

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CARES ACT INCENTIVE GRANTS

NEW FLEXIBILITY ON PAGE 2

Background

On May 4, 2020, Oklahoma was awarded \$160,950,476 in federal K-12 relief funding from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund created by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Within that funding, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) was allocated a set-aside amount of \$15,290,296 for “emergency needs” to address issues related to coronavirus. Of the set-aside funds, OSDE will allocate \$8,000,000 to districts through a competitive Incentive Grant.

Oklahoma was also awarded \$39,919,354 in education relief funds from the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund, which may be used to provide subgrants to districts “most significantly impacted by coronavirus.” Of that amount, Gov. Kevin Stitt will also allocate \$8,000,000 for the competitive Incentive Grant, bringing the total to \$16,000,000.

Award Eligibility

Districts that commit to spend at least 30% of their ESSER funds in at least two of the following priority areas will be eligible to apply for the Incentive Grants:

- Expanding connectivity for students to enable distance learning that accentuates digital transformation (i.e., purchasing devices, hotspots, access points, partnership agreements, etc.)
- Purchasing a Content Management System (CMS) or Learning Management System (LMS) to support students in distance learning (may be used for a new system or to add services to an existing system)
- Providing mental health supports through social and emotional learning tools for students experiencing trauma due to COVID-19
- Providing compensatory services to students identified to be at risk as a result of the closure of school buildings in spring 2020 (i.e., English learners, students with disabilities, students needing credit recovery, etc.)
- Providing training in the science of reading for teachers in Pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, with a specific focus on delivering instruction remotely (i.e., contract with a vendor for professional development, programs identified through What Works Clearinghouse, curriculum or materials to be used in teacher training)

Grant Award Amounts

Awards will be based on a district’s enrollment from the October 1, 2019, accreditation report:

- Up to 500 students: Eligible for up to \$50,000
- 501 to 1,000 students: Eligible for up to \$100,000
- 1,001 to 2,500 students: Eligible for up to \$200,000
- 2,501 to 7,499 students: Eligible for up to \$300,000
- 7,500+ students: Eligible for up to \$500,000

Grant Deadline, Start and End Date

In order to ensure districts have access to Incentive Grant funds as close to July 1, 2020, as possible, they must apply no later than June 22, 2020. Expenditures may be reimbursed between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2022.

Other Restrictions

- In order to apply, districts must have expressed their intent to do so on the application for CARES Act formula funds. However, districts may select different areas in the Incentive Grant application than what was selected in the CARES Act formula grant application.
CLARIFICATION: As long as both sets of funds are spent among the five priority areas, and no less than 10% of the ESSER formula set-aside is allocated for any one area, districts are eligible for the incentive grant. For example, a district could use its 30% set-aside for connectivity (priority 1) and a CMS (priority 2) and then use its incentive grant funds on social-emotional learning (priority 3). A district could also use both the 30% set-aside and the incentive grant between only two areas, provided no less than 10% of the ESSER formula set-aside is allocated for any one area.
- Funds received under the Incentive Grant program **may not** be used for personnel costs, including salaries, benefits and/or stipends.
- Districts receiving an Incentive Grant may not use the required 30% set-aside of ESSER formula funds to pay the salaries of **existing** personnel. However, they may use these funds to hire **new** personnel or pay stipends to existing personnel, provided such expenses are directly related to the impact of COVID-19 and are in furtherance of the intended use of the Incentive Grant.
- Of the required 30% set-aside, districts may not spend less than 10% in any one area. For example, they may spend 20% for connectivity and 10% for mental health, but they may not spend 25% for connectivity and 5% for mental health.
- Districts receiving an Incentive Grant from ESSER or GEER funds are required to provide equitable services to students and teachers in nonpublic schools.
- Districts may not utilize Incentive Grant funds for indirect costs (i.e., expenses of doing business that are not directly identified with the grant).

Determination of Most Significantly Impacted LEAs

In order for a district to receive a grant from GEER funds, the State educational agency (SEA, in this case, the OSDE) must determine the LEAs that have been “most significantly impacted by coronavirus.” In order to make such determination, districts will be required to describe how they have been most significantly impacted in three areas: academics, health and mental health, and economic and social factors. Districts will receive points on a rubric (see below) for how well they demonstrate the impact of coronavirus in their district. Districts receiving at least 9 of 12 points on this portion of the rubric will be considered most significantly impacted and eligible to receive a grant using GEER funds.

Grant Management and Reporting

Districts will apply for the Incentive Grant through the Grants Management System of the OSDE. For additional information, contact Shelly Perkins at (405) 522-2194, Shelly.Perkins@sde.ok.gov.

Grant Application Review Process

The following rubric will be used to score each application.

Criteria	Maximum Point Value
Need for Funds	15 Points
Use of Funds	45 Points
Connection to Local Initiatives	15 Points
Management of Project	15 Points
Data and Reporting Plan	10 Points
Bonus Points	
District received less than \$100 per student in ESSER formula Funds*	5 Points
District most significantly impacted by COVID-19 (3 areas: Academics, Health/Mental Health, Economic/Social)	12 Points
Total Points	117

* Districts will either receive 5 points or 0 points on this item.



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