

Hello Music Teachers,
Here is Volume 6.

Thanks!
Craig



Welcome back to your Post-Pandemic Planning Guide! It's hard to believe, but the calendar is quickly turning and summer is right around the corner!

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 you to better navigate the opportunities. Here is a crash course on terminology and important dates to consider:

Three large stimulus bills were passed called:

- **Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act** - March 2020
- **Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA, sometimes referred to as "CARES Act II")** - December 2020
- **American Rescue Plan (ARP)** - March 2021

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.

- Time is of the essence! Be sure to check with your state's Department of Education for deadlines on when the money must be spent.

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](#), [round 2](#), and [round 3](#) of ESSER.
- Find your State Department guidance on how funds can be used.
 - a. 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.
 - a. [Use](#) this directory to find your director.
 - b. 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.
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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 its ESSER Funds Guidelines. This document can be found [here](#).
- The U.S. Department of Education has an [online dashboard](#) that shows how ESSER I funds are distributed down to the district level.
 - a. 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 Marcia Neel, Dave Gerhart, and Heather Mansell of Yamaha to do a deep-dive on ESSER funds. You can find this podcast 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.

Step-by-step, we are going to get back to making music together! In case you missed our previous editions of the Post-Pandemic Planning Guide, they can be found [here](#)!

We will touch base with you again in two weeks and can't wait to see your momentum continue to build towards a successful start to the upcoming school year!

P.S. Perhaps you have some thoughts on how we can improve these blasts, excellent that's helped you, or want to share what you are doing now to prepare for Fall 2021. [Drop us a line here](#) — we'd love to hear from you!