

Federal Emergency COVID Assistance to K-12 Catholic Schools Summary

Since spring of 2020 Congress has passed multiple bills providing emergency education aid in response to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. Each bill has different programs with different requirements for participation by non-public schools. The following summaries were drafted soon after passage, and rules and regulations for implementation then followed from the executive agencies. Please see the program website links for the latest information.

Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act March 2020

The CARES Act provides \$30.75B to the Department of Education for the [Education Stabilization Fund](#). Under this stabilization fund, there are two funding streams where funds will be allocated to K-12 schools through grants to the states.

These two funding streams are:

[Governor's Emergency Relief Fund](#) (GEER)

- With monies under the fund, the Governor can provide “support to any other institution of higher education, local educational agency, or education-related entity within the State that the Governor deems essential for carrying out emergency educational services to students...the provision of child-care and early childhood education, social and emotional support, and the protection of education-related jobs.”
- The allocation has two parts: 60% of the allocation is based on student population and 40% of the allocation is based on section [1124\(c\) of ESEA](#).

[Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund](#) (ESSER)

- \$13.5B in formula funding is allocated directly to states to help schools respond to coronavirus and related school closures, meet the immediate needs of students and teachers, improve the use of education technology, support distance education, and make up for lost learning time.
- There are twelve uses for money provided under the fund, which include any activity under ESEA and IDEA, supplies to sanitize and clean facilities, planning for closures, purchasing educational technology, mental health support, etc.
- The allocation of this fund to the states is based on the same proportion each state received under Title IA in the most recent fiscal year.

For all funding distributed through these two funding streams, the local educational agency (LEA/school district) must make equitable services available to non-public schools in the same manner as provided under section [1117 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act \(ESEA\)](#). The LEA/school district is required to consult non-public schools and the “control of funds” is maintained by the local educational agency (LEA). These funds are available through September 30, 2021.

Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA)
December 2020

Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER II)

The agreement provides \$4.1B in additional funds under the CARES Act, Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund. There is a new restriction in the GEER Fund stating that no funding can be used for scholarships unless a state is already using the GEER fund for scholarships.

Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools Program (EANS)

Within the GEER Fund \$2.75B is "set-aside" exclusively for non-public schools. However, non-public schools must choose between a second Paycheck Protection loan and the grants that are available under this "set-aside."

The Secretary of Education's allocation of set-aside funding for each state is based on the number of low-income, school-aged children at or below 185% of the poverty level that attend non-public schools.

The Secretary of Education will invite Governors to apply for this grant funding within 30 days of enactment. Each Governor must then apply to the Secretary of Education for this funding; the Secretary has 15 days to approve or deny the application. Governors would then designate the state education agency to administer the grants, the state education agency would make this program information available to non-public schools, process applications promptly and obligate funding no later than 6 months after receiving funds.

After the state education agency receives the funding, it must make applications available to non-public schools; the state education agency has 30 days to approve or deny grant applications under the program. State education agencies shall prioritize assistance to non-public schools that enroll low-income students and are most impacted by the emergency.

Services or assistance that can be funded under this grant include: supplies to sanitize school facilities; personal protective equipment; improving ventilation; training for staff on COVID safety; physical barriers to facilitate distancing; other materials to implement public health protocols; expanding capacity to administer testing and tracing; educational technology; redeveloping instructional plans or addressing learning loss; transportation costs; and reimbursements for certain expenses that schools have incurred since the beginning of the pandemic. These services may be provided by a public agency or a third-party provider.

The bill requires the public agency administering the funds to retain control over the funds, in the course of its provision of assistance and services to non-public schools.

**American Rescue Plan
March 2020**

[Second Round of Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools Program \(ARP EANS\)](#)

A second amount of \$2.75B is available through September 30, 2023. Allocations to Governors under the Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools Program provide services or assistance to non-public schools that enroll a significant percentage of low-income students most impacted by the qualifying emergency. A new limitation exists that funds shall not be used to provide reimbursements to any non-public school. Many of the program specifics are not mentioned in the new language, thus, guidance is necessary from the USDE to confirm how much of the EANS I policy will carryover in the way of allocations, eligible services, and the impact of PPP participation.

[Additional Funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#)

Many Catholic schools currently receive equitable services under IDEA. The ARP provides 2.58B in additional funding to states under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for fiscal year 2021.

[Funding for E-Rate Support for Emergency Education Connections and Devices \(ECF\)](#)

Numerous Catholic schools benefit from telecommunications discounts and reimbursement for cable and internet through the E-Rate program. The ARP provides \$7.172B in new funding to address the “homework gap” through E-rate. This fund comes with new eligible services not previously available through E-Rate; funds are available to support *not only schools*, but students and staff as well. All schools are eligible for a 100% discount, rather than the usual tiered discount in E-Rate. Eligible services to address the “homework gap” include Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers, devices that combine modems and routers, connected devices (“laptop computer, tablet computer, or similar end-user device that is capable of connecting to advanced telecommunications and information services”), advanced telecommunications and information services. Funds may be used during the COVID Emergency Period, ending on June 30 one year *after* the date of the conclusion of the COVID Emergency Period. Funds remain available until September 30, 2030. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will announce the application process, in the near future.