

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GEER Fund (Updated 7/13/2020)

Q1. Are Component 1 and Component 2 intended for different types of educational entities?

Yes. Component 1 is intended to fund Device Availability and Connectivity initiatives **at the K-12 schools**, while Component 2 is intended to increase Educator Capacity initiatives related to remote learning statewide or regionally **led by IHEs**. If applicants for Component 1 wish to include activities included under Component 2 in their proposal, they may do so provided that **they partner with an IHE** to lead the Component 2 activities.

Q2. Will matching funds be required for all proposed initiatives under the GEER Fund?

No. The Project Narrative rubric (see language in Component 1, Project Narrative dimensions 1.3, 3.1, and 3.2; see language in Component 2, Project Narrative dimension 3.2) for more information about how applications will be evaluated in relation to sustainable funding solutions. Though there are no formal requirements for sustainable/matched funding, applications that demonstrate a clear need for additional resources relative to funding received through other relief programs and long-term financial viability of proposed initiatives.

Q3. How many proposals may any given applicant submit?

Two. An eligible entity may only appear on two applications (as a lead applicant or a partner); applications may be multidimensional, with multiple aspects, rather than multiple separate applications to limit the number of submissions we receive. To be clear, applicants need not submit two applications.

Q4. Will GEER Fund grants cover indirect costs?

Yes. Indirect costs may be charged to any federal education funding. These costs will be chargeable **at a restricted rate**. If you have a negotiated rate with the IDOE, you must use that rate or lower. If you do not have a negotiated rate with the IDOE, you may use up to an 8% de minimis rate.

Q5. May K-12 applicants partner with vendors for training in technology included in their grant?

Yes. While Component 2 is meant for IHEs, Component 1 applications may include professional development and training directly related to the technology requested as the primary target of the grant proposal.

Q6. May education-related entities (community organizations, vendors, curriculum providers, etc.) serve as a lead applicant for GEER Fund proposals?

No. Education-related entities may partner with LEAs/non-public schools or IHEs to collaborate in their initiatives, but may not serve as a lead applicant.

Q7. Will award recipients be able to back-date expenses to a date prior to GEER Fund award notifications?

Yes. The grant submission can include activities that revert back to March 13, 2020 when the pandemic was named a national emergency.

Q8. Will these funds be awarded on a lump sum, or reimbursable basis?

GEER Fund will be awarded on a reimbursable basis. Activities that occur must align with the grant and funding requested.

Q9. In what time period may services/activities (such as hotspot connectivity access) included under GEER Fund proposals be provided for?

Activities can occur through 9/30/22; however, as an emergency relief fund the program prioritizes the most urgent needs and will fund activities that ensure students and teachers have what is needed to successfully launch remote/distance learning as needed in the Fall and throughout the upcoming school year..

Q10. Will schools receive lower priority if they are solely focused on their district/immediate learning community instead of developing a wider partnership?

The GEER rubric prioritizes applications that demonstrate a collaborative/community-level approach across entities to maximize the impact of the proposal and leverage economies of scale; however, no applications will be deprioritized based solely on the number of entities included in the application.

Q11. If schools are collaborating across their counties/communities for connectivity and professional development, but needing to buy devices individually as districts, should they apply separately and mention the collaboration or apply once for the collaborative piece and separately for the devices as an individual school district?

If there is a unified project idea, where collaboration exists despite individual needs for different devices across multiple entities, write those disparate needs into the budget per entity under **one application**. The fiscal agent can do mass purchasing, or the individual entities can purchase and then provide the billing details for the fiscal agent to request reimbursement on behalf of the entire group.

Q12. Can an education service center in Indiana serve as a lead applicant for the GEER program?

Yes. As an LEA, Education Service Centers are eligible to apply for Component 1 activities.

Q13. How should applicants account for items which are not clearly distinguishable as either Device- or Connectivity-related?

Connectivity ought to specifically relate to in-home internet access. More granular budget issues can be addressed via email at Geer@doe.in.gov, or subsequent to proposal submission.

Q14. Are applicants allowed to request program licenses (e.g., EdPuzzle) as a part of their connectivity strategy (students receive activities at school, complete offline while at home, and then upload at school the next day)?

Yes. Budgets may include program licenses as a creative solution to a lack of connectivity access. This should be included in the supplies category unless the per unit price is \$5k or more, in which you would label it as equipment.

Q15. What is the timeline for GEER Fund grant award notifications?

Within a few weeks of submission. Funds will be disbursed as soon as possible subsequent to notification.

Q16. Does the requirement to provide equitable services to students and teachers in nonpublic schools apply to any programs under the CARES Act?

Yes. The CARES Act establishes two new funds to which equitable services requirements apply. Specifically, a local educational agency (LEA) that receives funds under either the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER Fund) (section 18002 of the CARES Act) or the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund) (section 18003 of the CARES Act) (“CARES Act programs” for purposes of this document) to provide equitable services to students and teachers in non-public schools in the same manner as provided under section 1117 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). (Section 18005(a) of the CARES Act). **An institution of higher education** or education-related entity that receives funds under the GEER Fund **is not required to provide equitable services** to students and teachers in nonpublic schools.

Q17. How should an LEA determine which non-public schools within their boundaries are eligible for equitable services, and how should an LEA determine the amount of equitable services for each school?

Equitable services eligibility for non-public schools should be determined **in the same fashion as they are with Title I-A funds**. The total amount of equitable services for each school that chooses to participate in the application should be determined based on a per-pupil calculation. Each LEA should determine a per-pupil amount by dividing their total funding request by total enrollment in the LEA. The amount of equitable services for each participating non-public school will then be determined by multiplying the school’s total enrollment by the LEA’s per-pupil amount.

Q18. What should an LEA that is subject to the equitable services requirement do if it is unable to collect a consultation form from each eligible non-public school prior to the deadline?

Applications that are submitted prior to the deadline, but do not include returned forms from each eligible non-public school, will be considered if the LEA has attempted to reach out to all nonpublic schools, and not necessarily whether all the forms have been returned. If the application is ultimately awarded funding, the review team will ensure that the equitable services requirements have been met prior to releasing the funds.
