



# ARP PATHS

The American Rescue Plan Act  
Partnership, Assistance, Transformation, and  
Heightened Support Resource for States

JANUARY 2022

“States are using American Rescue Plan funds to provide critical support to schools and communities. American Rescue Plan funds enable states to help keep schools open for full-time, in-person learning; meet students’ academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs in response to the pandemic; and address disparities in access to educational opportunities that were exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic. These funds are addressing the urgent needs of America’s children and helping our schools build back better.”

**SECRETARY MIGUEL CARDONA**



# Introduction

The American Rescue Plan Act's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) fund represent a historic investment in ensuring that all students have access to safe in-person instruction and in meeting the social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of the Nation's students.

The U.S. Department of Education is committed to supporting State Education Agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) in achieving the American Rescue Plan Act's intended purpose of helping schools and communities recover from the pandemic, address the impact of lost instructional time, and close opportunity gaps that have been made worse during this period, so that all children and youth—and especially those who have been underserved or disproportionately impacted by the pandemic—receive the educational opportunities they need to thrive.



The Department has developed this optional Partnership, Assistance, Transformation, and Heightened Support (ARP PATHS) resource to serve as a support for SEAs and LEAs as they put ARP ESSER funds to work in their communities. This tool builds on the questions in the ARP ESSER State plans that all SEAs have submitted and can support States in communicating how they are working to achieve shared goals of ensuring that ARP ESSER funds are used appropriately and effectively as intended by the law and are targeted to support the students most impacted by the pandemic. The tool includes a number of considerations for States as they determine how to build capacity and communicate their work and are specifically not intended as descriptions of current or new requirements. Many of the strategies also may apply to ESSER I and ESSER II implementation and States are encouraged to address how they are using these and other federal pandemic recovery funds.

## How to Use This Tool

States can—but are not required to—use the ARP PATHS resource to share their plans and progress on each indicator and describe the strategies they are implementing that could serve as promising practices for other states and the Nation. This could include using the resource as a tool for:

- ✓ Informing and refining the SEA's internal planning and resource allocation;
- ✓ Providing updates on ARP ESSER implementation at public meetings (e.g., state boards of education, legislative hearings);
- ✓ Highlighting the SEA's ongoing efforts and progress on the SEA's website; and
- ✓ Supporting key stakeholders (including students, families, educators, and civil rights organizations) in participating in ARP ESSER implementation by understanding the SEA's efforts to address and make progress on the ARP PATHS indicators.

The Department looks forward to continuing to partner with SEAs on this important work and to shine a light on the successes and innovations States implement with these critical resources. The Department is eager to share State examples and learn from State implementations to inform the Department's Technical Assistance Centers. SEAs also are invited to seek technical assistance on ARP ESSER implementation in these and other areas from the [Comprehensive Center Network](#), the [Regional Educational Laboratories](#), and other federal TA Centers.

The tool is broken into six sections, which focus on different elements of ARP implementation. For each, states can indicate the implementation status, describe their states' progress, and outline promising practices or impact.<sup>1</sup>



## Safely Reopening Schools and Sustaining Safe Operations

Safely reopening schools and sustaining safe operations to maximize in-person instruction are essential for student learning and well-being.

1

The SEA is building capacity in its LEAs to **implement strategies to maintain safe in-person instruction** including to the greatest extent practicable, by implementing health and safety strategies consistent with updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

### Status:

- Full implementation
- Initial/Ongoing implementation
- Planning underway
- Exploration

**Description of State's Progress—including links to publications, key messages, and other products:**

**Promising Practices of Implementation or Impact:**

# Planning for the Use and Coordination of ARP ESSER Funds

Seeking input from diverse stakeholders is critical to using ARP ESSER funds in ways that are responsive to the needs of students, families, and educators.

2

The SEA has strategies to ensure that the SEA and its LEAs **incorporate meaningful ongoing stakeholder engagement** that centers youth, family, community, and educator voices in decision-making. Strategies should include engaging all communities listed in the Department’s interim final requirements.

### Status:

- Full implementation
- Initial/Ongoing implementation
- Planning underway
- Exploration

### Description of State’s Progress—including links to publications, key messages, and other products:

### Promising Practices of Implementation or Impact:



## Maximizing State-Level Funds to Support Students

States have an extraordinary opportunity to address the needs of students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through the ARP Act's required State set-asides related to addressing "learning loss" and providing summer learning and enrichment programs and comprehensive afterschool programs.

3

The SEA is using its State-level ARP ESSER reserves to **address the impact of lost instructional time ("learning loss")** on students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs, including to address the disproportionate impact on students from low-income backgrounds, students with disabilities, students of color, multilingual learners, students experiencing homelessness, and migratory students—through evidence-based interventions using the:

- At least 5 percent set-aside to address the impact of lost instructional time ("learning loss");
- At least 1 percent set-aside to provide summer learning and enrichment programs; and
- At least 1 percent set-aside to provide comprehensive afterschool programs.

These resources can help address the needs of students who have missed the most in-person instructional time and those who did not consistently participate in remote instruction during building closures.

### Status:

- Full implementation
- Initial/Ongoing implementation
- Planning underway
- Exploration

### Description of State's Progress—including links to publications, key messages, and other products:

### Promising Practices of Implementation or Impact:



## Supporting LEAs in Planning for and Meeting Students' Needs

The safe return to in-person instruction must be accompanied by a focus on meeting students' social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs, and by addressing the opportunity gaps that existed before and were exacerbated by the pandemic.

4

The SEA is **building internal capacity** to distribute ARP ESSER funds quickly and efficiently and to ensure support and accountability for the use of ESSER funds.

### Status:

- Full implementation
- Initial/Ongoing implementation
- Planning underway
- Exploration

### Description of State's Progress—including links to publications, key messages, and other products:

### Promising Practices of Implementation or Impact:

5

The SEA has **awarded ARP ESSER funds** to all of its LEAs. LEAs are currently able to use all allocated funds as needed.

**Status:**

- All LEAs have been awarded funds and all funds allocated to LEAs are available for their use as needed
- Some but not all LEAs have been awarded funds
- LEAs have not been awarded funds

**Description of State’s Progress—including links to publications, key messages, and other products:**

**Promising Practices of Implementation or Impact:**

6

The SEA is building capacity in its LEAs to **effectively select, implement, and refine evidence-based interventions** using the required ARP ESSER LEA set-aside funding of at least 20 percent of funds to address the impact of lost instructional time (“learning loss”) on students’ social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs in ways that align to key findings from the science of learning and development.

**Status:**

- Full implementation
- Initial/Ongoing implementation
- Planning underway
- Exploration

**Description of State’s Progress—including links to publications, key messages, and other products:**

**Promising Practices of Implementation or Impact:**

7

The SEA has developed a **technical assistance strategy** to ensure that its LEAs that disproportionately enroll underserved students have the support and capacity to effectively deploy ARP ESSER resources with urgency and effectiveness.

**Status:**

- Full implementation
- Initial/Ongoing implementation
- Planning underway
- Exploration

**Description of State’s Progress—including links to publications, key messages, and other products:**

**Promising Practices of Implementation or Impact:**

8

The SEA has a process for its LEAs to **update LEA use of funds plans as needed** and that reflects a focus on continuous improvement.

**Status:**

- Full implementation
- Initial/Ongoing implementation
- Planning underway
- Exploration

**Description of State’s Progress—including links to publications, key messages, and other products:**

**Promising Practices of Implementation or Impact:**



## Supporting the Educator Workforce

The pandemic has taken a toll on the Nation’s educators as well as on its students, emphasizing the need to support and stabilize the educator workforce and to make staffing decisions that will address students’ social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs.

9

The SEA has identified LEAs that are experiencing **critical shortages** of educators and other school staff (including school counselors, school nurses, mental health professionals, transportation staff, and food service staff) and the SEA is using ARP ESSER funds and/or supporting its LEAs to use ARP ESSER funds to implement evidence-based and promising strategies designed to address these challenges, including through recruitment, compensation, retention, and “grow your own” strategies.

### Status:

- Full implementation
- Initial/Ongoing implementation
- Planning underway
- Exploration

### Description of State’s Progress—including links to publications, key messages, and other products:

### Promising Practices of Implementation or Impact:

# Monitoring and Measuring Progress

Being transparent about how ARP ESSER funds are used and measurement of the impact of the funding on the Nation’s education system are fundamental responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments.

10

The SEA has **programmatic and fiscal monitoring and internal controls** for SEA and LEA uses of ESSER funds, including ensuring that they meet the statutory requirements for allowable uses of funds.

**Status:**

- Full implementation
- Initial/Ongoing implementation
- Planning underway
- Exploration

**Description of State’s Progress—including links to publications, key messages, and other products:**

**Promising Practices of Implementation or Impact:**

11

The SEA ensures transparency by regularly publicly posting updated data on **SEA and LEA-level ESSER spending** and uses of funds.

**Status:**

- Full implementation and data are reported at least monthly
- Initial/Ongoing implementation
- Planning underway
- Exploration

**Description of State’s Progress—including links to publications, key messages, and other products:**

**Promising Practices of Implementation or Impact:**

12

The SEA ensures that its LEAs regularly **monitor student progress and opportunity to learn measures** and use the information to tailor ARP ESSER supports to the students most impacted by the pandemic and meet the social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of the whole child.

**Status:**

- Full implementation
- Initial/Ongoing implementation
- Planning underway
- Exploration

**Description of State's Progress—including links to publications, key messages, and other products:**

**Promising Practices of Implementation or Impact:**

13

The SEA has a plan to **evaluate on an ongoing basis the effectiveness of the evidence-based interventions** that the SEA and its LEAs fund with ARP ESSER resources and to make necessary refinements.

**Status:**

- Full implementation
- Initial/Ongoing implementation
- Planning underway
- Exploration

**Description of State's Progress—including links to publications, key messages, and other products:**

**Promising Practices of Implementation or Impact:**

## Suggested Resources

*Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools* from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>.

*American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Guidance Documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)*, available at: <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/american-rescue-plan/american-rescue-plan-elementary-and-secondary-school-emergency-relief/resources/>.

*Strategies for Using American Rescue Plan Funding to Address the Impact of Lost Instructional Time*, available at: <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/lost-instructional-time.pdf>.

*Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral and Mental Health*, available at: <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/students/supporting-child-student-social-emotional-behavioral-mental-health.pdf>.

*COVID-19 Handbook Vol. 2: Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs*, available at: <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf>.

*Frequently Asked Questions: Using American Rescue Plan Funding to Support Full-Service Community Schools & Related Strategies*, available at: <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/07/21-0138-ARP-Community-Schools-OMB-and-OS-Approved-071421-1.pdf> (English) and [https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/11/21-0138-ARP-Community-Schools-OMB-and-OS-Approved-071421-1\\_SPA.508dh.pdf](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/11/21-0138-ARP-Community-Schools-OMB-and-OS-Approved-071421-1_SPA.508dh.pdf) (Spanish).

*How American Rescue Plan Funds Can Prevent and Respond to Crime and Promote Public Safety*, available at: <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/06/21-0130-ARP-Public-Safety-ED-FAQ-06-16-2021.pdf>.

*[Letter to Chief State School Officers and School Superintendents from Secretary Cardona About the Importance of Using ARP ESSER and Other Federal Resources to Address Educator Shortages]*, available at: [https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/12/21-0414.DCL\\_Labor-Shortages.pdf](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/12/21-0414.DCL_Labor-Shortages.pdf).

*Frequently Asked Questions Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund and Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund: Use of Funds to Prevent, Prepare for, and Respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic*, available at: [https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/12/Fact-Sheet\\_COVID\\_connection\\_12.29.21\\_Final.pdf](https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/12/Fact-Sheet_COVID_connection_12.29.21_Final.pdf).



<sup>1</sup> Nothing in this tool should be misconstrued to modify or reduce existing legal requirements.



The U.S. Department of Education is committed to supporting State Education Agencies and school districts in implementing resources to promote safe school operations and equity-driven, sustainable, evidence-based programs to serve students and to continue to strengthen teaching and learning.

For more information please visit [ed.gov](https://ed.gov).