

Oregon ESSER III District Plan Guide

Updated March 2022



Oregon ESSER III District Plan Guide

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I. Context

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021. The ARP Act includes nearly \$122 billion for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) Fund. State and Federal communications refer to the Act and funds as “ARP ESSER” or “ESSER III” - these are interchangeable. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) was allocated \$1.121 billion in ESSER III funds and as required by law, 90% of this amount (\$1,009,633,486) was allocated to school districts (districts) using the Title I formula. The [Oregon ESSER III State Plan Application](#) for this funding was submitted on June 7, 2021, and on July 15, was formally [approved by the US Department of Education \(USED\)](#). On January 14, 2021, the Plan was updated to include the ESSER III Set Aside Investment Plan submitted to USED.

Purpose of this Guide

This guide serves as a resource to aid in the completion of USED and ODE reporting requirements and it is designed to:

- ✓ Clarify related federal requirements.
- ✓ Provide technical information to complete and update the estimated expenditure portion of revised ESSER III District Plan, also known as the Integrated Planning Tool (IPT).
- ✓ Share resources to support district planning.
- ✓ Provide refined descriptions of categories that districts may select based on recently released federal language.
- ✓ Communicate District Plan update and data collection due dates.
- ✓ Provide updated federal district data gathering requirements.
- ✓ Provide updated information from USED regarding allowable use of funds.

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II. Overview: What's Required

District Plan

Under the ARP ESSER program, districts are receiving significant resources to respond to student and educator needs as schools continue to safely reopen. District plans are necessary to ensure transparency and accountability for use of the funds. The public, and in particular, students, their families, and educators, have a vested interest in understanding a district's priorities and plans for the funds and whether and how the district will use the funds to address their students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. As a result, **all Oregon districts are required to complete a district plan and post it publicly (the public version must be accessible to screen reader technology) to their websites.**

Components of the District Plan and Due Dates:

- 1. District Plan for Expenditure of Funds** - Districts initially submitted estimated expenditures for Year 1 in October of 2021 and since October, districts' planned use of ESSER III funds have evolved. ODE is requesting that districts keep ODE updated as to how their planned use of ESSER III funds has changed since October. To this end, a revised Integrated Planning Tool (IPT) has been developed. The revised IPT has been pre-populated with the information each district submitted this past fall. ODE requests that districts review the revised IPT to ensure its accuracy in relation to the district's current ESSER III spending plan and update the plan with estimated expenditures for Year 2. Districts must submit an updated IPT by no later than **Friday, May 6th, 2022.**
- 2. Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan** - Due to the lifting of the statewide declaration of emergency and mask mandate, the due date for the updated Continuity of Services Plans is **March 30th**. Updated Plans must be submitted using the [Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan Smartsheet](#). The next required six-month update will be due in the fall of 2022.
- 3. Engagement** - Oregon has linked district ongoing SIA engagement to the required ESSER III engagement. ODE will ask for an update on districts' original plan narrative and engagement in the fall of 2022.

Annual Federal Reporting Updates

Each year the USED requires states to submit data on the expenditure of their ESSER I, II, and III funds to fulfill federal reporting requirements. As this is the first year states will be reporting on ESSER II and III, the USED has updated their data collection requirements.

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ODE will use ESSER reimbursement data and other data already submitted to ODE to complete most of the federal report. However, there is some data that will need to be submitted by the districts. ODE is using a Microsoft Form to collect the needed data from districts. The Form will open on **March 21st** and must be completed by **May 6th**. For more information on this data collection, see the [ESSER webpages](#).

Investment Strategies Updates

Last year, districts were required to link their investments to one or more of the Education Resource Strategies:

- Empowering, Adaptable Instruction
- Time & Attention
- Conditions for Teachers
- Relationships & Mental Health Support
- Family & Community Partnerships
- Other

The USED finalized data collection requirements, released in January of 2022, and have clarified expectations of how it expects State Educational Agencies (SEAs) to report on districts' spending of ESSER III funds. SEAs are expected to report both actual expenditure and planned uses of funds within five broad categories. When updating the IPT, districts must link each of their investments to one of these five spending categories:

1. Addressing Physical Health & Safety

- **Examples:** Investments in facility improvements (HVAC updates, investments to improve ventilation/airflow, outdoor space improvements, etc.), investments in staff wellness activities, purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

2. Meeting Students' Academic, Social, Emotional, and Other Needs (Excluding Mental Health Supports)

- **Examples:** Implementing or deepening authentic, culturally-responsive learning; assessing quality of current instructional materials and investing in high-quality instructional materials from the adopted materials list or independent adoption that meets state criteria and providing high-quality professional learning for teachers on implementation; investing in formative assessment practices; providing sufficient time for both content-focused collaboration and planning as well as student-focused collaboration; providing instructional coaching and resources; providing career connect learning (CTE)

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3. Mental Health Supports for Students and Staff

- **Examples:** Any mental health support provided by a licensed professional (i.e. Counselor, Social Worker, etc.). Any other type of mental health support goes under the above strategy (Meeting Students' Academic, Social, Emotional, and Other Needs)

4. Operational Continuity and Other Uses

- **Examples:** Substitute teachers, staff stipends for extra duties, staff retention support, additional staffing support designed to ensure students receive the same level of service prior to the pandemic, expenditures that do not fall into the previous three categories

5. Not Yet Planned for Specific Use

III. Instructions to Update and Submit the Integrated Planning Tool

Districts are required to provide an annual update to their ESSER III District Plan. The plan includes submission of the required data outlined in the data collection form, an updated Integrated Planning Tool (IPT) and updated narrative section of the Plan. The IPT has been updated to align to the new USED reporting requirements and clarify allowable expenditures. ODE has made these updates to facilitate the district submission process. The due date and process for districts submitting updates to the narrative section of the ESSER III District Plan is still in development and ODE anticipates providing clarity and guidance regarding this aspect of the district's plan by early June, 2022.

Districts identified activities aligned to strategies in their first submission of their ESSER III District Plan. Since this submission, many districts have modified their activities and ODE needs to know how districts have changed their activities to effectively report to USED. In addition, USED's updated annual reporting requirements have identified five categories to choose from. Districts will need to identify with which categories their activities fall under. ODE staff is available to provide additional guidance and information to ensure districts are able to comply with this reporting requirement.

In the original District Plans, districts were only asked for estimated expenditures for Year 1. This update asks for estimated expenditures for Years 1 and 2 (2021-22 FY and 2022-23 FY). Year 3 (Jul 2023-Sep 2024) estimated expenditures are optional for this year's IPT update.

ODE is also clarifying that districts may charge an indirect fee to their ESSER III allocation if the district has a federally negotiated indirect rate. The IPT now contains information indicating which districts have an approved indirect rate and this information has been incorporated into the IPT budgeting formula.

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As a reminder, for ESSER III a minimum of 20 percent (20%) of each district's total allocation must be spent on addressing the academic impact of lost instructional time, in Oregon, [*unfinished learning*](#). USED recognizes that the safe return to in-person instruction must be accompanied by a focus on meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, and by addressing the opportunity gaps that existed before – and were exacerbated by – the pandemic. Districts are required to use at least 20% of ESSER III funding to address unfinished learning, or expenditures related to addressing the academic impact of lost instructional time through the implementation of evidence-based interventions.

Examples of evidence-based interventions include but are not limited to:

- summer learning
- summer enrichment
- extended day
- comprehensive after school programs
- extended school year programs
- other evidence-based interventions aimed at learning loss

Evidence-based Interventions are practices or programs that yield evidence of student results and improved learning outcomes. The intent of grounding in evidence-based interventions is to ensure formal research and studies undergird the actions districts and schools take to support student learning and well-being. They are defined in four tiers:

- Tier 1 – Strong Evidence: the effectiveness of the practices or programs is supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented randomized control experimental studies.
- Tier 2 – Moderate Evidence: the effectiveness of the practices or programs is supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies.
- Tier 3 – Promising Evidence: the effectiveness of the practices or programs is 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 a State Educational Agency, LEA, or outside research organization to determine their effectiveness.

Referenced from [*USED's ESSER and GEER FAQ, May 2021*](#)

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Submission Instructions

1. Obtaining the Updated Template

ODE has pre-populated an updated template for each district using the information they submitted in their original IPT.

To access your district's pre-populated IPT, open the [IPT Prefilled Templates folder](#)¹, find your district's IPT file, and download it to your computer. **Please do not rename the file.**

2. Review and Update Your IPT

Before editing the file, read the **Instructions** tab. Then, review your district's IPT to ensure the Year 1 expenditures accurately reflect your district's current spending plan and update the plan with your estimated Year 2 expenditures. As a reminder, districts must include all public schools within the district boundaries that the district operates or sponsors, including district-sponsored charter schools, as part of their plan. Once the IPT is complete, save the file.

3. Submit the Updated IPT

To submit the updated IPT, upload it to the [Updated Planning Tools folder](#)².

The updated IPTs must be submitted by May 6th.

4. Post the Updated IPT to Your District's Website

Be sure to complete the final step: The completed version of this document must be posted on your district's website in a [location that is easy for members of the public to find](#).

Remember to make the IPT accessible (i.e. can be read using a screen reader). The Excel file is already accessible and can be posted as is. If you choose to post the document as a PDF, [please follow the instructions on the Accessible PDF tab of the IPT to convert the document to an accessible PDF](#). Using the "Save As" or "Print to PDF" options will result in a PDF that is NOT accessible.

¹ https://odemail-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/person/solarios_ode_oregon_gov/EqDSbsIX-rICkZSYgSTFzPQBWzNCHr1yJ072NToskznpIw

² https://odemail-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/person/solarios_ode_oregon_gov/EpEyZ9e9PPVEiS-QjC2x8HEBQR-zfsaPASUqy8GAcVfAqA

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IV. Overview/General Information Resources

- [ODE ESSER III Webpage](#) includes a variety of ESSER III resources.
- [ODE ESSER III State Plan Webpage](#) includes timelines, presentations, district allocations, and other resources supporting the [Oregon’s ARP ESSER \(ESSER III\) State Plan](#).
- [Oregon Invests & Envisions Equity in Education Framework](#) to guide district and state investments under the ESSER III allowable uses.
- [USED Frequently Asked Questions](#): Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Programs and Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Programs.
- The [Final ARP ESSER Fact Sheet](#) includes additional background information and lists allowable uses.
- [Office of Elementary & Secondary Education Emergency Relief Fund Webpage](#) has an array of ESSER related information, including links to what’s happening around the nation.

V. Contact Information

- **ESSER III District Plan and IPT:**
ODE.ESSER@ode.oregon.gov
Watch for more information on Office Hours and other Q&A opportunities coming soon.
- **Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan:**
ODECOVID19@ode.oregon.gov