

ED Releases Governor's Emergency Education Relief Grant Funding

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On April 14, the Department of Education [released another \\$3 billion](#) under the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund component of the CARES Act. GEER funding is an emergency grant awarded to state governors' offices that can be used flexibly to meet the needs of students, schools and other education-related organizations in their states.

Eligible funding recipients must wait for the state to draw down funding and set a plan for distributing money. ED has encouraged states to move quickly but did not set a specific timeline, and it could be anywhere from days to weeks or even months before funding is made available in some states.

Overview of the GEER fund

- Funding flows to the state governor's office, which must sign a [certification](#) form, request its share and decide how to best distribute the money. [Allocations](#) are based 60% on state population of individuals aged 5 through 24, and 40% on each state's share of Title I funding under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (which tracks at a high level to students with exceptional need).
- GEER is the most flexible portion of the larger \$30 billion Education Stabilization Fund of the CARES Act. The funds can be used to support educational entities of all types, public and private, for- and nonprofit – including public and private k-12 schools and charter schools, institutions of higher education, early childcare centers and other “education related” entities – that are deemed by the state to be essential to carrying out emergency educational services. In contrast, other funding in the Education Stabilization Fund is reserved largely for public school districts or institutions of higher education, and in some cases, to specific categories of each.
- The ability of states to distribute funding to education-related entities indicates that private companies in the space may be eligible recipients, although that appears to be at the discretion of the governor. Note that ED may require enhanced reporting for funds distributed to for-profit companies, according to the certification that states must sign. In addition, ED does not consider administrative or executive salaries to be a permissible use of GEER funds.
- The CARES Act and ED guidance give the states broad discretion in how to use and distribute the money. For example, while ED's announcement letter encourages states to use it to continue distance learning efforts, it does not require such priority.
- ED is encouraging the states to distribute GEER funds quickly, but it is not yet known how states will allocate the available funds or whether they will impose additional conditions on recipients. Based on the CARES Act and ED guidance, recipients will, at a minimum, be expected to (1) report and account for the use of funds, (2) continue to pay employees and contractors to the greatest extent possible during the COVID-19 disruption and (3) make records available to the state and the federal government for examination.

Next steps

Since the CARES Act passed on March 27, ED has made available only about \$9 billion of the \$30 billion in the Education Stabilization Fund. ED has been silent on the timing for the largest bucket of k-12 funding, the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, which will be largely directed toward public school districts. On the higher education side, ED made available [half of the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund on April 9](#), intended to cover emergency student grants, but has not indicated when the remaining half, which can be used to cover institutional costs, will be released. While there are indications that may be imminent, we will not know with certainty until ED issues its announcement.

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