



ESSER Bulletin

March 2024 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)



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 III Funding Requests (expenditures, cash requests, request for reimbursements):

- Schools will NOT be able to submit expenditures embedded in **Final Expenditure Reports (FER)**. All expenditures must be requested via Cash Requests before FERs get submitted.
- The OPI ESSER Team recommends cash requests be submitted at least bi-monthly.
- Schools can cross-reference E-Grants FERs with their onsite Accounting (Black Mountain, Foxey Lady, etc.)

ESSER III 20% Set-Aside - No Schools can return Lost Instructional Time (LIT) funds

- Schools are required to spend 20% of ESSER III on Lost Instructional Time (LIT).
- Please spend the **Lost Instructional Time** first. FERS will NOT be approved with remaining LIT funds.

ESSER Compliances:

Please expect delays in processing ESSER III amendments and cash requests if the below compliances are not completed.

- ESSER II FER 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 detailing salaries (FTE and grade level) and large projects/purchases approved through scope process (contact wendi.fawns@mt.gov (406) 437-8595 or rebecca.brown@mt.gov (406) 437-4795)
- Annual Data Collection will be April 1 – 15th, 2024. Process will be similar to last year, involve entering data into excel spreadsheet bright blue cells, and OPI will have a two-week period of walkthrough sessions to assist.
- The liquidation extension for CARES, CRRSA, has been extended to ARP (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](#).

Broadband Project Across Montana:

- OPI Broadband Resources: <https://opi.mt.gov/COVID-19-Information/ESSER/Broadband>



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- 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.

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](#)) ([2024](#))

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

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.

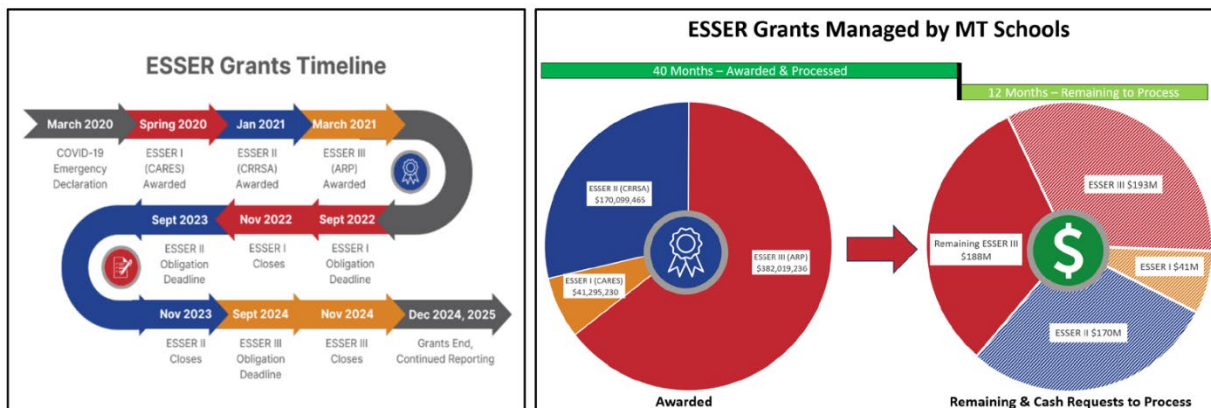
If your district has additional funding needs, please let the ESSER Team know so we can work toward a solution.

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.

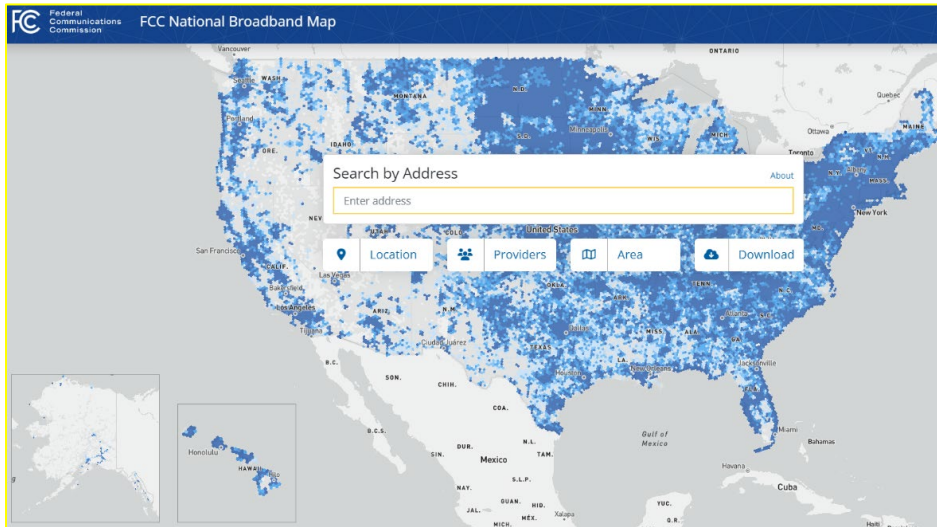
Accountability



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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](#).

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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.

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January 2024 ESSER Compass Update

ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief)



ESSER III Funding Requests (expenditures, cash requests, request for reimbursements):

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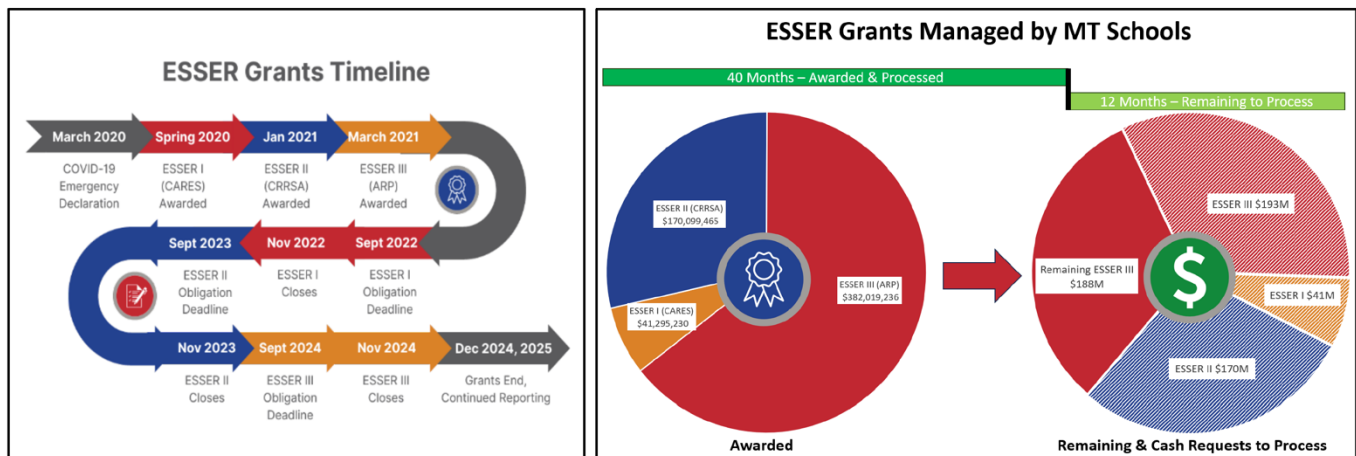
ESSER **System of Support** includes 6 days/week via Zoom, phone, email, text, and in person.

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)

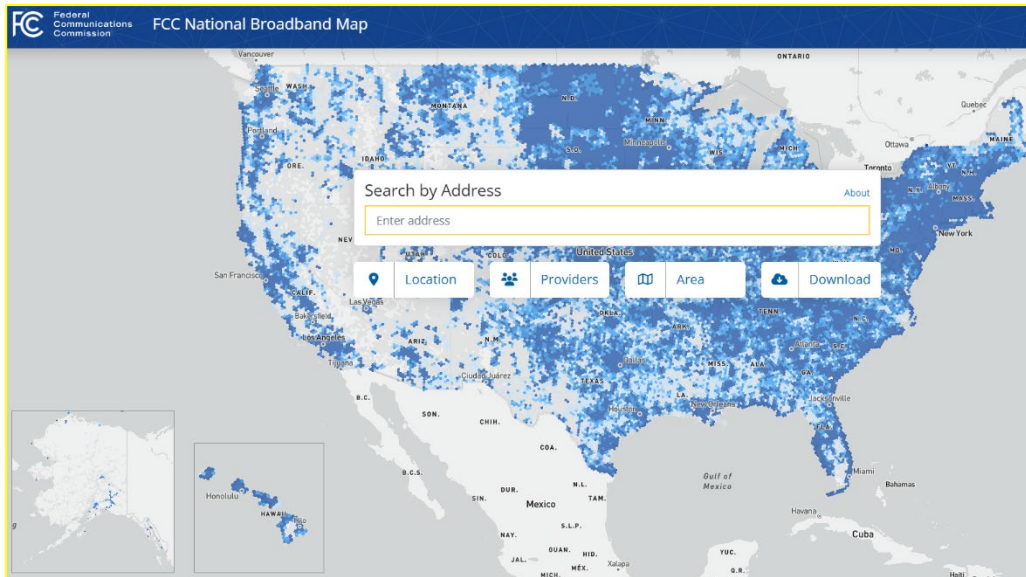
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Broadband Project Across Montana: Click on the map for details on Montana Broadband availability in your area



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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**.

Notices: [updated technical FAQs for liquidation extensions](#) and CRRSA [liquidation extension request template](#).

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