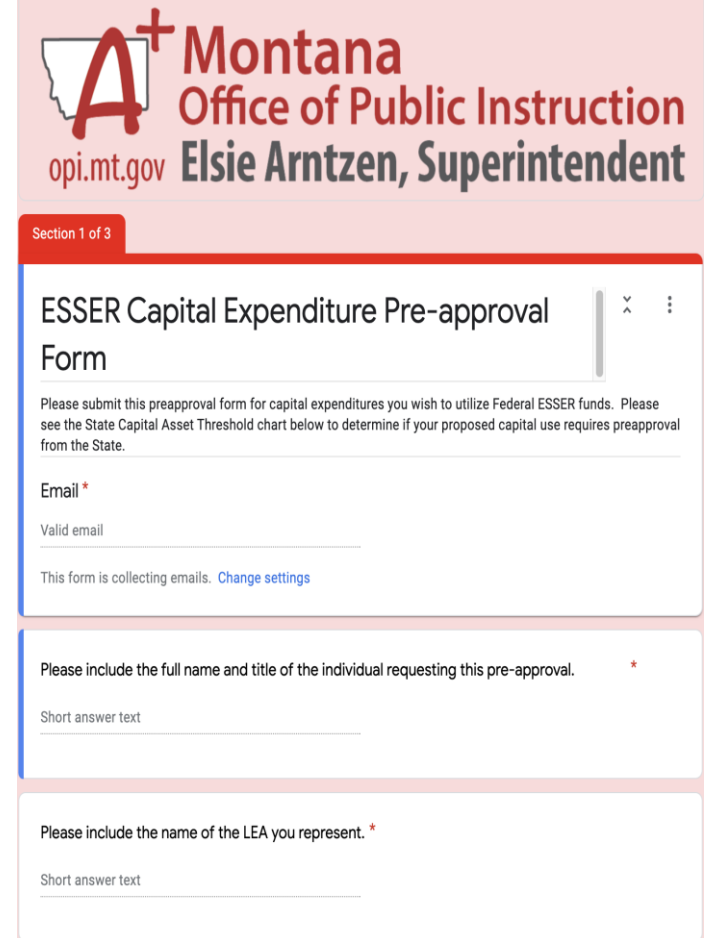


Compliance – Capital Expenditure

Focus on Student Gains

Capital Expenditures

- Project not pieces
- Relate project/purchase to student gains
- Project Scope can be used to track status and outcomes
 - Project Scope can be submitted to ESSER team before completing the form and used to copy/paste into the form, amendments, and cash requests as the project progresses



The screenshot shows the 'ESSER Capital Expenditure Pre-approval Form' interface. At the top, it features the Montana A+ logo and the text 'Montana Office of Public Instruction' and 'Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent'. Below this is a red bar indicating 'Section 1 of 3'. The form title is 'ESSER Capital Expenditure Pre-approval Form'. A note states: 'Please submit this preapproval form for capital expenditures you wish to utilize Federal ESSER funds. Please see the State Capital Asset Threshold chart below to determine if your proposed capital use requires preapproval from the State.' There is an 'Email *' field with a 'Valid email' label and a 'This form is collecting emails. Change settings' link. Below this is a section for 'Please include the full name and title of the individual requesting this pre-approval. *' with a 'Short answer text' input field. At the bottom is another section for 'Please include the name of the LEA you represent. *' with a 'Short answer text' input field.



Addressing challenges that existed *before* the pandemic can be a *reasonable response to the pandemic.*

- ESSER and GEER FAQs May 2021
- diverse needs **arising from or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, or to emerge stronger post-pandemic**, including responding to students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs p. 9
- Implementing or expanding art programs, sports programs, or clubs. C-3
- Improving existing data systems. C-12
- Sustaining and maximizing enrollment in existing summer programs. C-25
- Continuing to pay existing employees and contractors. D-3
- ED says SEAs and LEAs can use ESSER funds for mental health services and supports for students that were experiencing trauma before the pandemic. C-14
- Curriculum, including related professional development. (ARP Public Safety Guidance, pp.5-6)



Allowable/Reasonable continued renovation, teachers, technology, curriculum

Includes examples of allowable projects from ED (with citations):

- Improving school security,
- Improving drinking water including lead remediation,
- Servicing or upgrading HVAC systems,
- Stipends for teachers,
- Lap tops, internet routers,
- Repairing windows and/or doors so they can open to let fresh air in,
- Fencing and playground equipment,
- Professional Development,
- Curriculum, text books/online, remote learning,
- Field trips, and

Allowable/Reasonable exercise

- Allowable AND Reasonable
- Under what circumstances are the items below allowable.
 - Outdoor shed for storing 'extra' covid items
 - Tent or gazebo for outdoor presentations fresh air
 - iPads with bar code readers for internship skill and knowledge documentation
 - Provide workshops for 4-H and other community partners to develop mentoring fall programming around animal care
 - Establish mentoring and/or tutoring programs for students
 - Establish a collaborative team of district personnel and stakeholders to create, implement, and review action plans around system preparedness and innovative learning
 - Hiring professional coach to manage a pilot team tasked with developing proficiency based assessment for hospital and restaurant interns to gain out of seat time credit for math, health, and accounting

Grant Compliance - Plans and Stakeholders

- Transparent and Trackable grant management
 - ESSER ARP (use) **Plans**, December and June
 - **Safe Return Plans** Glendive Evergreen, Dec and June



Glendive Public Schools Safe Return to School and Continuity of Services Plan

Date of Original Adoption: April 29, 2020
Date Plan was Last Revised: June 13, 2022

Next Regularly Scheduled Month for Consideration (Quarterly): 3/14/21

Dates Reviewed: 3/9/20, 3/15/20, 3/17/20, 3/20, 3/25/20, 3/30/20, 4/6/20, 4/16/20, 4/29/20, 5/5/20,
5/11/20, 6/8/20, 6/29/20, 7/13/20, 7/21/20, 7/29/20, 8/3/20, 8/6/20, 8/10/20, 9/8/20, 9/14/20, 10/12/20,
11/9/20, 12/7/20, 12/17/20, 1/11/21, 2/8/21, 3/8/21, 4/12/21, 5/10/21, 6/14/21, 8/9/21, 12/13/21,
6/13/22

Posted on Website: June 16, 2021
Revised and Posted on Website: December 14, 2021
Revised and Posted on Website: June 13, 2022



Evergreen School District Safe Return to Schools and Continuity of Services Plan for COVID-19 Most Recent Update Approved on June 9, 2021

Plan Posting and Approval Dates

Initial Plan Adopted: March 18, 2020, March 26, 2020, July 13, 2020, August 12, 2020
Plan Posted for Public Review: June 4, 2021
Updated Plan Approved: June 9, 2021
Plan Reviewed: August 11, 2021, September 8, 2021, October 13, 2021, November 10, 2021
Updated Plan Posted for Public Review: November 18, 2021
Updated Plan Approved: December 8, 2021
Plan Reviewed: January 12, 2022, February 9, 2022, March 9, 2022, April 13, 2022, and May 11, 2022
Updated Plan Posted for Public Review: May 16, 2022
Updated Plan Approved: June 8, 2022



Grant Compliance – Annual Report and Stake Holders



- Federal **annual report**
 - Funding and outcomes attached
 - Participation numbers and spending categories
- Ongoing ESSER **stakeholder engagement**
 - The active process of involving those who may be affected by ESSER decisions (students, parents, teachers, community)
 - Connecticut is giving students \$1.5 Million ESSER funds to make decisions on allocation

20% For Lost Instructional Time

Hiring, Retention, and FTE

Expenditure Details

Home Internet and Technology

Safe School Reopening and Infrastructure

Equitable Support for Recovery and Acceleration

Compliance Tips



- **Think backwards** from end to beginning- sit back and enjoy the view
- Think system, broad and innovative
 - What data do I need at the end to prove results and gains
 - What can students, parents, teachers, school, and community gain through data
 - Who can we engage and what can we gain (aside from compliance and short-term funds)

The community will support successful schools but are unlikely to support perceived failing ones.

Accountants	Free audit checks with desire to help solve before problem is identified
NHS and Key Club students	CTE credit, real work that students can earn credit for during study hall, senior release, ... fliers, website design, excel sheets
Rotary and PEO members, retired teachers ...	Trained professionals often new to the community wanting to be connected in a meaningful way can produce reports, powerpoint presentations, perform research, conduct outreach
Hospitals and other businesses	Have great ideas about CTE, Internships, and often are attached to Foundation funding that can later help with the 'cliff'

Reality of the Setting: Auditors beware

- Setting generated by ESSER is challenging
 - Grant is changing and will continue to change
 - different from other grants
- Creates stress of the unknown
- Stress increases the likelihood of errors/mistakes
- Winning the lottery is not always fun



OPI's System of Support

Advocate	Auditor
Assist in securing operationally, technically, and financially feasible solutions	Documentation templates and report reviews; plans, data collection, projects
Helping to reduce work effort by demonstrating how one task can lead to more than one gain (public awareness of ESSER spending leading to future funding)	Monitoring and reporting on grant compliance
Training passing along information, regulations, guidelines	DOE ongoing training passing along information, regulations, guidelines

Resources at OPI.MT.GOV

Montana Office of Public Instruction



Welcome to the Office of Public Instruction

Superintendent Elsie Arntzen is proud to serve our Montana families, students, and teachers. **Families are the foundation of learning as our parents are our first teachers.** Our students are our most precious resource and the future of this great state. As a teacher of 23 years, the Superintendent knows the importance of quality educators in the classroom and is working to ensure Montana teachers have the flexibility needed to put our Montana students first.

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is charged with the responsibility of providing technical assistance in:

- School Finance
- School Law
- Teacher Certification and Licensing
- School Accreditation
- Teaching and Learning Standards

The OPI staff administer a number of federally funded programs and provide a variety of information services, including the information systems necessary to assess student achievement and the quality of Montana's elementary and secondary school systems.

OFFICE OF THE
SUPERINTENDENT

MEET EXECUTIVE STAFF

OPI ORGANIZATIONAL
CHART

SEE OPI PRESS RELEASES

ESSER



[Wendi Fawns](#)
ESSER/EANS Director

Wendi's grandmothers were elementary teachers and her parents' college professors. They shaped Wendi's passion for learning anywhere, anytime and in varied formats. Wendi has taught dyslexic readers in elementary schools and provided college/career program support to schools and families across Montana. Her career in social work, information technology, and education have centered around helping customers identify goals and gain the resources necessary to succeed. She holds a BA in Sociology with MIS focus and a MA in Education Leadership. She is a strong customer advocate, member of Rotary and P.E.O. International, and mother of a Montana high school teacher and Arizona college advisor.

406-437-8595



[Rebecca Brown](#)
ESSER Program Manager

Rebecca Brown is joining us from the Bozeman School District where she worked as an ICTE instructor, teaching Metals, Woods, and Auto shop classes. Rebecca holds a BS in Technology Education from Montana State University Bozeman. She has just recently moved to Helena with her husband, cats, and parakeet. Born and raised in Montana, Rebecca feels nothing can beat a gorgeous Montana summer weekend spent camping and floating on the river.

406-444-0783



[Victoria Hoefler](#)
Broadband Data Specialist

Victoria Hoefler relocated to Montana from the Atlanta, Georgia area. Victoria's previous roles in Corporate America include IT Support, Project Management, B2B Client Support, Software Training and Copywriting. In her secondary job, Victoria serves as the Founder and President of a 501(c)(3) Charity bringing awareness to mental health needs of Military Veterans and better quality of life for Military Families. She is looking forward to identifying effective ways to improve broadband internet data in the school throughout Montana.

406-438-3601

Thank you!

For questions or additional information please contact:

ESSER Program Questions

Wendi Fawns at wendi.fawns@mt.gov or 406-437-8595

Rebecca Brown at rebecca.brown@mt.gov or 406-444-0783