



This week, we're focused on accessing funding for your program. There are a lot of funding opportunities available through the COVID stimulus bills for schools and music programs, and this week's guide will offer a crash course on how to access this funding.

Understanding ESSER

Understanding the lingo allows us to better navigate the opportunities available to you. Here is a crash course on terminology and important dates to consider:

Two large stimulus bills were passed called the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act in March 2020 and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA, sometimes referred to as "CARES Act II") in December 2020.

As part of these relief bills, money was allocated to support educational needs through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds. This money flows from the federal government to the states, from the states to the districts, and from the districts to individual schools and programs in the form of grants. Because funding is awarded as a grant, it's crucial that your program and school proactively request this funding, as it can be widely used to support music education.

- School districts **must apply** for ESSER Funds from CARES Act II no later than September 30, 2021.
- School districts **must spend** ESSER Funds from CARES Act II no later than September 30, 2023.

Navigating What's Available In Your State

ESSER funds move from the federal level to the state level, to the school district level, down to your school. However, to access these funds, you need to know who to ask, for what, and when to do it! Let's take a look at how to navigate the available funds for your state:

- See what funds are available. Use these resources to see what funds are allocated for your state from [Round 1](#) and [Round 2](#) of ESSER.
- Find your State Department guidance on how funds can be used. Each state has issued guidelines on how the funds can be used. [Use this resource to find the specific guidance your state provides to local districts.](#)

Prepare For The Ask

Now that you have established what funding may be available to your program, it's essential to request these funds directly. Because funding is distributed in the form of grants, programs and districts must request the funds and declare the intended usage to receive them.

- Find your state Director of Arts Education.
 - [Use this directory to find your Director.](#)
 - Write to them about your state-level guidance. If Arts and Music are included, thank them, and if not, suggest that they work to make sure the guidance consists of Arts and Music so it is crystal clear that these funds can be used.
- Contact your school district.
 - The request for ESSER funds must be made through your school district, so you must coordinate your needs with your district's CFO, Assistant Superintendent, or whoever traditionally manages grant and federal funds for your district. [Use this directory](#) to find contact information if you do not know this person.

Prepare For The Ask (cont'd)

- Contact your school district.
 - Share your state's guidance and address why funds can and should be used for music. Here is a [great resource](#) to help make the case.
- Talk to your Principal and administration.
 - Share information about available funds at the district level and make sure they are applying for these funds. [Here is an email template](#) to begin the conversation.
 - *Please note that although the funds are dispersed to the district based on the Title I formula, any school can apply for funds from the district, regardless of the individual school's Title I status.*

Using ESSER Funds

ESSER funds are intended to help music programs in several ways, including mitigating the risk of COVID spread, offering supplemental support, and ensuring students have equitable access to music in various learning environments. Here are a few examples of ways that ESSER funds are being used in music classrooms:

- Instrument cleaning and sanitization
- Purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE), including mouthpieces, cleaning supplies, masks, and covers
- Facility and HVAC improvements
- Instrument purchases to prevent sharing
- Music learning software packages
- Digital learning equipment
- Summer programs and supplemental instructional support

RESOURCE ROUND-UP

Here are some more resources you can use to help you better navigate the process of accessing and utilizing ESSER funds within your program.

- NFHS recently released [ESSER Funds Guidelines](#).
 - The U.S. Department of Education has an [online dashboard](#) that shows how ESSER I funds are distributed down to the district level.
 - If you want to estimate your district's ESSER II and ESSER III funding, multiply the ESSER I amount by 4 and 10, respectively.
 - "After Hours: Conversations for Music Educators" recently sat down with Yamaha's Marcia Neel, Dave Gerhart, and Heather Mansell to do a deep dive on ESSER funds. [Watch the episode here](#).
 - Don't forget that music funding is also available for Title IV, Part A. [Here is a toolkit from NAFME on Title IV, Part A funds](#).
-

About The Authors

The MusicEdNow team is a cross-industry committee joined by a common goal to help music teachers navigate the challenges facing music programs. It was formed in 2020 and includes an experienced team of educators, non-profit organizations, and industry leaders.

KORG
EDUCATION

Powered by MusicEdNow