



**Arizona Department of Education**  
Arizona Department of Education ESSER Project Funds  
Application for ESSER III Set Aside Funds FAQ

*ADE ESSER Project funds (money from ESSER I, II, III) are designated to support statewide recovery efforts. Set aside funds refer to dollars available at the discretion of ADE for statewide strategic projects and investments.*

*Currently, ADE is accepting applications from eligible community organizations, including LEAs, for ESSER III Set Aside Fund. Within the Arizona Procurement Portal, you may see the application referred to as Request for Grant Application (RFGA) or Request for Proposal (RFP). However, this FAQ will be referring to it as the ESSER III set aside application. Awarded applicants will be considered grantees.*

*To learn more about the differences between ESSER I, II, and III available exclusively to LEAs and ADE ESSER Project funds available to eligible community organizations, including LEAs, view this [COVID-19 Federal Relief and Recovery Dollars infographic](#).*

**Can a grantee be a nonprofit organization?**

Yes, a grantee may be a non-profit. Eligible organizations include non-profit organizations, universities, LEAs (including public district and charter schools), Tribal entities and other community partners including vendors and for-profit entities.

**What types of entities are eligible to receive these grant funds? Do recipients of the grant need to provide direct services to students, or can the recipients provide the intervention programs only (for districts/schools to use directly)?**

The application is open to a wide variety of partners, including community organizations and other entities that support students and families. For-profit companies are not excluded from the Grant. Recipients of the grant can provide a direct service to students, as well as intervention programs for schools, districts, students, and families.

**Are private school eligible for ESSER III funds?**

No, private K-12 schools are not eligible to apply. However, a private post-secondary institution is eligible to apply.

**Can a nonprofit apply as the lead applicant in partnership with one or more LEAs?**

Yes, nonprofits can apply as the lead applicant in partnership with one or more LEAs. Neither LEAs nor nonprofits are excluded from applying for ESSER III set aside funds. This type of arrangement is allowable.



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**If an organization has 2 possible solutions that fall within different priority areas, should they be presented in a single proposal or in separate proposals?**

An applicant may submit more than one application. Individual proposals should be submitted independently and will be evaluated individually.

**Under item #6 on page 5 of the application, it says, "ADE reserves the right to award pre-approved provider status to multiple applicants." What does pre-approved provider status mean?**

Pre-approved provider status is not relevant to this application. It has been removed in an amended application for ESSER III set aside funds. Potential grantees will not need to take any further action if they completed the original application.

**In the Terms and Conditions, items #5, 6 and 8 refer to an "ADE Character Education Program instruction Grant"? What is that grant and how does it relate to the ESSER III set aside application?**

The ESSER III set aside application has been amended to delete those references, which were included erroneously. Potential grantees will not need to take any further action if they completed the original application.

**Is there a specific form or format for the budget? Where is that found?**

There is no specific budget form. Applicants may choose the budget format appropriate for their service.

**On page 7, item 3.3 lists the required application elements. In what section should we include the budget?**

The Budget should be labeled Attachment 10. The ESSER III application for set-aside funds has amended this. Potential grantees will not need to take any further action if they completed the original application.

**What is the definition of "evidence-based"?**

As required by the American Rescue Plan from which ESSER III funds (both set aside and those allocated exclusively to LEAs) are derived, evidence-based "means an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes". Evidence-based interventions are "practices or programs that have evidence to show that they are effective at producing results and improving outcomes when implemented".



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All grantees of ESSER III set aside funds must, at a minimum, fall within Tier 4, and this should be reflected in their applications. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Tiers:

- Tier 1 – Strong Evidence: supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented randomized control experimental studies.
- Tier 2 – Moderate Evidence: supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies.
  
- Tier 3 – Promising Evidence: supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented correlational studies (with statistical controls for selection bias).
- Tier 4 – Demonstrates a Rationale: practices that have a well-defined logic model or theory of action, are supported by research, and have some effort underway by an SEA, LEA, or outside research organization to determine their effectiveness.

[Evidence Base Guidance Document](#)

**Are software vendors able to apply for the grant?**

Software companies are not excluded from applying.

**The directions for the Applicant's Experience form say that we must submit two "completed and signed forms." The form does not have a signature line. Is a signature required?**

The signature requirement has been removed.

**Should a vendor who is applying for the ESSER III set aside funds apply with a partner LEA (or LEAs) in mind who will receive the services proposed in the grant?**

A vendor can apply for ESSER III set aside funds with a partner LEA or LEAs. However, they do not have to if their proposed scope of work is related to at least one of our priority areas as well as federally prescribed funding lanes and impacting the subgroups articulated in the ESSER III set aside funds application. All services rendered for purposes of this grants must be delivered by Sept. 30, 2024.

**Is there any guidance on how thorough our evidenced based narratives and proposals should be?**

The length of any narrative response to the Questionnaire is in the discretion of the Applicant.

**Are for profit entities eligible to apply for this grant?**

Private for-profit entities are not excluded from the grant.



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**In one of the guidance documents "Evidence Based ESSER Resources" there is specific reference to professional development for Early Childhood Education (ECE) Teachers serving Title-1 eligible students. Is the application for ESSER III set aside funds restricted to only Title 1 eligible students at the preschool level?**

The application is not restricted to only Title 1 eligible students at the preschool level. Please keep in mind that the scope of work must address how the funded activity or intervention will address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underrepresented student subgroups, including each major racial and ethnic group, children from low-income families, children with disabilities, English language learners, gender, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care.

**If we work with youth in foster care, migrants and immigrants yet have no commitment of intent from clients to give us students for this program, can we apply? Do we have to locate our own students for this program if awarded the grant?**

All grantees are required to report on student participation and impact of the service or intervention provided, broken down by subgroup. When applying for the grant, applicants must consider their ability to measure and demonstrate impact on underrepresented student populations.

**Should LEAs write proposals with a specific school in mind?**

An LEA should articulate in their written proposal, who the funds will be designated/directed to.

**Do recipients of the grant need to provide direct services to students, or can the recipients provide the intervention programs only (for districts/schools to use directly)?**

Grantees can provide a direct service to students, as well as intervention programs for schools, districts, students, and families.

**Does the proposal need to focus on only direct support to students or can it include a proposal that provides teacher development so they can more successful support students?**

All grantees are required to report on student participation and impact of the service or intervention provided, broken down by subgroup. When applying for the grant, applicants must consider their ability to measure and demonstrate impact on underrepresented student populations.

**Is there a recorded webinar for ESSER III set aside application?**

Yes, there is record webinar which can be accessed [here](#). Passcode: \$fq\$1r&8



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**What are unallowable/allowable expenses under this grant and/or where can we find this guidance? Is there a specified rate for indirect costs?**

Guidance on allowable costs can be found [here](#). It is ADE policy to limit indirect costs. Although there is no specified limit, ADE prefers to cap indirect expenses at 8%. If you are claiming an indirect rate in your budget, you will need to provide the approval of that rate by the Federal government, and an indirect rate considered excessive may cause your Grant application to be rejected.

**If awarded ESSER III set aside funds, do we have to locate our own students or does your department supply us with students?**

If awarded funds, grantees will need to locate their own students for their programming and/or project.

**Do we have to solicit our own students if we win a grant?**

If awarded funds, grantees will need to locate their own students for their programming and/or project.

**Is there an indirect cost cap or limit that we should use?**

It is ADE policy to limit indirect costs. Although there is no specified limit, ADE prefers to cap indirect expenses at 8%. If you are claiming an indirect rate in your budget, you will need to provide the approval of that rate by the Federal government, and an indirect rate considered excessive may cause your Grant application to be rejected.

**If we are a for-profit ed-tech company, but we are not offering direct services to students, do we need a direct-services partner (e.g., a school, district, etc.) at the time of application? Would we need a Letter of Agreement (or other agreement) in place with any partner at the time of application? Is this opportunity for an approved list?**

No, you would not need to have your direct service partner at the time of the submission of the application. If you have an existing partner who will be offering the direct service component, it would be recommended but, not required to have their letter of agreement in place with your application. Under this current application for ESSER III funds process, ADE will not be creating a distinct, state-approved list of vendors for direct services to LEAs or students and families.



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**An amendment mentions that there is now an Attachment 10, Budget proposal form, however it is not included with the other attachments. Can you please provide insight on this form and where to locate it?**

There is no specific budget form. Applicants may choose the budget format appropriate for their service.

**What is the projected timeline of implementation for the grantees?**

The timeline for implementation will be determined by the nature of the Grant awarded. It is the aim of ADE to ensure that the purpose of ESSER III set aside funds is achieved expeditiously.

**Has ADE re-considered enforcing a page limitation for the Program Narrative (i.e., 8-page limit, 15-page limit, 30 page limit), or is there still no firm page limit for all sections except "Other Attachments" (3.3.12.)?**

There are no page limits in effect except for these specifically stated in the solicitation.

**To reduce the amount of supplementary documentation provided, is it acceptable to include hyperlinks that point to supplementary information for ease of review/reference? Should proposed budget/financial information still be listed under "Attachment 10: Proposed Budget" (see 3.3.11 on pp. 3 of solicitation documents)?**

It is expected that the responses will normally be self-contained and not include links unless necessary.

**Can vendors submit their applications in a single document, or would ADE prefer documents to be separated into Financial Documents and Technical Documents? The solicitation document asks for "one electronic copy of the application" (3.1 on pp. 7), while the "Submitting an Offer" Quick Reference Guide (attached) provides instructions for uploading documents as "Supplier Financial Document" or "Supplier Technical Document."**

Applicant may submit their response as either a single document or as separate documents.

**Can vendors insert appendices within each attachment as applicable, or should appendices be limited to the "Other Attachments" section, which means appendices would be limited to 10 pages?**

If the appendices are referenced in one of the responses, they do not count against the "other attachments" limits. There is no set requirement as to where appendices should be placed. It is at the discretion of the applicant



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**What is the last date ADE will answer any questions regarding this application?**

ADE will respond to any question submitted before December 3, 2021 and will try to answer the questions as quickly as possible.

**Are electronic signatures acceptable? How do applicants attach resumes or word documents?**

If the applicant is unable to sign a word document, the documents can be converted to a signable format for submittal. Electronic signatures are acceptable. Resumes and budgets may be attached in any of the formats identified in the instructions provided all the necessary information is included.

**For certain roles, in lieu of resumes or CV, may vendors provide detailed job descriptions instead?**

If a key position is currently unfilled it is acceptable to provide the position description and required qualifications for the position.

**Are insurance certificates required with the submitted application, or may awarded vendors supply insurance certificates upon request after award?**

Insurance certificates are only required of successful applicants.

**Can potential grantees use these funds for materials & supplies?**

Specific uses of ESSER III set aside funds must comply with the [Cost Principles in subpart E of 2 CFR Part 200 of the Uniform Guidance](#). This requires, among other things, that every grant expenditure be necessary and reasonable to carry out the performance of the award. (See 2 CFR §§ 200.403-200.404.) Consistent with requirements in the Cost Principles, all expenditures must be properly documented. (See 2 CFR § 200.403(g).)

**May an Executive Summary and/or Letter of Transmittal be included with submission?**

Yes, an Executive Summary and/or Letter of Transmittal can be included in submission. Please include after the Table of Contents

**Item 23.1 requires "a written plan that illustrates how the Grantee shall perform up to contractual standards in the event of a pandemic" (pp. 11 of solicitation). Is this plan required with the submitted application, or is this plan required only of awarded vendors? If the plan is required with submission, under which attachment should it be located?**

The Pandemic plan is not required to be included in the response.





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**We have no employees and no need for worker's compensation insurance, but the application says we need to have it. What do we do?**

Workers' Compensation insurance will not be required if Applicant is exempt from the legal requirement for insurance. Waiver forms will be available if a grant award is made.

**Do we need to submit an Accord Certificate of Insurance with our response or only after a contract is awarded?**

Certificates of Insurance are only required after a grant is awarded.

**What type of letter of recommendation is required for the application?**

Please complete Attachment 4 for your references. ADE will contact the references for additional information. ADE will only contact two references provided, even if applicant provides information for more than two contacts.

**Is there any requirement for a partner organization to provide any funding for services provided?**

No

**What does min. Of 20% of fund use must be from ESSER?**

The 20% requirement applies to the direct grants available exclusively to LEAs under ESSER III only and is not applicable to the ESSER III set aside funds available in this application.

**What type of budget is needed to be submitted?**

There is no requirement for the format of the budget and applicant can submit the required information in a format of its choice. If the budget is unclear, ADE may ask for clarification or additional information.

**Is this a one-year program or to be submitted for multiple years?**

ESSER III funds (both set aside and those allocated exclusively to LEAs) must be expended before September 30, 2024. Within that time limit, the length of the grant for ESSER III set aside funds will depend on the service proposed.

**Will ADE give partial funding request or is all or nothing?**

ADE reserves the right to engage in discussions with individual applicants regarding the scope of the service and the funding.





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**The solicitation document on page 5, special instructions 2.2. mentions both “letters of reference” and “letters of support.” Should we submit additional letters of reference and/or letters of support?**

Letters of support are not being requested in this application for ESSER III set aside funds. Per the instructions on Attachment 4, applicant should fill out and complete the Attachment. ADE will contact the entities identified for references.

**For the general liability insurance, we are having difficulty with the coverage for Sexual Abuse and Molestation (SAM). Do grantees need a certificate of liability insurance as an attachment now or can we wait until after we have been awarded a grant?**

The State of Arizona requires SAM coverage for all contracts that involve direct services provided to children or vulnerable adults. SAM insurance will be required if your service brings your providers into direct contact with children or vulnerable adults but may be waived if it does not. ADE cannot provide additional assistance for meeting this requirement. As with all insurance your certificate of SAM coverage is not required until after the grant is made.

**Is there a specific date or time frame when grantees will be notified of award?**

The timeline for any award notification will depend on the number and complexity of grant requests received and has not been determined at this time.

**Is there a payment terms and schedule for awarded grantees?**

Payment terms schedules will be determined at the time of any award.

**Can you clarify if this is a reimbursement grant, or will funds be awarded to the nonprofit directly?**

This is not a reimbursement grant and funds will be provided directly to the organization once their required documentation is submitted and approved through procurement.

**Our organization has three schools under our umbrella, and we would like to apply for funding for all three. Do we submit a separate application for each one, or do we submit one combined application for all three?**

You can submit one application for all three schools.

*The full list of questions & answers for ESSER III Set Aside Application can be accessed by logging into the [Arizona Procurement Portal \(APP\)](#). Select “Open Solicitations” from the welcome page and enter the RFGA number BPM004016 as a keyword.*