CARES Act Funds in Education

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COVID-19 ECONOMIC RELIEF

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, passed on March 27th, provides over $2 trillion in federal economic relief to protect the American people from the public health and economic impacts of COVID-19. The CARES Act provides assistance for American workers, families, and small businesses, and preserves jobs for American industries.

CARES Funding coming to Minnesota for Education:

- Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)
- Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER)
- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER)
- Child Nutrition Grants to States
- Library Grants to States
- Head Start and Early Head Start
Section 5001 of the CARES Act established the $150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF), providing payments to State, Local, and Tribal governments navigating the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. The CARES Act sets criteria that expenses must meet to be eligible for CRF funding.

- MN received 2.2 billion
- State created cross-agency workgroups to access statewide needs and propose funding for various needs
Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF)

The CARES Act specifies that payments can be made from the CRF for:

- Expenditures must be a necessary result of the COVID-19 public health emergency
- Costs must not be accounted for in the current school year budget
- Funds must be expended by December 30, 2020

The CRF cannot be used to fill behind lost revenues or pay for expenditures that will be reimbursed under another federal program.
Goals for a Safe Return to School

1. Prioritize the safety of students and staff
2. Prioritize in-person learning, especially for younger learners and those with most need
3. Recognize differences in potential spread among different ages
4. Support planning, while permitting flexibility for districts
5. Take into account disease prevalence at a local level
Health Requirements & Best Practices

• Social distancing of 6 feet (as much space as possible for all in-person, **required** in hybrid model)

• Masking policy (required)

• Cohosting (recommended to the extent feasible)

• PPE for direct support student services (required)

• Build routines of hygiene education & practices (required)

• Ventilation system improvements

• Daily cleaning and frequent cleaning of high touch surfaces throughout the day (required)

• Building level COVID-19 program coordinator (required), with optional student counterpart

• Limiting nonessential visitors/volunteers/external groups (required)

• Discontinue large gatherings/activities that do not allow for social distancing (required)

• Daily health monitoring & adherence to exclusion policy (required)
Total CRF Funding Requested for Schools

**Total Request - $256 Million**

- Addressing Operating Costs and Supporting Student, Family, and Educator Needs - $244.8 Million
- Supplies for Schools; Flexibility for Critical Care Supplies - $5.2 Million
- Educator and School Staff Saliva Testing - $6 Million
Face Coverings for Every Student, Educator, and School Staff

• All students, staff, and others present in school buildings and districts offices or riding on school transportation vehicles are required to wear face coverings.

• Cross agency effort to procure the following supplies to all Minnesota school districts and charter schools:
  • Every K-12 student will receive one cloth face mask
  • Every educator and school staff will receive one cloth face mask
  • Every school will receive three disposable face masks per student
  • Every school will receive face shields for every licensed teacher and 50% of non-licensed staff
Testing Educators and School Staff

• Home test available for every educator and school staff this fall at no cost

• MDH Guidance prioritizing testing for educators and school staff by health providers exposed to COVID-19

• Coordination and support for events due to any school exposure, including state implementation of larger events
$244.8 million in additional funding from Coronavirus Relief Funds

- Operational Costs
- Supporting Student, Family, and Educator Needs
- Administration

* Funds are available from July 1\textsuperscript{st} through December 30\textsuperscript{th}. 
Operational costs associated with the learning model chosen –regardless of in-person, hybrid or distance learning including but not limited to:

- Daily cleaning supplies and disinfectant sprayers.
- Screening supplies including no-touch thermometers.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) including face coverings.
- Increased costs for transporting students at limited capacity.
Boost student, family, educator support, prioritizing equity. Funds can be used for (not limited to):

- Digital navigators: training for educators, students, or families on use of technology/digital literacy.
- Technology devices and internet access.
- Tutors or mentors to address learning loss: supporting whole school, small group, and individual needs.
- Translation services.
- School-age care for essential workers.
- Professional development focused on: Academic Response to Intervention (RtI); Social Emotional Learning; competency-based learning; diversity, equity, and inclusion; anti-bias practices.
Digital Navigators are people who support individuals and families to connect to an adequate, affordable, sustainable Internet service so that all learners have access to education opportunities and resources by:

- Identifying barriers and providing ongoing support in the specific context of local conditions,
- Being part of a network that receives specific training and developmental support,
- Helping families communicate in their first language with service providers, schools and additional community services,
- Supporting K-12 learning, including digital literacy and online safety
MDE Administrative costs include $300,000 for:

• Staff time to set up, review, monitor, and report on the use of these funds

• Support the SERVS application, which is used by the schools to draw and manage their funds.

• Fund staff to assist school districts with digital navigator support
Funds will be allocated to the schools based on the following:

1. 60% for operational cost – 100% based on Average Daily Membership (ADM)

2. 40% for supporting student, family, and educator needs
   - 40% based on ADM
   - 60% based on number of historically underserved students served by each school or school district

* Funds may be spent in any amounts in either of the two categories.
School Application Process - Timeline

1. Funds are available July 1st through December 30th.
   • MDE will be proactive in monitoring balances so as to ensure we spend all funds available to us.
2. CRF proposal was submitted to the LAC on August 4th, approved on August 17th.
3. SERVS application loaded with CRF allocations – est. August 21st.
4. Applications must be submitted by end of day October 1st.
   • Signed by superintendent and have no outstanding issues to be resolved.
   • funds not obligated through an application will be swept for re-allocation on October 2nd.
5. November 13th all schools who have not drawn at least 75% of their funds will be contacted and asked to provide an updated estimate of how much they think they can realistically spend by December 30th.
   • Funds will be re-allocated based on historically underserved populations served.
6. Reporting will need to be due October, 2020 and January, 2021.
1. Application will be similar to the ESSER/GEER application and process.

2. Application will include:
   • LEA identification and contact information.
   • Plan creation narrative.
   • Check boxes for broad categories of intended uses.
   • Statement of Assurances
   • DUNS number

3. Submit separate budget spreadsheet.

4. Application will not require a nonpublic participation.
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Many of the identified uses for this new CRF money are also eligible uses for the ESSER money that has already been allocated. Wherever possible, use your CRF funds first.
Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (G.E.E.R)

**Purpose:** Awarded to Governors for the purpose of providing LEAs, institutions of higher education (IHEs), and other education related entities with emergency assistance as a result of COVID-19.

**Minnesota’s State Allocation:** $43,427,249.

- MDE - $38,127,249
  - Technology
  - Summer School Programming
  - $5 million in competitive grants for other non-profit educational entities
- OHE - $5,300,000
Elementary and Secondary School Education Relief (ESSER)

Minnesota’s State Allocation: $140,137,253

**Purpose:** To provide local educational agencies (LEAs), including charter schools that are LEAs, with emergency relief funds to address the impact that Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the nation.

To be allocated in the following manner:

1. **Formula (90%) - $126,123,528**
   - Allocated to schools based on FY20 Title 1a allocations
   - Some schools did not qualify for Title 1a money in FY20 and won’t receive any of this funding
   - Tribal schools receive their ESSER allocation through the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)
   - Priority uses: Technology, Summer school programming, and mental health supports in schools

2. **Grants (9.5%) - $13,313,039**
   - To be used for emergency needs as determined by the SEA to address issues responding to COVID-19. These emergency needs may be addressed through the use of grants or contracts.
   - Some funds will be awarded to schools that did not qualify for Title 1a money in FY20
   - Targeted uses: Technology, Summer school programming, and mental health supports in schools

3. **Administration (up to .5%) - $700,686**
   - For administration costs
The Application Process

SERVS

Only uploads are needed when first applying. Complete separately for each program. After approval of uploads, create the line-item budget for each program’s expenses. Once the budget is approved, draw funds.

Narrative Document (Word)  
Budget Worksheet (Excel)  
Nonpublic Participation Summary (if applicable, Word)
Progress So Far

• Roughly 20% of expected applications have been received so far.
• The vast majority have been approved.
• Some have been asked to resubmit or add information.
• A small number are still being reviewed and will receive communication shortly.
• Several cannot be reviewed until they are signed in SERVS by their superintendent.
• Approximately 160 districts will need to make a decision about how to calculate the share of funds for nonpublic schools in their districts.

• The U.S. Department of Education has defined three choices:
  • Option 1: Use the share calculated for Title I, Part A in 2019-20.
  • Option 2: Divide the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals in participating nonpublics by the sum of such students in Title I schools and participating nonpublics.
  • Option 3: Divide the total number of students in participating nonpublics by the sum of students in the district and in participating nonpublics.

• Those that choose Option 1 or Option 2 can only spend their funds in Title I schools and must abide by supplement-not-supplant.
Thank you!

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