Address the impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty

Goal Leader:

Joaquin Tamayo, Senior Advisor, Office of the Deputy Secretary

Goal Overview

Goal Statement

The Department will be a leader and partner in addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in educational areas. By September 30, 2023, the Department will respond to the impact of COVID-19 and the need to continuously provide for high-quality educational environments and capabilities by supporting state educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs) and institutions of higher education (IHEs) to:

- Continue to support schools in maintaining safe, fully in-person instructions for students.
- Utilize COVID relief funds on appropriate, effective and evidence-based activities to reengage students, address lost instructional time, and improve educational opportunities by offering 300+ Department-led technical assistance engagements.

Problem to Be Solved

States, districts, schools, and colleges across the country have shifted their focus regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic from re-opening to recovery. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Protect Public Data Hub Learning Modalities Map indicated that 99.4 percent of school districts in the United States reported an option for in-person learning during week of February 20 through February 27, 2022. In addition to ongoing efforts to ensure a safe physical learning environment, educators across the country are addressing needs related to the impact of lost instructional time; student and staff social, emotional, and mental well-being; and ongoing teacher and administrator shortages. The U.S. Department of Education's (Department's) Institute of Education Sciences' (IES') National Center for Education Statistics found in its January 2022 School Pulse Panel survey results, that nearly all public schools reported requiring students to quarantine as a result of COVID-19. Additionally, 44 percent of public schools reported full- or part-time teacher vacancies, and school leaders reported concerns including lack of substitute teachers, student learning loss, and parental frustration over changing safety guidelines. The Department has and continues to play a critical role in supporting full recovery from the pandemic in the education community, from prekindergarten through higher education, through both distribution of unprecedented funding and on-going technical assistance.

What Success Looks Like

Indicators of success will include: (1) educational institutions continuing to be an option for in-person learning; (2) educators and other school staff being recruited, inducted, professionally developed, and retained in sufficient numbers to meet students' needs; (3) student and staff needs related to social, emotional, and mental well-being being addressed, (4) robust, evidence-based strategies and approaches to addressing learning loss will be implemented, evaluated, and continuously improved, and (5) decrease in indicators such as chronic absenteeism to demonstrate student re-engagement with schooling (6) institutions of higher education report on their annual report that Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds enabled them to keep students enrolled who were at risk of dropping out due to pandemic-related factors.

States, districts, schools, colleges, and universities have unprecedented relief funds to support these key indicators. The Department will monitor spending of relief funds in each of these key areas for both accountability and oversight and to identify ongoing opportunities where technical assistance and engagements can benefit applicants and the impact of the programs.

Goal target(s)[1]

Achievement statement		Key indicator(s)	Quantify progress		
By…	**We will…**	**Name of indicator[2]**	**Target value**	**Starting value**	**Final Result**
09/30/23	The Department will respond to the impact of COVID-19 and the need to continuously provide for high-quality educational environments and capabilities by supporting SEAs, LEAs and IHEs to: • Continue to support schools in maintaining safe, fully in-person instructions for students. • Utilize COVID relief funds on appropriate, effective and evidence-based activities to reengage students, address lost instructional time, and improve educational opportunities by offering 300+ Department-led technical assistance engagements.	1. Amount spent within each ESSER program on meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and other needs.	TBD	TBD	$6,135,079,987.56
		2. Percentage of institutions of higher education that report on their annual report that Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds enabled them to keep students enrolled who were at risk of dropping out due to pandemic-related factors.	75%	89.8%	91%[3]
		3. Percentage of K-12 public schools offering full-time in-person instruction.[4]	100%	--	99.9%

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[1] *Number of states reporting the use of Department funds for full-service community schools*, was removed as a key indicator for APG 1, due to data unavailability.
[2] Due to a variety of factors that make accurate data unavailable to calculate, key indicator 1 was replaced with *Amount spent within each ESSER program on meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and other needs*. The current value is the total of amount spent in each ESSER program: ESSER I $2,881,927,315.72, ESSER II $2,834,799,390.28, and ARP ESSER $418,353,281.56.
[3] FY 2022 Annual Performance Reports (latest data available).
[4] Effective February 2, 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, streamlined the sharing of COVID-19 data into one, easy-to-use platform. The HHS Protect Public Data Hub website is no longer being updated with COVID-19-related data. The School Learning Modalities page data are no longer collected; historical information is available at School Learning Modalities | HealthData.gov.
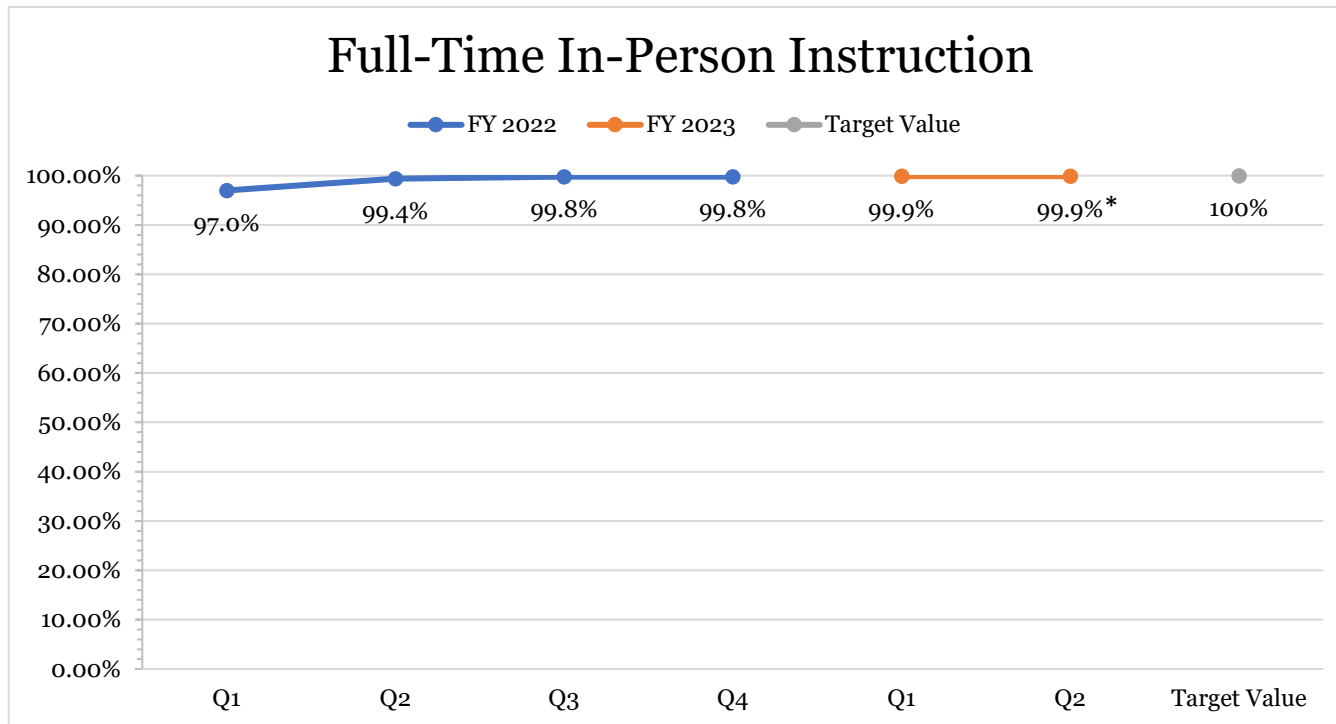
Goal Team

Goal Leader *Joaquin Tamayo* *Senior Advisor, Office of the Deputy Secretary*	
Education Stabilization Fund (ESF) and American Rescue Plan (ARP) Programs *(funded by pandemic recovery funds)* ***Adam Schott*** Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs, Delegated the Authority to Perform the Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education	**Higher Education** *(funded by pandemic recovery funds)* ***Nasser Paydar*** Assistant Secretary, Office of Postsecondary Education

Goal Strategies

The Department will employ a variety of strategies intended to support this agency priority goal, including the following:

- The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) will implement ongoing monitoring of relief funds, including review of State relief fund reporting, and provide ongoing support to States in the use of relief funds. A variety of resources related to use of relief funds can be found using the following links: Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund - Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and Deadlines and Announcements - Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- The Department's cross-office efforts by OESE, IES, and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services to support the field will include ongoing development and dissemination of resources via multiple avenues including social media. For example, the Department will continue to lift up examples from the field through the Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse, implement Lessons from the Field webinars, publish fact sheets.
- The Department will continue ongoing collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to support the physical safety of schools and campuses.
- Implementation of technical assistance communities of practice to support States and districts.
- The Department will support effective use of funds through the many opportunities for peer sharing and partnering with States, school districts, and other education stakeholders.
- The Department will facilitate institutions' use of CARES Act flexibilities related to the administration of Title IV and Higher Education Act of 1965 programs as well as flexibilities outlined in the Federal Student Aid Programs Federal Register Notice using authority of the Higher Education Relief Opportunities for Students Act of 2003 to assist students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in completing their programs of study.
- The Department will continue to host and participate in engagements and provide technical assistance for institutions that received funding, in order to ensure that they are using their funds to meet priority needs and for appropriate purposes.

Key indicators

Full-Time In-Person Instruction

Legend: FY 2022 | FY 2023 | Target Value

- Q1: 97.0%
- Q2: 99.4%
- Q3: 99.8%
- Q4: 99.8%
- Q1: 99.9%
- Q2: 99.9%*
- Target Value: 100%

* Effective February 2, 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, streamlined the sharing of COVID-19 data into one, easy-to-use platform. The HHS Protect Public Data Hub website is no longer being updated with COVID-19-related data. The School Learning Modalities page, data are no longer collected; historical information is available at School Learning Modalities | HealthData.gov.
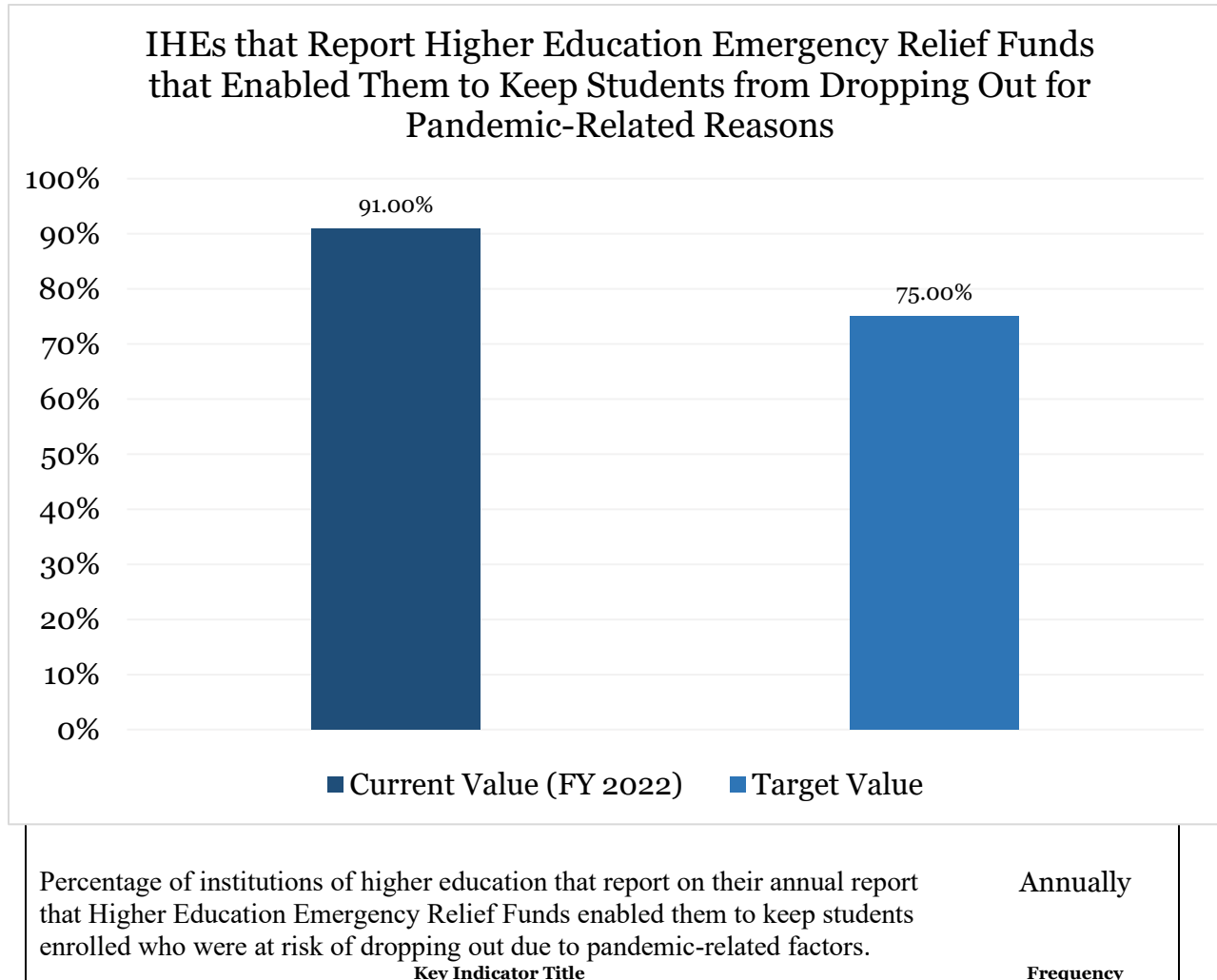
Percentage of K-12 public schools offering full-time in-person instruction.	Quarterly
Key Indicator Title	**Frequency**

Key indicators

IHEs that Report Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds that Enabled Them to Keep Students from Dropping Out for Pandemic-Related Reasons

- 91.00% — Current Value (FY 2022)
- 75.00% — Target Value

■ Current Value (FY 2022) ■ Target Value

Percentage of institutions of higher education that report on their annual report that Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds enabled them to keep students enrolled who were at risk of dropping out due to pandemic-related factors.	Annually
Key Indicator Title	**Frequency**

Key milestones

	Milestone Summary					
Key Milestone	**Milestone Due Date**	**Milestone Status**	**Change from last quarter**	**Office**	**Comments**	
Conference Presentation: Association of Educational Federal Finance Administration (Monitoring and Audit Resolution)	FY 2022, Q1	Complete	N/A	OESE	OESE's Management Support Office and State and Grantee Relations teams conducted joint presentations at the Association of Educational Federal Financial Administrators conference on monitoring and audit resolution requirements, with emphasis on what to expect regarding ESF and ARP compliance and accountability reporting.	
Release Basic Needs Guidance	FY 2022, Q2	Complete	N/A	OPE	In January 2022, OPE released basic needs guidance.	
Conduct Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) Supplemental Support under American Rescue Plan (SSARP) Webinar for grantees and release NIA on SSARP Institutions with the Greatest Need	FY 2022, Q2	Complete	N/A	OPE	In February 2022, OPE conducted HEERF SSARP Webinar for grantees and released the NIA on SSARP Institutions with the Greatest Need.	
External Stakeholder Webinar: with the Council of Chief State School Officers on Pandemic Recovery Funds Financial Management Requirements	FY 2022, Q2	Complete	N/A	OESE	Stakeholder webinar with noted advocacy group and association of State education chief officers; coverage of pandemic monitoring and compliance requirements.	
Briefing with Congressional Appropriations Committee Staff on ARP 1 Year Deadlines, Monitoring, Reporting and Accountability (both House and Senate staff)	FY 2022, Q2	Complete	N/A	OESE	OS Senior Advisor and senior leaders from OESE met with appropriators to respond to specific questions related to progress and requirements on the approach of the one-year anniversary of the ARP.	

External Stakeholder Webinars: ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief and Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools Annual Performance Reporting Requirements Training	FY 2022, Q2	Complete	N/A	OESE	Training and technical assistance opportunity provided to SEA and LEA grantees; coverage of annual performance reporting requirements and ARP Year 1 deadlines.
External Quarterly Grantee Monitoring Reviews	FY 2022, Q2-Q3	Complete	N/A	OESE	52 SEAs participated in a quarterly monitoring call focused on the LEA use of the 20% ARP ESSER set aside to address learning loss. In fiscal year 2023, all SEAs will participate in two quarterly monitoring calls focused on a high-priority issue.
Publication of Full-Service Community Schools Grant Program notice inviting applications (NIA)	FY 2022, Q3-Q4	Complete	N/A	OESE	NIA published in July, and received an additional $7 million to add to the FY 2022 enacted budget level to bring the full amount of grants to be awarded in December to $75 million.
Release Mental Health Guidance	FY 2022, Q3	Complete	N/A	OPE	In May 2022, OPE released Mental Health Guidance.
Conduct HEERF quarterly reporting webinars	FY 2022, Q3	Complete	N/A	OPE	In June 2022, OPE held HEERF quarterly reporting webinars.
Implement HEERF A2 Grantee Webinars on use of funds for construction and renovation	FY 2022, Q3-Q4	Complete	N/A	OPE	In FY 2022, OPE held 6 HEERF A2 Grantee Webinars on use of funds for construction and renovation.
Release SSARP Slate	FY 2022, Q4	Complete	N/A	OPE	In July 2022, OPE released the SSARP Slate, awarding 244 grants to institutions of higher education.
External Quarterly Grantee Monitoring Reviews	FY 2023, Q2	Complete	N/A	OESE	50 States, Puerto Rico, and Washington DC participated in a quarterly monitoring call with a review focused on the awarding of funds and subrecipient oversight by GEER grantees.

Publication Maintenance of Equity FAQs & Use of Funds Guidance	FY 2023, Q2	Complete	N/A	OESE	The Maintenance of Equity FAQs and Use of Funds Guidance for SEAs and LEAs provided guidance to ensure essential resources meet the needs of students who have been subject to longstanding opportunity gaps in our education system.
Publication of Disposition Use of Funds Guidance	FY 2023, Q2	Complete	N/A	OESE	The Disposition Use of Funds guidance is to support grantees in planning for the end of the performance period regarding equipment and supplies purchased with CARES Act funds.
Provided webinar on required Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) reporting	FY 2023, Q2	Complete	N/A	OESE	The Grants Policy and Training Division and OESE collaboratively hosted a webinar that provided an overview of FFATA requirements, supported with the navigation of FSRS.gov, and shared how to overcome common reporting challenges.
Provided webinar on Grant Closeout	FY 2023, Q2	Complete	N/A	OESE	The Grant Closeout and Late Liquidation webinar reviewed the requirements for closing out CARES ESSER and GEER grant and Department's standard formula grant liquidation policy as it applies to requests to liquidate funds after the end of the liquidation period.
Conducted Maine Consolidated Monitoring Review	FY2023, Q3	Complete	N/A	OESE	The Department conducted a consolidated monitoring review with Maine Department of Education with a review focused on the ESSER program utilizing new review protocols. The grantee received findings requiring it to conduct a subrecipient risk assessment and implement monitoring plans by the end of the first quarter of FY 202

Conducted New Jersey Monitoring Review	FY2023, Q4	Complete	N/A	OESE	The Department conducted a monitoring review with New Jersey Department of Education with a review focused on the ESSER and EANS programs. Currently, the Department is finalizing its review and anticipates making findings during the first quarter of FY 2024.
Conducted New Mexico Monitoring Review	FY2023, Q4	Complete	N/A	OESE	The Department conducted a monitoring review with New Mexico Department of Education with a review focused on the ESSER and EANS programs. Currently, the Department is finalizing its review and anticipates making findings during the first quarter of FY 2024.
Publication of Davis-Bacon Overview Brief	FY2023, Q3	Complete	N/A	OESE	The Davis-Bacon Overview guidance document shares information about the requirements under the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts. Davis-Bacon is enforced by the Department of Labor. This overview brief shares local educational agency (LEA) responsibilities, State responsibilities and links to resources that provide additional information.
Publication of Technical FAQs for Liquidation Extensions	FY2023,Q3	Complete	N/A	OESE	OESE published general and technical frequently asked questions for CARES ESSER, CARES GEER, CRRSA ESSER, CRRSA GEER, and CRRSA EANs liquidation extension requests.
Publication of ESSER and GEER FAQs in Spanish	FY 2023,Q4	Complete	N/A	OESE	OESE published ESSER and GEER FAQs in Spanish.

Provided webinar on Davis-Bacon Compliance and Oversight webinar	FY2023,Q3	Complete	N/A	OESE	OESE partnered with the Department of Labor to provide an overview to 481 participants of how Federal funding recipients can meet their obligations under the Davis-Bacon labor standards, including best practices for providing guidance and compliance oversight to sub-recipients and contractors.
Provided Davis Bacon Office Hours/webinar	FY2023,Q3	Complete	N/A	OESE	OESE and the Department of Labor provided an office hours session to address grantee questions that were not answered during the Davis-Bacon webinar previously held. This session reiterated the overview of how Federal funding recipients can meet their obligations under the Davis-Bacon labor standards, including best practices for providing guidance and compliance oversight to sub-recipients and contractors. There were 211 participants and OESE followed up with participants that had questions.
Provided FFATA Subaward Report System (FSRS) webinar	FY2023,Q3	Complete	N/A	OESE	OESE partnered with General Services Administration to support grantees with reporting subaward information within the FSRS. During this webinar issues such as receiving an error in subaward recipient's Congressional District and editing an existing report to correct information were addressed.

Provided the Office of State and Grantee Relations (SGR) Grantee Learning Series (5 Webinars)	FY2023,Q4	Complete	N/A	OESE	OESE provided the following five Grantee Learning Series webinars that focused on the requirements and related resources for the ESSER, GEER, and EANS programs: Grants Administration (94 participants), Grant Monitoring (109 participants), Technical Assistance, Communications, and Resources (77 participants), Maintenance of Effort & Maintenance of Equity (93 participants), and FFATA and Annual Performance Reporting (97 participants)
Approval and removal of conditions on resubmitted ARP ESSER state plans	FY 2023, Q1-Q4	Complete	N/A	OESE	OESE has reviewed and approved the removal of all conditions on ARP ESSER grants by Q4. 2 State plan amendments were approved in Q4.
Public schools offering full-time in-person instruction	FY 2023, Q1-Q4	Complete	N/A	IES	The School Pulse Panel (SPP) is a new study collecting information on issues concerning the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education.
Continue to effectively monitor HEERF implementation on an ongoing basis.	FY2023 Q1 - Q4	Complete	N/A	OPE	OPE continues to monitor HEERF spending, including institutions' use of funding. OPE satisfied and completed all requirements of the FY2023 ESF Improper Payment Study. In March 2023, OPE published an enhanced HEERF Monitoring Framework.

Continue to conduct technical assistance activities with HEERF grantees, focused on assisting grantees with HEERF allowable uses and reporting.	FY2023 Q1 - Q4	Complete	Please view "comments" column for updates.	OPE	OPE hosted a technical assistance session with the 62 Institutional Resilience and Expanded Postsecondary Opportunity grantees (November 2022). OPE has hosted 200 technical assistance activities (including webinars) since the beginning of FY 2023 on topics such as No Cost Extensions, ESF Improper Payment Study, a2 Construction, Renovation, and Real Property Project processes.
Release of the 2021 Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Report	FY2023 Q2	Complete	Please view "comments" column for updates.	OPE	ED released the 2021 Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund report which demonstrated the positive impact of these funds on keeping students enrolled in college, especially low-income students and students of color. More than 18 million students have received direct financial aid under the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) since the start of 2021. Over that period, nearly 6 million community college students received direct financial aid, along with more than 450,000 students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), more than 24,000 students at Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs), and nearly 8 million students at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), such as Hispanic Serving Institutions.

Publication of Full-Service Community Schools (FSCS) Grant Program notice inviting applications (NIA) and publication of FSCS Notice of Final Priority and Requirements (NFP)	FY 2023, Q3-Q4	Complete	N/A	OESE	The FY 2023 FSCS NIA published on June 7, 2023. The NIA is the official document governing the FY 2023 competition. A Notice of Final Priority and Requirements (NFP) published on June 7, 2023. This NFP establishes a priority for a future FSCS national evaluation of effectiveness and FY 2023 application and grant program requirements related to the national evaluation of implementation.

Narrative – FY 2023 Q4

Offices across the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) mobilized to support the field in addressing the immediate and longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. From awarding and administering unprecedented funding from Congress to educational institutions across the PK-20 spectrum, to producing and widely disseminating guidance and resources, to establishing robust partnerships with other Federal agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services and AmeriCorps, the Department implemented a multi-pronged approach to providing assistance to students, families, and educators in the wake of the pandemic. Consistent with the mission of the Department, we strove at every turn to understand and respond to the needs of all students and particularly the needs of students most impacted by the pandemic including economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, English learner students, students experiencing homeless, and other historically underserved students. As evidenced by the milestones we met, we achieved this APG. Furthermore, we embraced the opportunity to raise the bar on our own work and called upon the field to do the same as a call to action to fully recover from the impacts of the pandemic, continue leading the world, and ensure all children, students, and adults succeed in their educational trajectories and beyond.

In the area of higher education, a large majority of grant recipients (91%) indicate that HEERF funds enabled institutions to keep students enrolled who were at risk of dropping out due to pandemic-related factors.

The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) continued to work with state education agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) to provide high-quality technical assistance regarding the Educational Stabilization Fund (ESF) and other American Rescue Plan (ARP) education funding and programs. OESE has provided over 50 relevant sources overall of financial, technical, and programmatic sources to help grantees, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders in helping the Nation's schools and communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since Q1 of fiscal year 2022, OESE lifted conditions placed on approved State plans that, during the initial review, did not fully meet the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ARP ESSER) requirements. For those approved plans that did not fully meet the requirements, a State required, and the Department allowed for, additional time to identify evidence-based interventions that a State will implement to address the academic impact of lost instructional time and ensure that such interventions respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. Of the 23 States with conditions placed on their state plans, in Q3 of FY 2023, OESE approved one ARP ESSER State plan amendment and lifted conditions on three ARP ESSER State plans. All other States had their conditions lifted prior to Q2.

In Q1 of fiscal year 2023, OESE reviewed the implementation of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds for one State as a part of OESE's consolidated monitoring and finalized the State's report in Q2. No programmatic findings for ESSER or GEER were made. Additionally, one State's ESSER program was reviewed during Q2 as a part of OESE's consolidated monitoring. Results from that review were finalized in Q3.

In Q2 of fiscal year 2023, OESE also conducted quarterly reviews with 50 States, Puerto Rico, and Washington DC. The focus of the review was the awarding of funds and subrecipient oversight by GEER grantees. OESE issued findings to seven States and closed findings for five of the seven grantees by end of FY 2023.

In Q3 of fiscal year 2023, the Department conducted a consolidated monitoring review with Maine Department of Education, the review focused on the ESSER program utilizing new review protocols. The grantee was required, as a result of the review, to establish and implement a risk assessment and subrecipient monitoring plan.

In Q4 of fiscal year 2023, OESE conducted monitoring reviews with New Mexico Department of Education and the New Jersey Department of Education, the reviews focused on the ESSER and EANS programs utilizing new review protocols. The Department will determine findings in the first quarter of FY 2024.

Additionally at the start of Q1, OESE released a template and FAQs for States to request a one-time extension to the period of liquidation for CARES Act grants. In Q3, OESE released the updated FAQs and a revised request template for CRSSA Act grantees. In total, for all four quarters of FY 2023, OESE approved and monitored the implementation of CARES Act liquidation extensions for 21 grantees and CRSSA Act liquidation extensions for two grantees.

OESE continued to provide technical assistance to State grantees with required Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) reporting. FFATA reporting improved in Q4 from July to September. There was a decrease from nine States to five States with one overallocated program. There was a decrease from ten States to four States with a program with zero subawards reported. OESE issued findings in June 2023 to States with overallocated ESSER or GEER programs and ESSER or GEER programs that are under 90% reported without explanation. There were 18 States issued FFATA reporting corrective action letters; ten States have fully resolved those corrective actions.

OESE continues to provide ongoing, one-on-one assistance to States to come into compliance with the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) and Maintenance of Equity (MOEquity) provisions. By the end of Q4, 41 states were compliant with the State-level MOEquity provisions, and 49 States were compliant with the MOE provisions in FY 2022.

In FY 2023, OESE also hosted nine monthly check-in calls with all State pandemic-relief fund grantees to provide timely and reliable technical assistance including support with required data collections or required submission of information. In addition, OESE sent 13 weekly newsletters to 485 subscribers that included the most up to date information such as, recent grantee communications, upcoming webinars, reporting updates, deadlines, announcements, and grantee resources. Additionally, in Q1 of FY 2023, OESE updated "Appendix B" of the maintenance of effort (MOE) FAQs to support States' reporting efforts. In December, OESE issued a that ensures understanding of the MOE and maintenance of equity (MOEquity) requirements. OESE also updated the Uses of Funds FAQs for the ESSER and GEER programs and held a webinar to review those for grantees.

Now that all new streams of Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) have been obligated, the Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) anticipates the need for ongoing technical assistance regarding A2 flexibilities and ensuring compliance as it gets closer to the expiration date for those funds. The A2 flexibilities are those that the HEERF funding stream specifically dedicated to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs), and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). To date, OPE (Higher Education Programs) has approved 100 requests submitted under the A2 flexibilities, totaling $403,606,890 in approved projects.

In FY 2022, OPE's Emergency Response Unit (ERU) conducted 15 technical assistance activities with HEERF grantees focused on assisting grantees on HEERF allowable uses and reporting and exceeded our performance target by doing 8 more sessions that planned. OPE has continued these technical assistance activities throughout FY 2023 and performed 200technical assistance engagements in the fiscal year (192 more than targeted). Topics of these engagements include FY 2023 ESF Improper Payment Study; No Cost Extensions; Grant Closeout; A2 construction; Renovation and Real Property Processes; and the transition to G6.

OPE has released a selection of guidance documents for institutions to encourage using HEERF to support student basic needs, including food, housing, and childcare and best practices to address mental health and substance use disorders on campus. These efforts will support inclusive environments, equity in student access and completion. The Department implemented a revamped annual report to collect additional data on how ARP funds support evidence-based programs.

From the revamped annual report collection, the Department was able to issue a public report on 2021 HEERF annual data highlighting the impacts the pandemic relief funds had on keeping students enrolled and institutions open. The 2021 Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund demonstrates the positive impact of these funds on keeping students enrolled in college, especially low-income students and students of color. More than 18 million students have received direct financial aid under the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) since the start of 2021. Over that period, nearly 6 million

community college students received direct financial aid, along with more than 450,000 students at HBCUs, more than 24,000 students at TCCUs, and nearly 8 million students at MSIs, such as Hispanic Serving Institutions. Additional key findings include:

- **Helped students afford basic needs and remain enrolled in school.** In 2021, institutions distributed $19.5 billion in Emergency Financial Aid Grants to 12.7 million students, including 80 percent of Pell Grant recipients. Approximately 9 in 10 institutions reported that HEERF enabled them to keep students enrolled who were at risk of dropping out due to pandemic-related factors.
- **Kept student costs down, including reducing unpaid balances owed to the institution.** Roughly 3 out of 4 institutions indicated that HEERF enabled them to keep student net prices similar to pre-pandemic levels. More than 1,400 institutions spent nearly $1.5 billion on discharging unpaid student balances.
- **Kept colleges open and faculty and staff employed.** More than 2 of 3 institutions indicated that HEERF allowed them to keep faculty, staff, employees, and contractors at full salary levels.
- **Helped slow the spread of the pandemic.** Nearly 3 of 4 institutions stated that HEERF enabled them to purchase COVID tests, provide health screenings, and provide the healthcare necessary to help support students, faculty, and staff.

Additional information

Contributing Programs

Organizations:
> Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), Office of Postsecondary Education, Office of Career and Technical Adult Education, and Institute of Education Sciences

Program Activities:
- State and Grantee Relations: ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund and the Education Stabilization Fund
- School Choice Improvement Program: Promise Neighborhoods, Magnet Schools Assistance Program, and Full-Service Community Schools
- Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund

Stakeholder / Congressional Consultations

The Department's fiscal year (FY) 2022 and FY 2023 Agency Priority Goals (APGs) were developed and informed by the priorities of the Administration, the Department's Secretary, and internal and external stakeholders, including educators, education policymakers, state and local leaders, education researchers and related organizations, advocacy organizations, students, and families. Specifically, the Department engaged and solicited suggestions, research, and focus areas from staff at all levels across the Department. The feedback from staff provided valuable perspectives about the opportunities and challenges for the Department. Additionally, as required by the *Government Performance and Results Act and Modernization Act of 2010*, the Department shared the strategic framework and APGs with Congress.

In June 2021, education community stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide comments through a published notice of proposed Secretary's Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grants Programs in the *Federal Register*. Following the invitation for comments, the Final Secretary's Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grants Programs, which included public comments, discussions, and changes, was published in December 2021.