

Frequently Asked Questions

ESSER III Jump Start Kindergarten Program

Eligibility

Q: Who is eligible for ESSER III Jump Start Kindergarten grant funds?

A: Under the guidelines of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) federal grant, the Oregon Department of Education used a formula to award funds to districts with higher percentages of populations disproportionately affected by the pandemic and historically underserved.

Q: Are charter schools eligible for Jump Start Kindergarten grant funds?

A: Yes. Grant funds are distributed to LEAs (districts) and not directly to schools. A charter school may be eligible for a JSK program at the school site, but the grant funds go directly to districts.

Q: Do the K-8 Summer Enrichment State Summer Learning Grants for 2022 include providing services to incoming kindergarten students? This may impact our decision on accepting ESSER III Jump Start Kindergarten funds for 2022.

A: Yes. The K-8 Summer Enrichment Grants may serve incoming kindergarten students.

Program Design

Q. May a Grantee contract with a third-party organization to provide programming?

A: It depends. Grantees may contract for services that would be considered a necessary and reasonable part of an evidence-based kindergarten transition program, which may include services such as family support, health screenings, referral services, and the like. Grantees may not make subgrants, and must conform to the procurement standards in §§200.318 through 200.327.

Q. Is it allowable to charge a fee to families for additional supplies for the Jump Start Kindergarten grant?

A: No. Grant recipients may not charge fees in order for students to participate in the Jump Start Kindergarten program.

Q. May grantees opt out of the family engagement activities for the first year and focus solely on the kindergarten classroom activities?

A: No. Jump Start Kindergarten Grantees must provide a minimum of 10 hours of family partnership activities each year. Family activities may include family/teacher home visits, Jump Start orientation, facilitated family gatherings, school tours, and playground socials. Please reach out to ODE staff if you would like additional ideas and support.

Q. When is the best time to conduct family engagement activities?

A: It is recommended that family engagement activities occur between May 1st and before winter break begins. Family engagement activities can take place any time during the year.

Q. May grantees include incoming first graders who had an interruption to their kindergarten experience?

A: Yes. Jump Start Kindergarten grantees may provide classroom seats to incoming first graders as long as all focal kindergarten students have been served.

Q. Do Jump Start Kindergarten classrooms need to coordinate with early childhood special education programs to provide inclusive programming?

A: Yes. Smooth kindergarten transitions require a strong hand-off between early education providers, Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) staff and a child's new elementary school and kindergarten teacher. Any referrals in process should receive follow-up as part of the Jump Start Kindergarten program, and Grantees should make time for school or district staff to facilitate this process. Grantees should reach out to ODE staff for assistance in making these connections if they do not already have them.

Q. Do Jump Start Kindergarten classrooms need to coordinate with migrant education programs to provide inclusive programming?

A: Yes. A good first step is to meet with the migrant education coordinator for your region and the school readiness specialist to review programmatic functions, details, and student needs before the start of the program. If you need support making those connections, please reach out to ODE staff.

Q. My school district has a special “transitioning into kindergarten” program that runs throughout the summer. Does the Jump Start Kindergarten program need to coordinate with this program?

A: Best practice is to coordinate with the existing programs already in place. (Use goal language around partnerships.) This is an opportunity to create comprehensive programs and coordinated use of funds. Braiding funds leverages resources and can help with the sustainability of the program in the future.

Q. For the summer of 2022, our district was not able to secure a kindergarten teacher for one school. As a result, we would like our teacher to deliver activity kits to Jump Start families. Is that an allowable expense?

A: Yes. This is an allowable use for the summer of 2022 only, as long as districts have a plan to implement family engagement and kindergarten classroom program requirements for summer 2023 and 2024.

Spending

Q. May we use Jump Start Kindergarten funds for food at family engagement events?

A: It depends. Food costs associated with family and caregiver activities can be covered as long as the food cost is reasonable and appropriate and the activity is directly aligned with the goals and activities of the grant. It is important to note that elaborate catered meals are not considered a reasonable and appropriate cost. The food provided at family and caregiver activities can be provided to staff working the event.

Q. May we purchase capital expenditures with this grant?

A: It depends. Capital expenditures must be directly related to the Jump Start Kindergarten program. For capital expenditures over \$5,000, grantees must first request approval from ODE. An example of capital expenditures over \$5,000 could be playground equipment.

Q. Can grantees braid funding from Summer Learning or 21st Century funds and Jump Start Kindergarten?

A: Yes. Braiding funds is encouraged for Jump Start Kindergarten Grantees. Doing so helps grantees continue the program after the grant award date is over.

Q. Will grantees receive indirect funding to cover administrative costs of implementing Jump Start Kindergarten?

A: Yes.

Operations

Q. May Jump Start Kindergarten grant funds be used to pay for custodial or secretarial services?

A: Yes.

Do you have additional questions about Jump Start Kindergarten? Please email Nancy Hauth, nancy.hauth@ode.oregon.gov.