



Education Stabilization Fund – Targeted Monitoring Review Webinar FAQ – October 18, 2022

What stimulus funds are being monitored as part of the Education Stimulus Funds Monitoring?

CARES (ESSER I & GEER I), CRRSA (ESSER II & GEER II), ARP-ESSER, and the ARP-ESSER State Level Reserves are all included in this monitoring. The ARP-HCY I and II funds are NOT a part of this monitoring process. The HCY I & II funds will be reviewed as part of the regular ESSA-funded programs reviews of ESEA Title Programs.

Will ARP 611 & 619 be included in this review?

No. These programs are overseen by the Office of Special Education. Questions regarding these funds should be sent to IDEA@nysed.gov

Where can LEAs find recorded webinars, FAQ documents, and other resources related to the Monitoring of Education Stabilization Funds?

All presentations, recorded webinars, and FAQ documents are posted on the ESF Monitoring website. The presentation for [Targeted Monitoring](#) was posted on 11/1/22.

The link below will direct you to the Monitoring website, where you will find many resources related to the monitoring of CARES, CRRSA, and ARP-ESSER funds.

<http://www.nysed.gov/federal-education-covid-response-funding/education-stimulus-fund-monitoring-and-technical-assistance>

Who did the Welcome email come from on 10/11/22?

CARESACT@nysed.gov

Who can the LEA contact regarding their Monitoring Group assignment?

If you did not receive the welcome email, which included your group assignment, please contact CARESACT@nysed.gov to ensure that your LEA is on the appropriate monitoring list.

When will the monitoring applications be open in the Business Portal?

The portal application will post according to the Review Group the LEA was assigned to. These dates can be found on the monitoring website under the accordion labeled [“Coordinated and Targeted Review Groups”](#).

Does an LEA need to submit its monitoring application in the Business Portal prior to the on-site/virtual visit? There are two weeks between October 28th and November 18th.

The calendar posted on the monitoring website breaks down the process step-by-step, so *10/28 is the date that LEAs in Group A should expect to have their monitoring survey posted to the Business Portal. The LEA will then have about 6 weeks to complete the monitoring survey*, which includes uploading evidence for each indicator. November 18 is the date when the LEA will be asked to confirm the date for the ½ day virtual visit with a calendar invitation. The LEA is only expected to confirm the date of the ½ day virtual visit on November 18 or notify their reviewer of a scheduling conflict.

Please note: There are *no on-site visits* for targeted monitoring. It is a ½ day virtual visit with your single reviewer. Additionally, please be reminded that the date of the visit is determined by the scheduling survey that was shared in the welcome email.

Additional information and a complete, detailed breakdown of the dates you can expect to receive or turn in information can be found in this document on the monitoring website:

<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/federal-education-covid-response-funding/esf-targeted-monitoring-process.pdf>

What additional support will be offered throughout the monitoring process?

In addition to direct technical assistance from your monitoring reviewer, we will be holding several sessions for informal office hours. Additionally, LEAs may be invited to participate in more focused technical assistance webinars on specific topics within the monitoring process, such as the effective use of data for program evaluation and the provision of equitable services. The dates and registration links will be published to the monitoring website as they become available.

Our LEA is continually making amendments to our approved ESF budgets based on needs and availabilities. Amendments cannot be submitted until the annual budget is approved. How should this be handled if we must make amendments after our Targeted Monitoring process has begun?

The federal guidance related to amendments on the [Grants Finance website](#) states that any changes to an approved budget must be discussed with the program office before changes are made. Communication between the LEA and their ESF reviewer should occur as soon as possible before moving forward with changes to the approved budget. If the LEA has not yet contacted their reviewer from the original application, they should do so sooner rather than later so that there is a record of the change(s) made prior to the Virtual Visit.

Formal amendments are required if there are changes that are equal to or greater than 10% of a budget code or over \$1,000. The LEA will [complete and submit the FS-10A](#) form to the reviewer who approved their original budget. Changes that do not meet this threshold should still be documented as an informal amendment to ensure complete and transparent record-keeping.

What is an “informal” amendment?

Informal amendments are used for record-keeping and transparency in cases where the changes to the approved budget do not meet the threshold above for a formal amendment. These are completed using the same FS-10A amendment form as above, but they are numbered “000”. These should be signed by the LEA’s superintendent or Chief Academic Officer (CAO) in blue ink and submitted as a hard copy to your reviewer to demonstrate that the CAO has approved the change. Informal amendments are not recorded in the CAFÉ system nor are they sent through Grants Finance.

If the monitoring process has begun but the LEA is still in the process of getting an amendment in order, how should the LEA proceed?

Contact the reviewer from the original application as soon as possible to create a line of communication regarding any potential changes. The purpose is not to ask IF something can be done but rather HOW the LEA can do it. The sooner the LEA can document desired changes, the more smoothly monitoring will go.

If an LEA is just beginning the amendment process at the time monitoring begins, this is an opportunity to discuss with your monitoring contact how, where, and why the LEA wishes to move funds around.

The goal of all communication and record-keeping regarding amendments to approved budgets is to prevent any misalignments between what was originally approved in the application and the current use of funds. We expect the use of these funds to be audited closely, and our goal is to ensure LEAs are in the best position possible in the event of an audit.

Can we expect to have the same reviewer for monitoring who also reviewed and approved our original grant applications?

No. It is possible that an LEA had their original grant applications reviewed by different individuals. For example, you may have worked with Reviewer A for CARES, Reviewer B for CRRSA, and Reviewer C for ARP-ESSER. These are the individuals an LEA should contact if they are making changes to the budgets that were originally approved in the application.

The monitoring process is separate from the approval process. It is possible that the LEA will have a new reviewer to guide them through the monitoring process. Because there is a small team of individuals working on the distribution of these funds, an LEA may also get to work with the same individual over multiple grant applications.

If you are unclear as to who your reviewer(s) are and are unable to find the information within the Business Portal applications, please contact CARESACT@nysed.gov, and the team will ensure that you have the correct contact information for each step of this process.

How can an LEA find out who their original reviewer was when their ESF grant application was approved?

In the business portal, all approved applications will appear in the LEA's "Outbox". The reviewers contact information is identified in the comments box on each application. The comments box is located in the bottom left corner of every application. If there have been changes in staffing at the LEA, your Superintendent or CAO may need to give additional permissions allowing those new individuals to have access to the applications. For assistance with user roles, please email SEDDAS@nysed.gov.

For grants that have ended by the time monitoring begins (e.g., CARES Act – ESSER I and GEER I), will the FS-10F suffice as evidence for Indicators 1 & 2 under Section III: Use of Funds?

The FS-10F can be included as evidence for these indicators, However, it must be supported by additional documentation that demonstrates that the LEA's activities and expenditures aligned with the requirements set forth in the original application. The supporting documentation includes payroll records, receipts, invoices, and purchase orders showing the specific expenditures claimed in the FS-10F.

How much documentation must be uploaded to show how the LEA spent stimulus funds?

All Education Stabilization Funds (CARES - ESSER I & GEER I, CRRSA - ESSER II & GEER II, ARP-ESSER, and ARP-ESSER State Level Reserves) must be accounted for during monitoring. This includes, but is not limited to, payroll documentation for all employees, contracts, invoices, purchase orders, and receipts for items and services paid for with stimulus funds.

We are a very large district with at least 10 Title I schools. Must we upload every single receipt or invoice for monitoring, or can we include a representative sample?

LEAs that have 10 or more Title I schools can provide a representative sample of documentation showing how the stimulus funds were spent. The sample size must represent at least 25% of the total allocation for each grant awarded.

Do LEAs need to keep Personnel Activity Reports (PARs) for employees who were paid by the grant?

Personnel Activity Reports, also known as Time Distribution Records, are only required if an employee is splitting his or her time between activities funded under ESSER or GEER and activities that are not allowable under the applicable program.

An LEA must maintain time distribution records (sometimes called “time and effort” reporting) only if an individual employee is splitting his or her time between activities that may be funded under ESSER or GEER and activities that are not allowable under the applicable program. However, it is likely there will be very few situations in which an employee of an LEA would perform multiple activities where some are not allowable under ESSER or GEER, and thus would be required to maintain time distribution records, given that an LEA is authorized to use funds on “activities that are necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services in [an LEA] and continuing to employ existing staff of the [LEA]” in order to “prevent, prepare for, and respond to” the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional information on these requirements can be found in the guidance documents below:

https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/05/ESSER.GEER_FAQs_5.26.21_745AM_FINALb0cd6833f6f46e03ba2d97d30aff953260028045f9ef3b18ea602db4b32b1d99.pdf

[https://www.ecfr.gov/on/2021-03-31/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E#p-200.430\(i\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/on/2021-03-31/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E#p-200.430(i))

Aside from the required evidence to be uploaded in the Business Portal, will there be additional narrative questions for LEAs to answer?

Yes. There are a few sections where narrative responses will be typed directly into the portal in addition to uploading evidence. This includes sections where the LEA will fill out a chart or grid to elaborate on the evidence provided.

Will evidence need to be uploaded for the chart entries as well?

Yes. These entries ask for the results of programming and evidence that the evaluations were done as planned. Examples of evidence might include a PowerPoint presented to the Board of Education showing student engagement in a stimulus-funded program.

The charts include a section for the evidence base the LEA used while developing programming. What level of detail is expected here?

LEAs do not need to upload the evidence base for Tier I-III interventions unless it is requested by your NYSED reviewer. In general, if programs were developed using one of the recommended activities in the initial application, such as high-dosage tutoring, an evidence base will not be required. However, if the LEA developed its own program that has not been tested (a Tier IV intervention), NYSED will request additional evidence, such as progress monitoring for students participating in the program, to ensure that the LEA is providing the most impactful response possible to benefit its students.

Will NYSED provide templates that can be used to aid in the organization of LEA’s responses prior to entering information into the Business Portal application?

Yes. Our team developed excel templates that will be a resource for LEAs in organizing responses.. These are posted to the monitoring resources website: <http://www.nysed.gov/federal-education-covid-response-funding/education-stimulus-fund-monitoring-and-technical-assistance>

For LEAs designated for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) or Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), could the District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) or School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) serve as evidence of a comprehensive needs assessment under [Indicator 5 of Stakeholder Engagement](#)?

Indicator 5 is specific to the use of ARP-ESSER State Level Reserves, so it is not applicable to all LEAs. However, the spirit of equity and inclusion reflected in this indicator is an essential through-line for all grant funding as we attempt to redress the significant and disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on specific subsets of students, such as those from low-income families, students of color, English learners, children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, those in foster care, and migratory students.

The DCIP or SCEP developed by an LEA could potentially contribute to evidence of a comprehensive needs assessment, however it is **not** sufficient to replace the comprehensive needs assessment. Indicator 5 emphasizes with the necessity of focusing on the unique needs and challenges for *students who were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic*, so the needs assessment must make clear that these students' challenges were specifically addressed in the planning process. This means that LEAs must ensure that students from these backgrounds were accommodated for when planning to use ARP-ESSER State Level Reserves, for example by providing transportation, meals, or targeted small-group tutoring to ensure students can access programs to mitigate learning loss. Although the DCIP and SCEP processes require robust stakeholder engagement, these plans are typically a general needs assessment that lacks the emphasis on disproportionately impacted students that were [required when planning to use State Level Reserve funding](#). Thus, while the DCIP and SCEP are great starting points for planning and can be included as a facet of evidence, they **cannot substitute** for a comprehensive needs assessment that focuses on the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on some students.

How could an LEA's DCIP or SCEP be incorporated as evidence of stakeholder engagement?

The DCIP and SCEP can provide strong evidence of stakeholder engagement under Indicator 1 - Stakeholder Engagement. However, the evidence must be supplemented with proof that the discussions included a specific focus on the use of ARP-ESSER and ARP-ESSER State Level Reserves funding to support students who were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, an LEA could include their DCIP as well as meeting notes, presentations, emails, and surveys that show these conversations took place and assessed the needs and challenges of these disproportionately-impacted students in a meaningful way.

How will this review impact our LEA's FS-10F for CARES? Will payment be delayed?

Payments will not be delayed due to the monitoring process.

If an LEA has already closed out a grant by submitting the FS-10F and completing an audit, how will Targeted Monitoring affect those grants?

The answer to this question depends on the nature of the finding during monitoring. All activities funded by CARES (ESSER I & GEER I), CRRSA (ESSER II & GEER II), ARP-ESSER, and ARP-ESSER State Level Reserves will be included in the monitoring process. If a corrective action is noted, NYSED will look for the avenue that creates the least amount of risk for the district. This could be as simple as moving some allowable expenditures out of your General Fund and into Special Aid funding.

If we are a district that was assigned a later date for monitoring (e.g., during the 2023-24 school year), how would we make corrective actions on a program that has already ended, such as CARES or CRRSA?

Corrective actions can still be assigned for programs that have already ended, but the corrective action itself will be dependent on the nature of the finding. One possibility could be to switch an expense that was eligible under CARES or CRRSA (e.g., a purchased service or a staff member salary) from the general fund into the LEA's special aid fund. Notes of these transfers would be recorded by the LEA for clarity and record-keeping purposes. Remember that the goal of this

monitoring process is to ensure that the LEA meets expectations and is well-positioned for future auditing.

In what circumstances could a Corrective Action require Board of Education (BOE) approval?

Most corrective actions will not trigger BOE approval. The exception to this would be corrective actions regarding the LEA's policies where a policy may require revision. In a case such as this, the LEA would have to go through their regular policy review process, which usually requires BOE discussion and approval.

If an LEA has made small changes within budget codes, could this lead to corrective actions if they do not have informal amendments in place?

If the changes made would not have constituted a formal amendment, this will probably not lead to corrective action. Instead, this is an opportunity for the LEA and its monitoring reviewer to discuss and agree upon why and how the changes were necessary.

What happens if a non-public school that received equitable services does not reply to the survey?

The email sent to the non-public school, as well as any reminders, can be uploaded as evidence if requested by the monitoring reviewer.

Does the LEA need to provide proof of sustainability? What if the LEA does not intend to maintain ESSER-funded programs after the grant ends?

NYSED is not asking for proof of sustainability as part of the monitoring process. If an LEA does not intend to maintain an ESSER or GEER funded program, an explanation can be included in the narrative response box provided.

NYSED will provide technical assistance to LEAs that seek to continue implementing ESSER and GEER funded programs beyond October 2024.