




MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents
Business Managers

FROM: Dr. Michael Johnson, Commissioner 

DATE: April 22, 2020

SUBJECT: Guidance on CARES Act Funds

CARES Act: Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief Fund

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, signed into law on March 27, 2020, provides funding and flexibilities for States to respond to the COVID-19 emergency in K-12 schools. In addition to providing a variety of waivers for assessments, accountability, reporting and funding carryover, the CARES Act provides an economic stimulus to individuals, businesses, and schools.

The CARES Act provides education funding to state education agencies (SEA) and local education agencies (LEA) to support schools as they are dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic (*Cares Act Section 18003(c)*). Funding has not yet been distributed to SEAs, but the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) is proactively creating a streamlined process for distributing the CARES Act stimulus funding to districts.

Funding will be distributed to districts according to Alaska's Title I-A allocation formula. Please note that this funding is not Title I-A funding; however, the Title I-A funding formula is the mechanism used to determine district funding levels. Estimated allocations for districts are attached and can be found on DEED's COVID-19 [website](#). If a district does not receive Title I-A funding, it will not be eligible to receive a CARES Act allocation based on the Title I-A formula from DEED.

As soon as DEED is notified of the final allocation, calculations will be finalized. Districts will then have a reasonable amount of time to apply for CARES Act funds using DEED's [Grant Management System \(GMS\)](#). It is DEED's intention that the application process be as

streamlined as possible. While the CARES Act funding is not subject to the Title I-A Carryover Limitation, funding does expire September 30, 2021. As additional information from the U.S. Department of Education (US ED) becomes available, it will be made available to districts.

Funding for the CARES Act is very flexible. Under the law, funds may be used for any activity authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Act, or McKinney-Vento Homeless Act, in addition to other activities to help with the response to COVID-19, including preparedness and response efforts, sanitation, professional development, distance learning, and other activities. As with all federal funds, 2 CFR Part 200 applies.

Title I-A ranking and serving as well as school and Title I-A student eligibility provisions do not apply to CARES Act funding. Additionally, the restriction on carryover limits outlined in the funding waiver for Title I-A does not apply to CARES Act funds. There is a definite end date for the expenditures.

A waiver to remove the maintenance of effort will be submitted to US ED for both districts and the state.

Equitable Services

Private schools are eligible for equitable services through the district (*CARES Act Section 18005(b)*).

Districts must reach out to all private schools located within their district boundaries for Title I-A and Special Education in order to inform private schools of the CARES Act funding and determine whether the private schools wishes to participate. A previous decision by a private school to turn down Title I-A funds does not impact its eligibility to participate in CARES Act funding (*CARES Act Section 18005(a)*).

Application Process

US ED is required to provide states with an application or application process within 30 days of the CARES Act passage, and then has 30 days to approve applications. At this time, an application has not been made available to DEED.

Once funding levels have been finalized by US ED, districts will use GMS to create budgets and indicate which activities they will be funding with the CARES Act funds. The following delineates the twelve activities outlined in the Act.

1. Authorized Programs *CARES Act Section 18003(d)(1)*.
 - Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
 - Title I-A Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged
 - Title I-C Education of Migratory Children

- Title I-D Educational Support for Neglected, Delinquent or At-Risk Children and Youth
 - Title II-A Supporting Effective Instruction
 - Title III-A Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students
 - Title IV-A Student Support and Academic Enrichment
 - Title IV-B 21st Century Community Learning Centers
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
 - Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)
 - Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins)
 - McKinney Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act
2. Coordination of LEA preparedness and response efforts to improve coordinated responses with other agencies to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus. *CARES Act Section 18003(d)(2).*
 3. Providing principals and other school leaders with the resources necessary to address school needs. *CARES Act Section 18003(d)(3).*
 4. Activities to address the unique needs of low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth. *CARES Act Section 18003(d)(4).*
 5. Developing and implementing procedures and systems to improve LEA preparedness and response efforts. *CARES Act Section 18003(d)(5).*
 6. Training and professional development for LEA staff on sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases. *CARES Act Section 18003(d)(6).*
 7. Purchasing supplies to sanitize and clean LEA facilities. *CARES Act Section 18003(d)(7).*
 8. Planning for and coordinating during long-term closures, including how to provide meals, technology for online learning, guidance on IDEA requirements, and ensuring other educational services can continue to be provided consistent with all applicable requirements. *CARES Act Section 18003(d)(8).*
 9. Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students served by the LEA that aids in regular and substantive educational interactions between students and their classroom teachers, including assistance technology or adaptive equipment. *CARES Act Section 18003(d)(9).*
 10. Providing mental health services and supports. *CARES Act Section 18003(d)(10).*

11. Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental afterschool programs and addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care. *CARES Act Section 18003(d)(11)*.
12. Other activities that are necessary to maintain operations and continuity of services and continuing to employ existing staff. *CARES Act Section 18003(d)(12)*.

CARES Act: Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund

Approximately \$3 billion of the \$30.75 billion Education Stabilization Funds in the CARES Act is allocated for the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF), Section 18002. The State of Alaska is estimated to receive \$6,503,527.

These funds are allocated to governors to use at their discretion on education relief. The governor can use these funds for emergency support to local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and other education entities. Funding can also be used to support childcare and early childhood education, for social and emotional support, and to protect education related jobs.

While these are flexible discretionary funds that governors can use to meet the needs of students, schools (including charter schools and non-public schools), postsecondary institutions, and other education-related organizations, the law provides more clarity in that SEAs may use grants awarded under the GEERF to:

- Provide emergency support to local educational agencies that have been significantly impacted by COVID-19 to continue to provide educational services to students as well as support the LEA's ongoing functionality. *CARES Act Section 18002(c)(1)*.
- Provide emergency support to institutions of higher education that provide services to students significantly affected by COVID-19. *CARES Act Section 18002(c)(2)*.
- Provide support to any education-related entities deemed essential for carrying out emergency educational services to students for activities that are authorized under the ESEA, IDEA, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and McKinney-Vento. *CARES Act Section 18002(c)(3)*.
- Provide support to any education-related entities deemed essential for providing childcare and early childhood education, social and emotional support, and the protection of education-related jobs. *CARES Act Section 18002(c)(3)*.

Approximately \$3.7 million from the State of Alaska's allocation will be distributed to 35 districts in order to ensure all districts receive funding equal to or greater than the allocation of

the \$30 million one-time funds through the foundation formula versus the allocation based on the Title I-A funding formula for the Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief Funds.

Distribution of Funds

DEED will be applying for GEERF on behalf of the Governor through the *Certification and Agreement for Funding under the Education Stabilization Fund Program Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund* (application) released by the US ED this week.

Timeline

Each Governor will have one year, from the date of the State's award, to award funds. Any funds not awarded within one year of the award must be returned to the US ED for reallocation. *CARES Act Section 18002(d)*.