

Title V, Part B – Rural Education Initiative



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Title V, Part B – Rural Education Initiative

Purpose

The Rural Education Initiative (REI) is designed to assist rural school districts in using federal resources more effectively to improve the quality of instruction and student academic achievement. REI (*also referred to as REAP - Rural Education and Achievement Program*) consists of two separate programs: the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program and the Rural and Low-Income Schools (RLIS) program.

Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA)

The SRSA program provides local educational agencies (LEAs) with greater flexibility in using the formula grant funds that they receive under certain state-administered federal programs. The U.S. Department of Education (USED) calculates the SRSA grant allocations for an eligible LEA on the basis of a statutory formula and makes the SRSA grant allocations directly to the eligible LEAs. SRSA funds do not flow through the Nebraska Department of Education. It also authorizes formula grant awards directly to these LEAs for a wide range of local activities that support student achievement. The SRSA program provides flexibility to eligible, rural LEAs to use specific federal formula funds to support local activities under Title I, Part A, Title II, Part A, Title III, Title IV, Part A and /or Title IV, Part B to assist them in addressing local academic needs more effectively. To be eligible to participate in the SRSA grant, an LEA must:

- Have a total average daily attendance (ADA) of fewer than 600 students or serve only schools that are located in counties that have a population density of fewer than 10 persons per square mile.
- Serve all of the schools served by the local educational agency are designated with a locale code of 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the Secretary of Education.

Rural and Low-Income Schools Program (RLIS)

The RLIS program is an initiative that provides grant funds to rural LEAs that serve concentrations of children from low-income families. An LEA is eligible to receive funds under the RLIS program if:

- 20-percent or more of the children age 5 to 17 served by the LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line.
- All schools served by the LEA have a school locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the Secretary of Education.

Eligible systems apply for the RLIS funds through the consolidated application.

Use of Funds

An eligible LEA may use RLIS funds for:

- Activities authorized under Title I, Part A.
- Activities authorized under Title II, Part A.
- Activities authorized under Title III.
- Activities authorized under Title IV, Part A.
- Parental involvement activities.

Carryover Funds

Eligible LEAs may obligate Title V, Part B funds during the federal fiscal year for which the funds were appropriated and during the succeeding federal fiscal year.

The Tydings period gives the eligible LEAs 27 months to obligate their funds 2 C.F.R. Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards under (Education Department General Administrative Regulations [EDGAR] at 34 C.F.R. 76.709 [b]), (Rural Education Achievement Program [REAP] Guidance, 6/13/03, III C-8). It is the expectation of the USED that Title V, Part A, REI funding be expended during the year in which it is allocated.

While there are no provisions for the reallocation of Title V, Part B funds, LEAs with carryover funds in excess of 25-percent of their allocation will be monitored. Technical assistance will be provided to LEAs with an excessive amount of carryover funds.

Choice of Participation

If an LEA is eligible for funding under both RLIS and SRSA, such LEA may receive funds under either RLIS or SRSA for a fiscal year, but may not receive funds under both RLIS or SRSA. An LEA eligible for funding under both this subpart and subpart 1 shall notify the Secretary and the SEA under which of such subparts the local educational agency intends to receive funds for a fiscal year by a date that is established by the Secretary for the notification.

Accountability

Each year an LEA receives a grant under the SRSA program or receives a grant under the RLIS program, the LEA must administer an assessment that is consistent with the assessment requirements in Section 1111 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Allocations

RLIS Standard Operating Procedures (SOP- Annual, once USED REAP have notified our SEA that schools have been awarded and shown in the FY 20__ Master Eligibility Spreadsheet in Max.Gov. Our RLIS Specialist watches/waits for GAN Award notification.

- 1) GAN award is then used to take the total FY allocation for Nebraska and the team calculates the five-percent 5% set-aside for Administrative costs. This set-a-side amount of funds are used directly for the Federal Programs RLIS Specialists coding of time and effort in managing the work for administering the Grant.
- 2) Remainder of funds allocated 95% are then calculated by the number of districts eligible and the total number of students ADA count to come up with an per student amount. Each schools ADA count is then multiplied into the 95% allocation to show the districts FY allocation.
- 3) Allocation(s) are then cross-checked for accuracy by ESEA Assistant Administrator.
- 4) The SEA RLIS Specialist then provides communication with RLIS Grant information to the District Superintendent/Authorized Contact which includes: a cover letter with RLIS Grant details, FY GAN, Grant Application which includes district information which requires date/signature, budget detail page, goals and objectives page that is tied to student achievement validation/measurement.
- 5) Time-line includes notification in September each year, grant application due back to NDE by November 1st each year and reviewing reimbursement reviews throughout the twenty-seven performance period, and monitoring on an annual basis until grant expiration.

Monitoring

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) / Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Monitoring Guide provides the requirements of the programs in the ESEA/ESSA Consolidated Application and other formula grants funded under this legislation. This checklist can be used by grant recipients to ensure programs are operated in compliance with the law and guidance. The Monitoring Guide will be used for on-site visits and desk-audit monitoring. All ESEA/ESSA programs are also monitored through the application and financial reporting approval processes.

Each District, ESU, and sub-recipient receiving funds from any of the ESEA/ESSA formula grants will be monitored annually using either an on-site visit or desk-audit. Districts and sub-recipients with multiple programs may have their review spread over multiple years.

At least one month prior to the visit, the district or ESU will be contacted by the NDE reviewer to arrange the details of the monitoring. After being notified the district or ESU is to complete the appropriate sections of the Monitoring Checklist and submit to the reviewer (at least one week prior to the scheduled visit). The form is designed to identify areas where technical assistance may be needed as well as options for documentation to support compliance with the requirements. NDE is requiring that some pieces of evidence/documentation be submitted prior to or during the monitoring visit. These items are indicated on the checklist with grayed boxes. For some documentation, only specified documentation will be accepted. These are indicated in bold font in the grayed boxes. All other documentation should be available for review.

Monitoring visits will include a review of documentation and a conversation with appropriate program directors and/or staff members. All participants to be involved in the visit will be identified during preliminary planning by the grant subrecipient and the NDE reviewer.

Following the review, the District will have 30 days to submit any documentation or evidence that was not available during the review as requested by the reviewer. The District will receive a written report within 90 days

if additional evidence was submitted. If a review report includes a finding of non-compliance, a plan for correcting the issue is required within 60 days of receipt of the report and may involve a follow-up visit.

Following the review, the District, ESU, or other sub-recipient will have **30 days** to submit any documentation or evidence that was not available during the review as requested by the reviewer. The District will receive a written report within **90 days** if additional evidence was submitted. If a review report includes a finding of non-compliance, a plan for correcting the issue is required within **60 days** of receipt of the report and may involve a follow-up visit.