



ESSER Bulletin

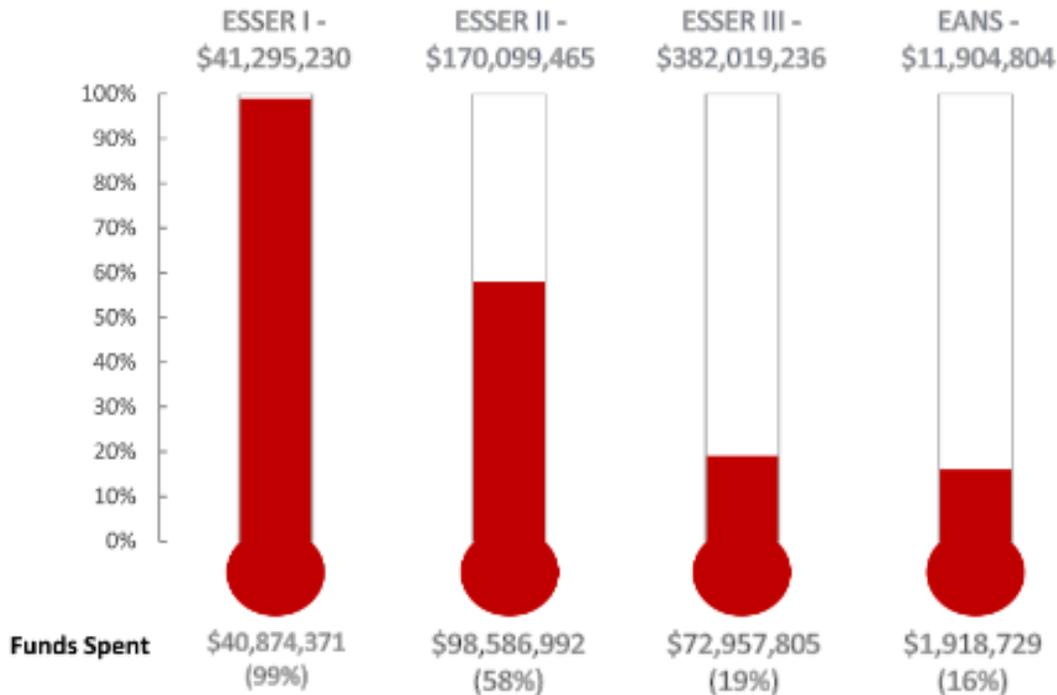
December 2022 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

Looking Back:

The **ESSER CARES I funding cycle** closed on September 30, 2022. The Final Expenditure Report (FER) should have been submitted through E-Grants no later than October 25, 2022. **If your ESSER I FERs have not been approved, you will not be able to draw down from ESSER II or ESSER III. If you haven't yet, submit your FERs for your ESSER I grant(s)!**

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



The **Thermometer** image above shows the status of Montana's ESSER/EANS Grants as of November 2022. This visual is updated on a monthly basis and can be found on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#).



ESSER Resources

▶ [ESSER State and District Plan](#)

▶ [Resources, FAQ, and Guidances](#)

▼ [Allocation and Status Updates](#)

Allocation Updates

- [ESSER I, II and III District Allocations](#) (pdf)
- [Enrollment Increase \(HB 630\) BASE Aid Payment Guidance](#) (pdf)

Status Updates

- [District October 2022 Status Report](#) (pdf)
- [Trustee October 2022 Status Report](#) (pdf)
- [District September 2022 Status Report](#) (pdf)
- [Trustee September 2022 Status Report](#) (pdf)
- [District August 2022 Status Report](#) (pdf)
- [Trustee August 2022 Status Report](#) (pdf)

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

THANK YOU to all who registered and attended the **November ESSER Virtual Guidance Sessions** during the week of November 14-18! Videos and slides from all past guidance sessions are posted on the OPI [ESSER Webpage](#) and [YouTube channel](#).



Looking Ahead:

ESSER Grant Compliance:

- Safe Return plan updated at least every six months: OPI verification done in June and December.
- ARP ESSER plan reviewed/updated at least every six months: OPI verification done in June and December.
- Data Collection/Annual Grant Reporting each year in spring; date TBD by Federal Dept of Education.

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.



OPI has formed an **ESSER Review Committee**. This committee will be helpful in assisting OPI in training, processing, and compliance process revisions for ESSER. The committee will meet remotely on a monthly basis and cover topics such as: data collection/annual reports, plan revision, training topics and format, and overall ESSER support. We are seeking 10-15 committed district members to participate. If interested, please reach out to Wendi Fawns or Rebecca Brown for more information.

December's **Virtual ESSER Guidance Sessions** will take place during the week of December 12-16. 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 this fall 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.

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

- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)
- 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](#)

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

November 2022 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

Looking Back:

THANK YOU to all who registered and attended the **October ESSER Virtual Guidance Sessions** on October 17-21. There were a total of 10 sessions, covering **E-Grants Error Messages**, **E-Grants Prep and Processing**, the **Annual Federal Data Reporting** process, **School Plan Updates**, and **Audit & Reporting Compliance**. Attendees included school district superintendents, clerks, and trustees, as well as other community stakeholders. Videos and slides from all past guidance sessions are posted on the OPI [ESSER Webpage](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

The second semester of the **ARP Afterschool 2022** grant cycle is in full swing. We've already seen programs use ESSER ARP funds in amazing beneficial ways, and we look forward to seeing all the innovative uses to



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come. **This grant cycle will end on December 31, 2022.** Amendments and Cash Requests should be submitted no later than **November 25, 2022** in order to be processed by the deadline.

District Monthly Status Reports are available on our OPI ESSER website. We have designed this report which shows Allocations, Expenditures, and Remaining Balances within the different ESSER grants for each district. You can find these reports on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#) under the **Allocation & Status Update** accordion tab.

The **ESSER CARES I funding cycle** closed on September 30, 2022. The Final Expenditure Report (FER) should have been submitted through E-Grants no later than October 25, 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. Let's keep up the great work as we finish out ESSER CRRSA II and ESSER ARP III!

The **ARP Summer Enrichment 2022** grant cycle has also closed. Thank you to all the schools and organizations who hosted summer programs with the help of this grant. Please make sure the Final Expenditure Report (FER) is submitted by **November 25, 2022.**



Looking Ahead:

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.

OPI has formed an **ESSER Review Committee**. This committee will be helpful in assisting OPI in training, processing, and compliance process revisions for ESSER. The committee will meet remotely on a monthly basis and cover topics such as: data collection/annual reports, plan revision, training topics and format, and overall ESSER support. We are seeking 10-15 committed district members to participate. If interested, please reach out to Wendi Fawns or Rebecca Brown for more information.

School Plan updates will be due in December. Every 6 months, schools must update their Safe Return plan and the ARP ESSER (Use of Funds) plan, and updates must be sent to OPI. Throughout the month of November, make sure to gather meaningful stakeholder input in order to update your School Plans. OPI will be offering some Guidance Sessions on the School Plans during November (see below).





2022
November

ESSER GUIDANCE SESSIONS

The Office of Public Instruction's ESSER team priority for 2022-23 is to provide **resources** and **support** to educators through a series of interactive, group, and individual events. The team is providing the below series.

FIVE DAYS, FIVE TOPICS:

Mon
11/14/22

UPDATING SCHOOL PLANS, and ANNUAL FEDERAL DATA REPORTING

Understanding the ESSER ARP School Plans and how to update them. Understanding the updated Data Collection process for 2022.

Tues
11/15/22

NEW SUPERINTENDENT AND CLERK TIPS

Helpful tips, tricks, and guidance for those just starting in a Superintendent or Clerk position.

Weds
11/16/22

MEANINGFUL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Understanding how to gather Meaningful Stakeholder Input, and how to use it in the School Plan, ESSER Grants, and other ways.

Thurs
11/17/22

E-GRANTS ERROR MESSAGES

Understanding the common Error Messages in E-Grants, and how to solve them.

Fri
11/18/22

OPEN OFFICE HOURS

Open time for Q&A. School Districts can ask the ESSER team any questions they may have about the Grants, Plans, etc.

The format for the Guidance Sessions will be:
Brief Presentation
(recorded and posted on website)

Followed by Q&A

SCHEDULE

Each session will be offered at
11:00 am and 3:00 pm
Via Online Meeting

REGISTRATION:

MONDAY-THURSDAY:
Link Coming Soon!

FRIDAY:
Link Coming Soon!



November's **Virtual ESSER Guidance Sessions** may focus on the following topics:

- Updating School Plans (Safe Return and ARP ESSER) and Annual Federal Data Reporting
- New Superintendent and Clerk Tips
- Meaningful Stakeholder Consultation and Communication
- E-Grants Error Messages
- Friday will have some Open Office Hours times available for Q&A

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 this fall under the updated name **ESSER Extended and Expanded Learning Opportunity (EELO)**. 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.

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

- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)



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- 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](#)

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

October 2022 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

Looking Back:

THANK YOU to all who registered and attended the **September ESSER Virtual Guidance Sessions** on September 20-23. There were a total of 8 sessions, covering **Allowable Use, Amendments, Cash Requests,** and the **Capital Expenditure Process**. We had a total of **95 people** attend the virtual conference sessions, including school district superintendents, clerks, and trustees, as well as other community stakeholders. Videos and slides from September’s sessions will be posted on the OPI website soon.

Videos and Slides from the **August 9th ESSER Conference** have been posted on the [website](#) and our [YouTube channel](#).

The **ARP Summer Enrichment 2022** grant cycle has come to a close. Thank you to all the schools and organizations who hosted Summer programs with the help of this grant. Please make sure all cash requests are submitted by **October 25, 2022**.



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- [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](#)

For further information please contact:

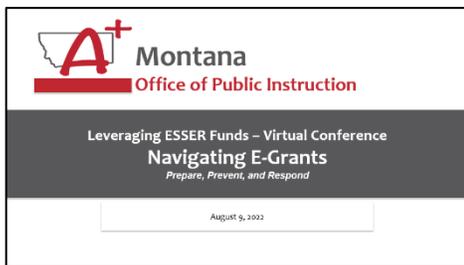
Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov

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

September 2022 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

Looking Back:



THANK YOU to all who registered and attended the **ESSER Virtual Conference: Montana Schools Leveraging ESSER** on August 9th. We had **95 people** attend the virtual conference sessions, including school district superintendents, clerks, and trustees, as well as other community stakeholders. Videos and slides will be posted on the OPI website soon!

Looking Ahead:

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.

The **ESSER Virtual Conference** kickoff event was the first part of a series of insightful monthly opportunities for your organization and OPI staff to work collaboratively. We are reaching out to you to determine the time and topics for these monthly guidance sessions. Please fill out [THIS SURVEY](#) to let us know what you'd like to see. Our goal is to create a setting for collaboration upon our Pillars of Hope, Teach, Learn, and Ready. (If the above link doesn't work, copy and paste this link into your browser: <https://forms.gle/8tEgYr1bdsP4BxnGA>)

The **Afterschool** and **Summer Enrichment grants** will be reopening early this fall. 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.

Updated Data Reports will be available on our OPI ESSER website. We have designed this report which shows Allocations, Expenditures, and Remaining Balances within the different ESSER grant cycles for each district. You can find these reports on the [OPI ESSER webpage](#) under the **Allocation & Status** accordion tab.

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

- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)
- Department of Education [Labor Shortages and ESSER](#) funding allocations
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- [Department of Education ESSER ARP and IDEA Section 2014](#) Fact Sheet
- Montana [District list of ESSER Plans](#)
- Montana [District list of fund allocations](#)

We are very near the end of the **ESSER CARES I funding cycle**, which closes on September 30, 2022. If your district has not yet used all these funds, please contact the ESSER team for support and assistance.

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

August 2022 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

Looking Back:

Safe Return and LEA ARP Plans (ESSER fund use) are required to be updated at least twice a year, in December and June of each of the grant years. OPI has been reviewing these plans as of June 2022, and notifying Districts who still need to review and update plans, including the requirement to engage the community. Please make sure your plans are updated!

Data collection for ESSER I: With the end of the fiscal year in June, the OPI collected and reported data to the Department of Education on how ESSER I funds are being spent. Data reports were submitted successfully. We are about halfway through the **ARP Summer Enrichment** grant cycle, which runs through July-August. Summer Enrichment grants were awarded to seventeen non-profits and schools who serve at least 40% low income qualifying students, and whose programs focus on Math. Some of these awards were used to fund scholarships, allowing more students to access summer programs and supports. Some funds helped pay for staff salaries, to increase the staff and program hours offered to students. Students in some programs used math in cooking and baking exercises, feeding their peers and invited guests. Other students used math while working on construction projects like a Library Box or a Shed to hold outdoor play equipment. Sports, gardening, rocket building were all activities used to teach and reinforce students' Math skills. These Summer programs also focused on Community Connection and Social Emotional learning. Our students are being given more access, support, and opportunity than ever before, and their communities are a big part of making it happen! So THANK YOU and congratulations to all of our Summer Enrichment grantees.



ESSER staff welcomed a new member of the team in July! 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 B.S. 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. Rebecca is the new ESSER Program Manager, and she can be reached at Rebecca.Brown@mt.gov or at (406) 444-0783.

Looking Ahead:

OPI is committed to a **system of support** for school districts, students, and parents throughout Montana that provides an array of services. These services are available this summer and include webinars, in person conferences, and individualized program support.



ESSER Virtual Conference: Montana Schools Leveraging ESSER

The Office of Public Instruction is reaching out today regarding an opportunity on August 9th for any stakeholders (superintendents, principals, district clerks, board members) looking for more information and additional support with ESSER. Come join OPI for the **Montana Schools Leveraging ESSER** conference where your Advocates will guide you through using and managing ESSER funds. This kickoff event will be part of a series of insightful monthly opportunities for your organization and OPI staff to work collaboratively. Our goal is to create a setting for collaboration upon our Pillars of Hope, Teach, Learn, and Ready. Click [THIS LINK](#) to register! For more information contact Wendi Fawns at wendi.fawns@mt.gov.

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

- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)
- 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](#)

Grant Annual Reporting on outcomes achieved for the **Montana Afterschool Program Grant** will be open for submission in early Fall 2022. Just like with other ESSER grants, OPI needs to collect data on how the Spring Afterschool funding was spent.

Program Reports Data Collection Summer Enrichment: Once the ARP Summer Enrichment grant cycle ends on August 31, 2022 we will begin collecting data on how the funds were spent. You can anticipate communication from OPI on this data collection in late August or early September.

We are very near the end of the **ESSER CARES I funding cycle**, which closes on September 30, 2022. If your district has not yet used all these funds, please make sure they get used before the deadline. It is important to use these funds before ESSER CRRSA II and ESSER ARP III funds. District allocations can be viewed [here](#), District plans reviewed [here](#). OPI and the Department of Education supports the use of funds to ensure Montana students are safe and secure.

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.

July 2022 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

The **Montana Summer Enrichment Grant** focused on math-based programs for Montana students. The \$3.8 million grant was Opened on May 18, 2022, closed on June 7, 2022, and awardee notices were sent out on June 10th to our Montana Students. The **Montana Afterschool Program Grant** was similarly awarded last year and program reports, on outcomes achieved, will be open for submission in August 2022.



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Safe Return and LEA ARP Plan (ESSER fund use) are required to be updated at least twice a year. OPI will review the plans in December and June of each of the grant years. Districts have been notified of the need to review and update plans including requirement to engage the community.

As we near the end of the **ESSER CARES I funding cycle**, it is important to use these funds before ESSER CRRSA II and ESSER ARP III funds. District allocations can be viewed [here](#). District plans reviewed [here](#). OPI and the Department of Education supports the use of funds to ensure Montana students are safe and secure. ESSER funds can be used for improving school security and drinking water. Funds can be used to address mold and other [barriers to health](#). An announcement by the [Department of Education addressed labor shortages](#) and advocates supporting teachers and other education staff through ESSER funds.

OPI is committed to a **system of support** for school districts, students, and parents throughout Montana that provides an array of services. These services are available this summer and include webinars, in person conferences, and individualized program support.

ESSER staff is welcoming on a new member of the team July 1, 2022 who can be reached at Rebecca.Brown@mt.gov.

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

- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)
- 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](#)

For further information please contact Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov.

June 2022 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

The **Montana Summer Enrichment Grant** focuses on math-based summer programs for Montana students. These math-based summer programs integrate math skills into innovative projects that address academic needs of Montana students. The \$3.8 million grant is available to [qualifying](#), established non-profit organizations and schools over a three-year period. Qualifying programs include:

- anticipated student participation is at least 40% low-income qualifying
- the organization has at least 3-5 years of past summer programming experience
- program/project focuses on Math and includes pre/post-testing of students

Initial award level is \$15,000. Opened on May 18, 2022 and closes on June 7, 2022.

Grant recipients will be notified by June 10, 2022. To apply for this grant, please click [here](#).

Register for a Summer Enrichment grant webinar to learn more by emailing wendi.fawns@mt.gov. The webinars are scheduled for June 1st at 4:30 pm, June 2nd at 10 am and June 3rd at 2 pm.

Safe Return and LEA ARP Plan (ESSER fund use) are required to be updated at least twice a year. OPI will review the plans in December and June. Districts have been notified of the need to review and update plans including requirement to engage the community.



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

- Department of Education [ESSER FAQ](#)
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- Montana [District list of ESSER Plans](#)
- Montana [District list of fund allocations](#)

Amendments are processed weekly but often result in 'returned for modification' due to descriptions. Districts are encouraged to provide language that demonstrates how the action (item purchased or funds transferred for another use) helps them **prepare for, respond to, and prevent** covid or outcomes of covid. Please relate the amendment to **student gains**.

Going forward and in recognition of staffing changes OPI grant managers would like to requests district clerks **update their egrant Authorized Representative** via the [egrant](#) link under Training/[E Grant Security User Guide](#).

For further information please contact Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov.

May 2022 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

Federal ESSER Data Collection Compliance

A \$3.8 million fund was designated by the Montana Legislature through House Bill 362. Leveraging the State's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funding, to enhance and expand student access to quality summer programming across the state. The ESSER ARP Summer grant application is anticipated to be available under the ESSER link on the OPI website by the end of April. The application will be similar to the ESSER ARP afterschool program application. Our goal is to make award announcements in May. Afterschool and summer school ESSER grants both have data collection requirement. Funding for both afterschool and summer ESSER ARP grants can be used through October 2024.

All **Safe Return plans** must be updated no less than every six months, until September 30, 2023. Districts must seek public input and take the input into account in the development and revision of the plans. An updated plan needs to be posted on the school website at the URL link that the district provided to the OPI on the ESSER III e-grant application. If a district website is not available, the updated plan needs to be emailed to Wendi Fawns, OPI ESSER/EANS Director. The following are update checkpoints: July 2021, December 2021, June 2022, December 2022, and June 2023. In an email dated November 16, 2021, to Districts Authorized Representatives, instructions were detailed and links to each District Plan were provided.

Going forward and in recognition of staffing changes OPI grant managers would like to requests district clerks update their E-Grant Authorized Representative via the [E-Grant](#) link under Training/[E-Grant Security User Guide](#).

For further information please contact Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov.



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April 2022 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

Federal ESSER Data Collection Compliance

The Federal Data collection for ESSER spending from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021 must be submitted to the OPI through the [Data Collection Tool](#). This data reporting is a requirement of ESSER grant funding. The Data Collection required a significant amount of work. We appreciate the work you did and the patience in working through technical challenges. If you have yet to complete all six reporting sections, for each of your schools, feel free to contact Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director for assistance.

ESSER Summer School application is anticipated to be available under the ESSER link on the OPI website in mid-April. The application will be similar to the after-school program application. Our goal is to make award announcements by the first week in May. After school and summer school ESSER grants will have data collection requirement and OPI is working to pull as much data from applications as possible to avoid duplication of work effort.

Going forward and in recognition of staffing changes OPI grant managers would like to request district clerks update their egrant Authorized Representative via the [egrant](#) link under Training/[E Grant Security User Guide](#).

For further information or if you have questions, please contact Wendi Fawns, ESSER/EANS Director at wendi.fawns@mt.gov.

February 25, 2022 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

Federal ESSER Data Collection Due Date Approaching

The Federal Data collection for ESSER spending from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021 must be submitted to the OPI through the [Data Collection Tool](#) by March 18, 2022. The OPI has provided a number of supports to help you complete the required Federal Data Collection:

Divided the cumbersome Federal Data Reporting Form into six user friendly data collection modules.

Provided in depth webinar walk-throughs of each of the data collection modules.

You can find the webinar recordings and slide decks by clicking [here](#) and scrolling down to the Data Collection Resources.

Continue to provide direct support from the ESSER Team and the Data Operations Team through the ESSER-OPI@mt.gov email account.



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OPI Welcomes New ESSER/EANS State Director

Wendi Fawn is the new ESSER/EANS Director in School Finance. Wendi's grandmothers were elementary teachers and her parents' college professors who shaped Wendi's passion for learning anywhere, anytime and in varied formats. Wendi has taught dyslexic readers in elementary public/nonpublic school classrooms and provided college/career program support to public/nonpublic schools and families across Montana. Wendi loves to travel and has been to every state except Alaska and lived in India. She attended school in Vermont and remembers fondly her 4th grade field trips to tap maple trees for making syrup. Her career in social work, information technology, and education have centered around helping customers identify goals and gain the resources necessary to succeed. Her BA and MA degrees demonstrate the benefits in coordinating education to gain the most in an ever-changing world. She is a strong student advocate, member of Rotary and P.E.O. International, and mother of a Montana high school teacher and Arizona college advisor.



Wendi can be reached at Wendi.Fawns@mt.gov or (406) 437-8595



Kirksey Takes on New Role at OPI

Jeff Kirksey, the ESSER Program Manager, has become the OPI's new Workforce and Talent Senior Manager. In this role Jeff is charged with leading the agency's human resource plans, policies, and development. Jeff brings 20 years of operations and personnel management experience from postsecondary education to his new role. Jeff shared, "It has been a wonderful privilege to return home to Montana and serve the educators and students of our great state through the ESSER program. I look forward to continued partnership and communication as we strengthen the OPI Team to better serve our children and our colleagues in the field."

Jeff will continue to support the ESSER program as Director Fawns transitions into her new role and a new ESSER Program Manager is hired.

Questions? Contact:

[Wendi Fawns](mailto:Wendi.Fawns@mt.gov), ESSER EANS Director, (406) 437-8595

[Jeff Kirksey](mailto:Jeff.Kirksey@mt.gov), (406) 444-0783

February 2022 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

Enrollment Increases and ESSER Funding:

The 2021 Legislature through HB 630 amended statute to suspend the funding of enrollment increases through the Anticipated Enrollment increase (20-9-314, MCA) and Unanticipated Enrollment Increase (20-9-166, MCA) processes. However, the legislature provided for additional payments to schools for enrollment increases during FY2022 & FY2023. Guidance and finalized payment amounts are now available at [COVID 19 ESSER HB630 Additional Payment](#).

ESSER Federal Data Collection



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL RB 2022

The United State Department of Education is requiring a robust data collection to monitor usage of ESSER dollars and ESSER funded school programming. The federal government is collecting this data to measure funding effectiveness in meeting challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. On Monday, December 13th Authorized Representatives were emailed links to the Federal Data Collection Tool. The collection deadline has been extended to March 18, 2022. This is a significant data collection and the OPI is here to help districts through the process. We hosted working session webinars throughout January to help you complete the data collection process. The webinars were recorded and posted the OPI ESSER website under the guidance tab, sub tab ESSER District Resources. We will offer office hours in February to address frequently asked questions. Be watching the ESSER Bulletin for further data collection details and supports.

ESSER I

There are just *8 months left to obligate and spend* down your ESSER I allocation. ESSER I funds must be obligated by September 30, 2022 and liquidated by November 10, 2022. If you do not plan to use all of the ESSER I funds, please contact Jeff Kirksey so those funds can be reallocated within the state. All funds not liquidated by November 10, 2022, will be returned to the Federal Government.

ESSER Questions?

If you have questions about your ESSER funds and how to use them in accordance with federal regulations reach out to the ESSER Program Manager, Jeff Kirksey at ESSER-OPI@mt.gov or (406) 444-0783. We are frequently adding content to the ESSER website at: <https://opi.mt.gov/COVID-19-Information/ESSER>

January 2022 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

ESSER I

There are just *9 months left of obligate and spend* down your ESSER I allocation. ESSER I funds must be obligated by September 30, 2022 and liquidated by November 10, 2022. If you do not plan to use all of the ESSER I funds, please contact Jeff Kirksey so those funds can be reallocated within the state. All funds not liquidated by November 10, 2022, will be returned to the Federal Government.

ESSER Federal Data Collection

On Monday, December 13th Authorized Representatives were emailed links to the Federal Data Collection Tool. The collection deadline is Monday **January 31, 2022**. This is a significant data collection and the OPI is here to help districts through the process. We will be hosting working session webinars every Wednesday in January to help you complete the data collection process as well as posting helpful guidance on the OPI ESSER website and through the ESSER Bulletin. Here is the information on the webinars for your planning purposes. Webinars will be recorded and posted the OPI ESSER website.

January 5, 2022, 10:00 AM – Data Collection Webinar (Orientation and Expenditure Details)

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/89282184011?pwd=d3RvNzdGZHIZY01LN1BxdVJXVWtHQ09>

Passcode: 954267

Or Telephone

+1 213 338 8477 or +1 206 337 9723 or +1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 892 8218 4011

Passcode: 954267



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL RB 2022

January 12, 2022, 1:00 PM – Data Collection Webinar (Equitable Support & Safe Reopening)

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/89573004446?pwd=YzlkdnNgZG1GaDhVMnJzSmZlb2VwQT09>

Passcode: 633226

Or Telephone:

+1 206 337 9723 or +1 213 338 8477 or +1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 895 7300 4446

Passcode: 633226

January 19, 2022, 10:00 AM – Data Collection Webinar (20% Lost Instructional Time, Home Internet, & Hiring and Retention)

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/81131100901?pwd=Ym1jSVJNVkx1YTFOdmF6YWFnMUF6dz09>

Passcode: 728070

Or Telephone:

+1 213 338 8477 or +1 206 337 9723 or +1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 811 3110 0901

Passcode: 728070

January 26, 2022, 1:00 PM – Data Collection Webinar (Review and Frequently Asked Questions)

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/85714216023?pwd=ZDltU0M3cVRtKzhHaXgrcGxhSzVMdz09>

Passcode: 823437

Or Telephone:

+1 213 338 8477 or +1 206 337 9723 or +1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 857 1421 6023

Passcode: 823437

ESSER Questions? – If you have questions about your ESSER funds and how to use them in accordance with federal regulations reach out to the ESSER Program Manager, Jeff Kirksey at jeffrey.kirksey@mt.gov or (406) 444-0783. We are frequently adding content to the ESSER website at: <https://opi.mt.gov/COVID-19-Information/ESSER>

Questions? Contact:

[Jeff Kirksey](#), ESSER Program Manager, 406-444-0783



File name: an ESSER Compass ALL RB 2022