

HOW STATES CAN USE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING AND FEDERAL GRANTS TO **SUPPORT TEACHER DIVERSITY**

ALL STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF RACE OR ETHNICITY, benefit from having a racially and culturally [diverse teacher workforce](#), and the positive impacts are especially significant for students of color. However, the wide and persistent [disparity](#) between the proportion of students of color and that of teachers of color in the U.S. is preventing far too many students from realizing these benefits. While the majority of students in P-12 public schools are children of color, only 20% of the national teacher workforce is comprised of teachers of color.

To ensure equitable outcomes for all students, state leaders must make a concerted effort to prepare, recruit, and retain teachers of color. Federal funds are one resource that state leaders can use to establish and/or supplement programming designed to diversify the teacher workforce. Though several federal funding streams can be used for this purpose, state and district leaders have a great opportunity to leverage COVID-relief funds to expand their diversity efforts. The primary source of these funds, the American Rescue Plan (ARP), provides a one-time federal investment of more than \$122 billion that distributes support among the nation's schools to aid in the long-term recovery from COVID-19. Although at least 90% of these dollars flow directly to districts, each state has a minimum set-aside that can be used through early 2025. As a condition for receiving funds — often referred to as Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds — states were required to submit [plans](#) outlining how they will use funds for authorized purposes, including “expanding the educator pipeline and educator diversity.”

What COVID relief funds were made available to schools and districts?

To provide relief to struggling states, school districts, and schools during the pandemic, the federal government passed a series of monetary relief packages known as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Securities (CARES) Act, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, and the American Rescue Plan (ARP). Discussions on and references to these funds use many acronyms, a few of which are detailed below:

- ESSER I – one-third of the total funds dispersed, established by the CARES Act
- ESSER II – additional funding that was provided in the CRRSA Act
- ARP ESSER or ESSER III – additional ESSER funding provided by ARP

The funds provided are unprecedented both in their size and scope: Districts were given large amounts of money and broad discretion in how to spend that money. For ESSER III, districts are required to set aside at least 20% of their funding to “address learning loss” and to build in supports for the social-emotional well-being of students. The remaining 80% can be used toward any policies that address the needs arising from the pandemic that have been previously authorized by state and federal spending guidelines. This can include, but is not limited to, hiring school counselors, making improvements to school facilities, providing additional training and professional development for teachers, and purchasing new technology and curriculum.

The Education Trust has collected state-level data on the use of ESSER funds to elevate promising practices for advocates and policymakers. State spending is broken down into three broad categories:

- 1. Supporting educator preparation programs that attract and support candidates of color**
- 2. Developing and/or implementing policies or programs to recruit teachers of color**
- 3. Developing and/or implementing policies or programs to retain teachers of color**

Investments in Educator Preparation Programs

Students of color face greater hurdles when it comes to financing their college education and repaying student [loans](#). Several states used ESSER funds to expand opportunities for teacher candidates of color to enroll and succeed in preparation programs, and to limit the unnecessary barriers to enter the profession.

Promising practices:

- [Georgia](#) used \$5 million to provide program fees, books and materials, certification preparation, and exam fees for the [Georgia Academies for Teacher Preparation and Pedagogy](#), an alternative certification program. The state used another \$5 million to provide program fees, books, and materials for teacher endorsements in high-need areas as identified regionally.
- [Indiana](#) used funds to contract with 13 higher education institutions to support English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching certification.
- [Ohio](#) and [Nevada](#) used funds to provide grants that enable institutions of higher education to offer [scholarships](#) to students participating in teacher preparation programs.
- [Iowa](#), [Nevada](#), and [Oklahoma](#) used funds to provide tuition assistance, student teaching stipends, and/or certification exam fee waivers to students participating in teacher preparation programs.
- [Massachusetts](#) used \$350,000 to [pilot alternative assessments](#) for teacher licensure to “be more inclusive in [their] approach to identifying strong educators in the state.”
- [South Carolina](#) used \$600,000 to expand the [Call Me MISTER](#) program at Clemson University, which aims to increase the pool of teacher candidates from diverse backgrounds.



Investments in Teacher Recruitment

States also used ESSER funds for recruitment efforts to attract more educators of color into the profession.

Promising practices:

- [Maryland](#), [Texas](#), [Missouri](#), [Nevada](#), [Georgia](#), and [Tennessee](#) used funds to support Grow Your Own programs (GYOs)—community-focused recruitment programs that tend to attract more candidates of color than traditional educator preparation programs.
- [Iowa](#) used \$45.6 million to establish the Teacher and Paraeducator Registered Apprenticeship Program [Pilot](#).
- [New Mexico](#) used \$37 million to create the [Educator Fellows Program](#), which covers salaries, tuition stipends, and licensure fees for teaching assistants who are pursuing licensure. Teaching assistants tend to be more racially and ethnically diverse than the teacher workforce.
- [Oregon](#) used \$4 million to increase the number of bilingual/bicultural educators through scholarships, residencies, and GYOs.
- [Louisiana](#) used \$1.2 million to support the [Louisiana Pre-Educator Pathway](#), which aims to recruit and retain teachers of color.
- [South Carolina](#) used \$1.2 million to strengthen the [Teaching Fellows Program](#), which recruits high school students into the teaching profession and helps them develop leadership skills. The state also invested \$1.7 million in an initiative with Teach.org called [TeachSC](#), which recruits young people into the teaching profession with a focus on diversifying the teacher workforce.
- [Massachusetts](#) used \$1 million to support the [Teacher Diversification Pilot Program](#), a grant program that supports local school and district efforts to strengthen and diversify existing teacher recruitment.
- [Nebraska](#) used about \$50,000 for the [Diverse Educator Pilot project](#), a partnership with University of Nebraska-Lincoln's College of Education dedicated to understanding and addressing the barriers people of color face to entering the teacher workforce.

Investments in Teacher Retention

States also invested ESSER funds to retain teachers of color through programming that provides ongoing support and growth opportunities while improving working conditions that disproportionately affect teachers of color.

Promising practices:

- [Colorado](#), [Illinois](#), [Louisiana](#), [Mississippi](#), [Missouri](#), and [Texas](#) used funds to support teacher residency programs, which are associated with higher rates of retention for teachers of color.
- [Arizona](#) and [Kentucky](#) invested in mentoring and/or induction programs for new teachers. High-quality induction programs are associated with higher [retention](#) rates among early-career teachers for all teachers but particularly for [teachers of color](#).
- [Nevada](#) invested in the Rising Leaders Network, which provides supports for education leaders from historically underserved racial and ethnic groups.
- [Connecticut](#) used funding for professional development opportunities supporting current educators, including diversity and cultural competence training.

Other federal funding sources that can be used to diversify the teacher workforce

While ESSER funds are set to expire in early 2025, there are a number of other federal funding sources that states and districts can use to support teacher diversity initiatives:

- **The Augustus F. Hawkins Center for Excellence** program provides competitive grants to teacher preparation programs at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), minority-serving institutions, and tribal colleges and universities. In 2022, Congress appropriated \$8 million for Hawkins grants, which marks the first time the Hawkins program has been funded since its creation in 2008. The Education Trust has [requested](#) at least \$40 million in funding for fiscal year 2023.
- Some required grant uses include implementing pedagogical practices in teacher preparation programs that are inclusive of race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status, and provide sustained and high-quality preservice clinical experiences to teacher candidates. In August 2022, the U.S. Department of Education invited eligible parties to submit an [application](#) for the first round of funding for FY23.
- **Title IIA of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** allots formula-based funding to each state education agency for improving teacher quality overall and “provid[ing] low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers.” Some allowable uses include supporting Grow Your Own programs, providing high-quality, evidence-based professional development, and training teachers to effectively support students with disabilities and/or English learners. The Education Trust has [requested](#) \$18.54 billion in funding for FY23.
 - [Idaho](#) used Title IIA funds to support Grow Your Own programming.
 - [Illinois](#) used Title IIA funds to support the development and implementation of the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards in educator preparation programs.
- **The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** authorizes competitive [grants](#) to state education agencies and institutions of higher education to support special education services. Teacher preparation is one of many allowable uses. The Education Trust supports continued and increased funding for this program in support of educator diversity.
 - [Wyoming](#) used \$150,000 from the state set-aside portion of the IDEA Part B 611 grant for a tuition reimbursement program for educators to obtain a master’s degree in special education or an Early Childhood Special Education Endorsement.
 - San Francisco State University used IDEA grant funding to support Project [GROW](#), which funds a stipend program for students in the Early Childhood Special Education program. A top priority of the program is recruiting culturally and linguistically diverse educators.
 - North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University used IDEA grant funding for [scholarships and stipends](#) to support students pursuing master’s degrees in special education, with a goal of increasing the diversity of special education teachers in the state.

- **The Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED)** program provides competitive funding to institutions of higher education to support the preparation and development of highly effective educators. The Education Trust has [requested](#) \$200 million in funding for FY23.
 - The [Alder](#) Graduate School of Education used SEED funding to partner with LEAs in **Massachusetts, California, and Tennessee** to establish urban teacher residency programs.
 - Georgia State University used SEED funding to support [CREATE](#), an innovative three-year teacher residency program.
- **The Teacher and School Leader (TSL) Incentive** grant program supports local educational agencies (LEAs) and nonprofits to establish performance-based compensation systems (PBCS) or human capital management systems (HCMS) for teachers and principals at high-need schools. As these grants are specifically for districts, states should support districts in applying for funding. The Education Trust has [requested](#) \$3 billion in funding for FY23.
 - The San Antonio Independent School District in Texas used TSL grant funding for the Equity-Centered Educator Pipeline Initiative, a [program](#) that seeks to improve recruitment and retention of diverse educators.
 - The Winston-Salem /Forsyth County Schools LEA in North Carolina used TSL grant funding for building an equity-centered teacher and school leader [pipeline](#), which includes Grow Your Own programs.
- **The Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP)** program is a competitive federal grant program that funds partnerships between LEAs and/or schools and educator preparation programs to strengthen the teacher pipeline. Allowable uses include supporting teacher residency programs and Grow Your Own programs. The Education Trust has formally [requested](#) \$300 million in funding for FY23.
 - Several [institutions](#) of higher education, including Western Michigan University, Texas A&M University, University of West Alabama, and Voorhees College, an HBCU in South Carolina, used TQP grant funding to establish teacher residency programs.

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