February 2024 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

ESSER III Funding Requests (expenditures, cash requests, request for reimbursements):
In an effort to ensure compliant close out of ESSER III, schools will NOT be able to submit expenditures embedded in their Final Expenditure Reports (FER). The OPI ESSER Team is also recommending that cash requests be submitted at least bi-monthly to ensure funds are fully obligated and expended by the ESSER III deadline of September 30, 2024.   Funds must be requested via Cash Requests before FERs get submitted.
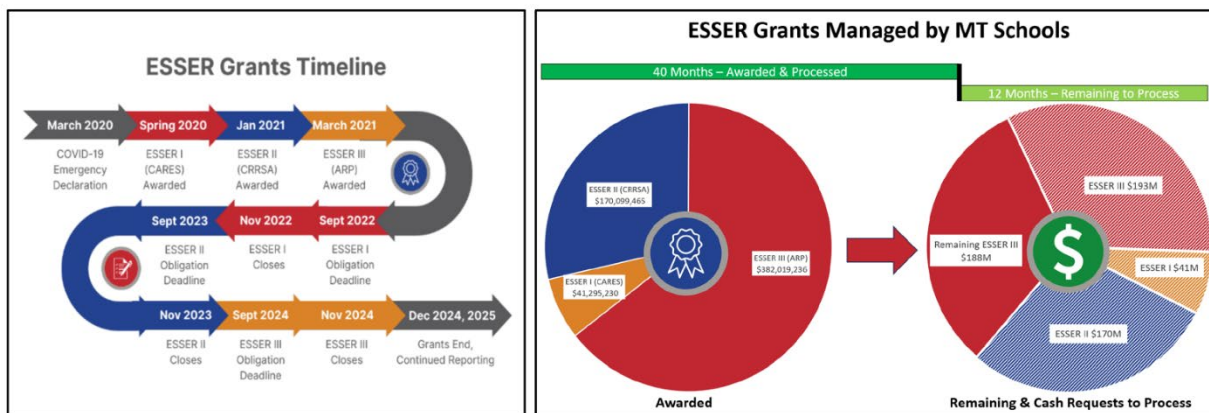
ESSER **System of Support** includes 6 days/week via Zoom, phone, email, text, and in person.
If your district has additional funding needs, please let the ESSER Team know so we can work toward a solution.

ESSER Compliances:
Please expect delays in processing ESSER III amendments and cash requests if the below compliances are not completed.
- Final Expenditure Reports for all ESSER II past due November 10th, 2023
- Self-Assessment past due November 30th, 2023
- ARP Plan and Safe Return Plan past due June 2023
- ESSER II and III budget pages updating/detailing salaries (FTE and grade level) and large projects/scopes/pre-approval through Amendment process
- Capital Expenditure AND/OR Large Project/Item purchase Scopes
- Annual program/data reporting (data collection) April 2024. Process will be similar to Year 3 (FY2022) involving an Excel data collection file largely populated through OPI data pulls. Districts will need to retrieve the file and update missing data by inputting into bright blue cells. OPI will have a two-week period of walkthrough sessions.
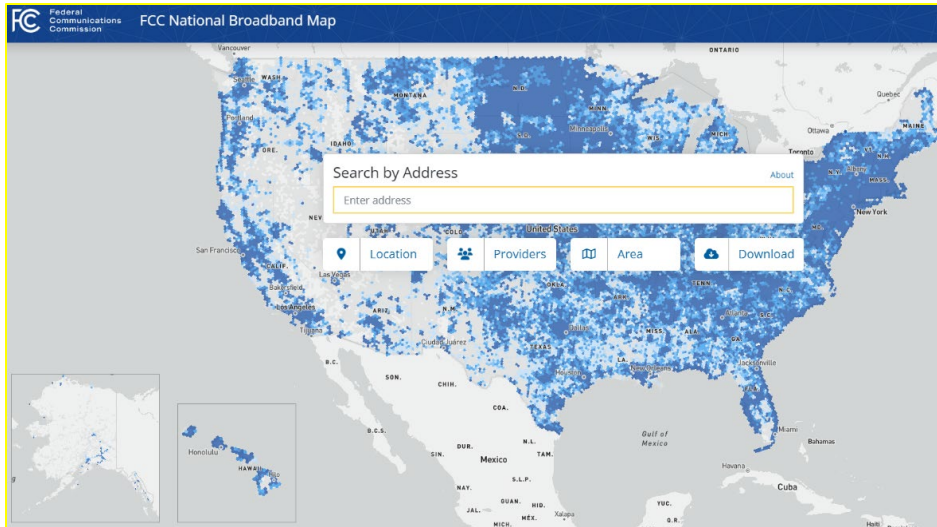
Accountability

District Monthly Status Reports (allocated and expended) can be viewed on the OPI ESSER webpage.

Broadband Project Across Montana: Click on the map for details on Montana Broadband availability in your area

- OPI Broadband Resources: https://opi.mt.gov/COVID-19-Information/ESSER/Broadband
- The States Digital Opportunity Plan is open for public comment by sending to Connectmt@mt.gov
- For more information on the Broadband project contact Allison Agostino (406-202-7685) for details.

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**.

The process to request a liquidation extension for CARES, CRRSA, has been extended to ARP. You can access the Department's explanatory letter to states, updated FAQs, and ARP ESSER and EANS liquidation extension request template.

ESSER ELO (Extended/Expanded Learning Opportunity) Grant:
- ESSER ELO (Extended/Expanded Learning Opportunity) Grant funding available for the 2023-24 School Year (Afterschool) and Summer 2024 focuses on **Math and/or Reading Literacy**.
- Please contact Allison Agostino at allison.agostino@mt.gov or visit the ELO Website page.

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 and see Amendment and Cash Request guidance.

Many **resources** are available on the OPI ESSER webpage including but not limited to:
- Department of Education ESSER FAQs
- All previous Compass newsletters (2021-22) (2023)

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) 437-4795
Allison Agostino, Project Communication Specialist and Broadband at allison.agostino@mt.gov (406) 202-7685

Montana
Office of Public Instruction
opi.mt.gov Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent

January 2024 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)

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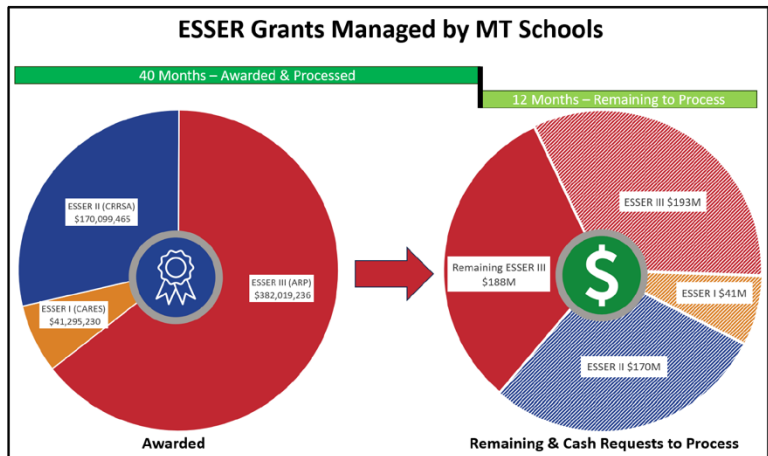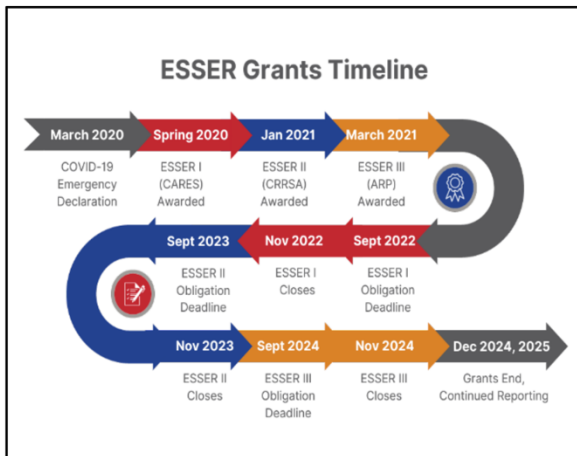
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ESSER Compliances:
Please expect delays in processing ESSER III amendments and cash requests if the below compliances are not completed.
- Final Expenditure Reports for all budgets in ESSER II
- Self-Assessment due by November 30th, 2023 (different than annual data collection).
- ARP Plan and Safe Return Plan revised/updated June 2023 (last revision needed)
- ESSER budget pages updated in an Amendment with details on salaries and Scope
- Capital Expenditure AND/OR Large Project/Item purchase Scopes
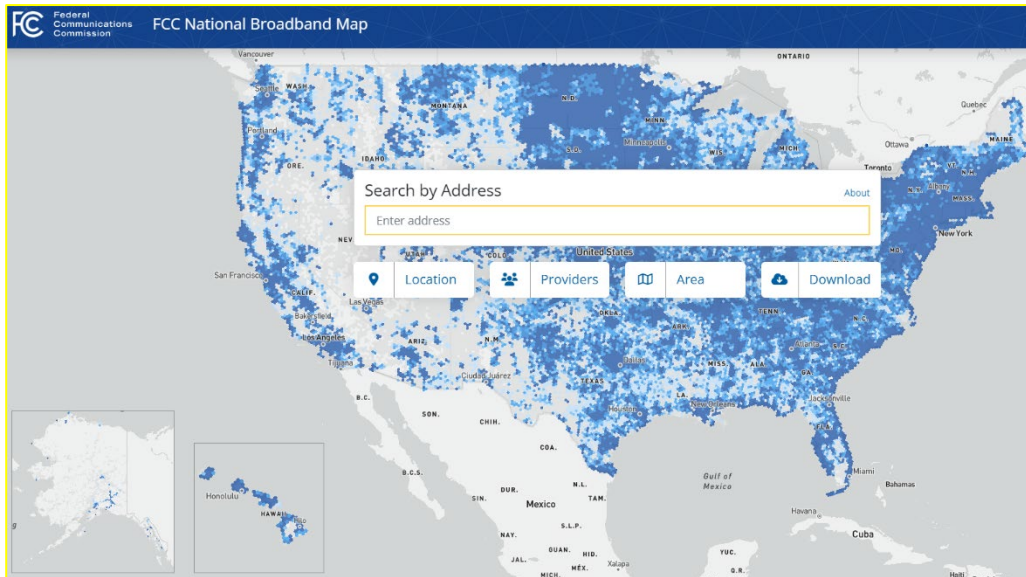- Annual program/data reporting - data collection (TBA expected in spring)

Accountability

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Notices: updated technical FAQs for liquidation extensions and CRRSA liquidation extension request template.

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