

Funding Opportunity

Applications Due: **Friday, September 30, 2022, at 11:59pm**

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| ESSER Rural Program Development Grant  Pursuant to the American Rescue Plan of 2021 |

**Program Questions:**

Scott D. Jones

Chief Strategic Recovery Officer

(720) 951-1924 | [Jones\_S@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Jones_S@cde.state.co.us)

**Budget/Fiscal Questions:**

Allisha Cody, Grants Fiscal Analyst

303-919-2413 |[cody\_a@cde.state.co.us](mailto:cody_a@cde.state.co.us)

**Application Process Questions:**

Kim Burnham, Competitive Grants and Awards Supervisor

(303) 866-6916 | [Burnham\_K@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Burnham_K@cde.state.co.us)

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**ESSER Rural Program Development Grant**

**Applications Due: Friday, September 30, 2022, at 11:59pm**

# Introduction

Significant interruptions to in-person learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic have led to potentially devastating and long-lasting negative impacts on student achievement, impacting every part of Colorado society. These negative impacts on student achievement are not equal; students furthest from privilege are at risk of the most opportunity loss. Research suggests that while all students may fall behind as much as seven months because of interruptions to in-person learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students who are identified as most in need may fall behind as much as ten months, exacerbating already entrenched inequities. Responding to learning opportunity loss and the widening of opportunity gaps could be the greatest challenge our state faces over the next few years, and the state has an urgent and immediate need to provide additional support to ensure students are well prepared for the future.

A critical component of ensuring the academic success of Colorado’s students is strengthening students’ engagement in their learning. At the same time, the pandemic has resulted in students feeling disengaged and disconnected from their schools and communities. A wide variety of opportunities and programs are available for supporting districts across the state of Colorado in identifying and/or building programs to address this need. However, for many rural Colorado districts, limited staffing capacity minimizes their ability to identify and/or build such programs resulting in those opportunities remaining unleveraged.

As such, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is creating a grant program that will provide rural districts additional funding capacity to support in the development of programs that strengthen student engagement. Through this ESSER Rural Program Development Grant, rural districts submitting the following brief application will receive funding to support the development of a wide range of programs to support re-engaging and strengthening student engagement–particularly for those students most impacted by the pandemic. This program will be funded under the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) state reserve.

# Purpose and Program Activities

This program exists to provide grants to rural districts to plan and develop programs designed to expand learning opportunities so as to strengthen student engagement in learning–both during the traditional school day and year and beyond. A rural district (as defined below in “[Eligible Applicants and Priority Criteria](#_heading=h.3j2qqm3)”) may apply for a grant.

A district awarded a grant shall use the grant money to plan and **develop** a program to renew engagement for students who have become disconnected during the pandemic and strengthen engagement for other students impacted by the pandemic. Potential programs to be developed include, but are not limited to:

* Before and after school programs;
* Summer school programs;
* Programs that focus on strengthening school climate;
* Career-connected learning, student pathways, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities; and
* Other academic enrichment programs.

# Eligible Applicants and Priority Criteria

Only [districts identified as rural](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeedserv/cderuraldesignation2021-2022) by CDE or a Colorado BOCES are eligible to submit an application. A BOCES is an eligible applicant so long as only students enrolled in rural or small rural districts are served by these funds.

# Available Funds

Every district identified as rural based on the 2021 October Student count is eligible to receive a grant of $3,000.

# Allowable Use of Funds

Funds must be expended in a way that supports the planning and development of programs designed to strengthen student engagement–particularly for those most impacted by the pandemic. Please see “[Purpose and Program Activities](#_heading=h.z337ya)” for allowable program categories. All expenses must align with the allowable uses as defined through [ARP ESSER III](https://www.cde.state.co.us/caresact/esser3) and all expenditures must be allocable, allowable, and reasonable as defined in [2 CFR 200](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200). These funds are specific to this program, the ESSER Rural Program Development Grant, and uses of funds for any other purpose are not allowed.

Allowable expenses include, but are not limited to:

* Salary and benefits for staff dedicated to this purpose;
* Contracts for services rendered in support of program development; and
* Supplies necessary for the development of programs.

If you have any question regarding allowable expenses, please reach out to Allisha Cody (Cody\_A@cde.state.co.us) for confirmation.

# Duration of Grant

Funds awarded through this program must be expended no later than June 30, 2023.

# Evaluation and Reporting

Each grantee receiving funding through the ESSER Rural Program Development Grant is required to report, at a minimum, the following information to the Department on or before June 30, 2023:

* A description of the uses of funds including the program(s) developed as a result of the funding; and
* The number of staff and positions recruited, reassigned, or hired to support the program.

LEPs receiving funding will also be required to submit an Annual Financial Report. Details and format for this report will be provided upon award and as part of the budget workbook and/or grant award letter (GAL).

# Data Privacy

CDE takes seriously its obligation to protect the privacy of student and educator Personally Identifiable Information (PII) collected, used, shared, and stored. PII will not be collected through the ESSER Rural Program Development Grant. All program evaluation including educator, staff, and any student data will be collected in the aggregate and will be used, shared, and stored in compliance with CDE’s privacy and security policies and procedures.

**Note**: Documents submitted to CDE must not contain any personally identifiable student or educator information including names, identification numbers, or anything that could identify an individual. All data should be referenced/included in the aggregate and the aggregate counts should be redacted to remove small numbers under n=16 for students or n=5 for educators.

# Review Process and Timeline

Applications will be reviewed by CDE staff on a rolling basis to ensure they contain all required components. Applicants will be notified within two weeks of submission as to the status of their award**.**

# Submission Process and Deadline

Applications must be completed (including all elements outlined below) and submitted through the [**online application form**](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/5e6b500979d745d3b0f09225440e3ed2) on the CDE Website by **Friday, September 30, 2022, at 11:59pm.** The Excel Budget Workbook and Program Assurances Form must also be uploaded to the Smartsheet form at the time of submission.

Application resources and required documents to include in the submission are available on [**CDE’s Program webpage**](http://www.cde.state.co.us/caresact/esser-ruralprogramdevelopment). Incomplete or late applications will not be considered. Applicants should receive an automated confirmation email from the online system upon submission. If you do not, please email [CompetitiveGrants@cde.state.co.us](mailto:CompetitiveGrants@cde.state.co.us).

# Required Elements

The ESSER Rural Program Development Grant [**online application form**](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/5e6b500979d745d3b0f09225440e3ed2) includes the following elements, all of which must be completed.

**Part I: Applicant Information**

**Part II: Program Assurances Form**

Upload the Program Assurances Form (PDF or Word file) within the [**online application form**](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/5e6b500979d745d3b0f09225440e3ed2). Funding will not be awarded until all signatures are in place. Applications may be submitted without signatures; however, please attempt to obtain all signatures before submitting the application.

**Part III: Budget Workbook**

**Budget** **Workbook** (can be downloaded from [**CDE’s Program webpage**](http://www.cde.state.co.us/caresact/esser-ruralprogramdevelopment))

Upload the completedBudget Workbook (Excel) within the online application.

**ESSER Rural Program Development Grant**

**Applications Due: Friday, September 30, 2022, at 11:59pm**

**\*\*Please provide the following within the** [**online application form**](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/5e6b500979d745d3b0f09225440e3ed2) **\*\***

The application form does not save works in progress, so applicants may find it useful to complete the application in the tables below and paste the responses into the online application.

# Part I: Applicant Information

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Lead Local Education Provider (LEP)/BOCES Information** | | | | | | | | |
| **LEP/BOCES Name:** | |  | | | | | **LEP/BOCES Code:** |  |
| **DUNS/Unique Sam.gov Identifier:** | | | |  | | | | |
| **DUNS Expiration Date:** | | |  | | | | | |
| **Mailing Address:** | |  | | | | | | |
| **Region**  [choose the one check box below that best indicates the region of Colorado this program will directly impact] | | | | | | | | |
| ☐ Metro ☐ Pikes Peak ☐ North Central ☐ Northwest  ☐ West Central ☐ Southwest ☐ Southeast ☐ Northeast | | | | | | | | |
| **Authorized Representative Information** | | | | | | | | |
| **Name:** |  | | | | **Title:** |  | | |
| **Telephone:** |  | | | | **E-mail:** |  | | |
| **Program Contact Information** | | | | | | | | |
| **Name:** |  | | | | **Title:** |  | | |
| **Telephone:** |  | | | | **E-mail:** |  | | |
| **Fiscal Manager Information** | | | | | | | | |
| **Name:** |  | | | | | | | |
| **Telephone:** |  | | | | **E-mail:** |  | | |
| **Category of Use**  [choose the one check box that best indicates the program development category for which you intend to use these funds] | | | | | | | | |
| ☐ Before/Afterschool Program ☐ Summer School Program ☐ Other Academic Enrichment Program  ☐ School Climate Program ☐ Career-Connected Learning ☐ Other Student Engagement Program | | | | | | | | |
| **Brief Description of the Intended Use of Funds**  (no more than 100 words) | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | |

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# Part II: Program Assurances Form

The appropriate Authorized Representatives must sign below to indicate their approval of the contents of the application **ESSER Rural Program Development Grant**, and the receipt of program funds.

On \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date), the Superintendent/President of School Board/Board President of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (district) hereby agrees to the following assurances:

1. The grantee will ensure that all purchases and other expenses under this grant will be administered in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and requirements delineated in this application.
2. The grantee will ensure that the funds awarded for this program will only be used to meet the goals of the ESSER Rural Program Development Grant, namely to develop programs for students in rural districts that will strengthen student engagement in learning. This can include, but is not limited to, developing: 1) before and after school programs; 2) summer school programs; 3) programs focused on strengthening school climate; 4) programs focused on career-connected learning, student pathways, or Career and Technical Education (CTE), and other academically enriching programs.
3. The grantee will ensure that the ARP - ESSER III funds will only be used for activities allowable under section 2001(d)(2)(e) of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.
4. The grantee will ensure that the ARP - ESSER III funds will not be used for 1) subsidizing or offsetting executive salaries and benefits of individuals who are not employees of the SEA or LEAs or 2) expenditures related to state or local teacher or faculty unions or associations.
5. The grantee will ensure that ARP - ESSER III funds will be used for purposes that are reasonable, necessary, and allocable under the ARP Act.
6. The grantee will, to the greatest extent practicable, continue to compensate its employees and contractors during the period of any disruptions or closures related to COVID-19 in compliance with section 2001(d)(2)(e) of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. In addition, each entity that accepts funds will continue to pay employees and contractors to the greatest extent practicable based on the unique financial circumstances of the entity. Similarly to the CARES Act and CRRSA, ARP funds generally will not be used for bonuses, merit pay, or similar expenditures, unless related to disruptions or closures resulting from COVID-19.
7. The grantee will cooperate with any examination of records with respect to such funds by making records available for inspection, production, and examination, and authorized individuals available for interview and examination, upon the request of (i) the U.S. Department of Education and/or its Inspector General; or (ii) any other federal agency, commission, or department in the lawful exercise of its jurisdiction and authority.
8. The grantee will meet the requirements of section 442 and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA, 20 U.S.C. 1232(e)- & 1228(a)), meaning that during the entire duration of time that the entity is receiving funding under ARP - ESSER III, the LEA will, where applicable:
   * Ensure that it has taken steps to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its federally-assisted programs for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs;
   * Ensure that each program will be administered in accordance with applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications;
   * Ensure that control of funds and property acquired using ARP ESSER III program funds will be maintained and administered by the appropriate public agency;
   * Ensure that fiscal control and fund accounting procedures will be used to ensure proper disbursement of, and accounting for, federal funds;
   * Report to the state agency or board and to the Secretary as may be needed for the state agency or board and the Secretary to perform their duties under each program, and each grantee will maintain records (as required in Section 443 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)) and provide access to those records as the state board, state agency, or Secretary deems necessary to carry out their responsibilities;
   * Provide opportunities for the participation in, planning for, and operation of each program by teachers, parents, and other interested agencies, organizations, and individuals;
   * Ensure that applications, evaluations, plans, or reports related to each program will be made available to parents and the public;
   * The grantee has adopted effective procedures for acquiring and disseminating information and research regarding the programs and for adopting, where appropriate, promising educational practices to teachers and administrators participating in each program; and
   * Ensure that none of the funds expended under any applicable program will be used to acquire equipment if such acquisition results in a direct financial benefit to any organization representing the interests of the purchasing entity or its employees.
9. The grantee will annually provide the Colorado Department of Education the evaluation information required in the “[Evaluation and Reporting](#_heading=h.1ci93xb)” section of this application including the End-of-Year Report (**Attachment A**) of the Request for Applications.
10. The grantee ensures that it will work with and provide requested data to CDE for the ESSER Rural Program Development Grant within the time frames specified and containing such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.
11. The grantee ensures that it will participate in and comply with the CDE’s monitoring process and protocols.
12. The grantee will not discriminate against anyone regarding race, gender, national origin, color, disability, or age.
13. The grantee will be in compliance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) requirements in 2 CFR, including Subpart D—Post Federal Award Requirements (2 CFR §§200.300-345) and Subpart E—Cost Principles (2 CFR§§200.400-475).
14. The LEA will comply with the provisions of all applicable acts, regulations and assurances; the following provisions of Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 81, 82, 84, 97, 98, and 99; the OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Non procurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485; and the Uniform Guidance in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.
15. If any findings of misuse of these funds are discovered, project funds will be returned to CDE.
16. The grantee will maintain sole responsibility for the project even though subcontractors may be used to perform certain services.
17. The grantee ensures that it will, if applicable, comply with the maintenance of equity provisions in section 2004(c) of the ARP.
18. All organizations and staff associated with this technical assistance program shall comply with all state and federal laws relating to health, safety and anti-discrimination, including but not limited to Titles VI and VII of the federal "Civil Rights Act of 1964", pub. l. 88-352, as amended; the federal "Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990", 42 U.S.C. sec. 1201 et seq., as amended; Section 504 0f the federal "Rehabilitation Act of 1973", 29 U.S.C. sec. 794, as amended; and Title IX of the federal "Education Amendments of 1972", 20 U.S.C. secs. 1681 to 1688, as amended.

The Colorado Department of Education may terminate a grant award upon thirty days’ notice if it is deemed by CDE that the applicant is not fulfilling the requirements of the funded program as specified in the approved project application or if the program is generating less than satisfactory results.

Project modifications and changes in the approved budget must be requested in writing and be approved in writing by the CDE before modifications are made to the expenditures. Contact Allisha Cody ([cody\_a@cde.state.co.us](mailto:cody_a@cde.state.co.us) | 303-919-2413) and Scott D. Jones ([Jones\_S@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Jones_S@cde.state.co.us) | 720-951-1924) for any modifications.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Name of Organization Board President  (School Board, BOCES, Charter School) |  | Signature |  | Date |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Name of Organization Authorized Representative  (Superintendent, Charter School Institute, BOCES Executive Director) |  | Signature |  | Date |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Name of LEP Program Contact |  | Signature |  | Date |

**Note:** Upload the Program Assurances Form within the [**online application form**](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/5e6b500979d745d3b0f09225440e3ed2). Funding will not be awarded until all signatures are in place. Applications may be submitted without signatures; however, please attempt to obtain all signatures before submitting the application.

# Attachment A: Reporting Guidelines

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* A description of the uses of funds including the program(s) developed as a result of the funding; and
* The number of staff and positions recruited, reassigned, or hired to support the program.

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