

Elementary and Secondary Relief – Digital Equity
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Last Updated: Tuesday, August 11, 2020

General

1. Where is the grant information located?

The grant information is located on the Educational Technology page on the ISBE website:
<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Educational-Technology.aspx>
Click on the blue Elementary and Secondary Relief – Digital Equity Grant tab.

2. Is this grant in IWAS now?

Yes. Eligible districts will find it under the ACTIVE GRANTS section under SYSTEM LISTING in IWAS.



The screenshot shows the IWAS system interface. At the top, there is a blue header with 'Categories - Click to Expand/Collapse Tree' and 'Authorization'. Below this, a tree view shows 'Grants' expanded to 'Active Grants'. Under 'Active Grants', the grant 'Elementary and Secondary Relief - Digital Equity RFP' is listed. To the right of the grant name are three icons: a blue circle with an 'i', a calendar icon, and a person icon. A green button labeled 'Authorized' is to the right of these icons. Below the grant list, a legend explains the icons: a blue circle with an 'i' for 'System Description - Detailed', a calendar icon for 'Due Dates', and a person icon for 'Profile'. At the bottom right, there is a blue link that says 'Want to Signup for Other Systems?'.

3. The grant speaks about a pre-submission required technology survey (tech survey). Where is the technology survey located?

The link is at <https://tcfillinois.tfaforms.net/7>. Information about this survey is located on the OVERVIEW tab of the grant application in IWAS.

4. Once I submit the tech survey to the LTC, will I get an acknowledgement to proceed with the rest of the ISBE grant application?

Yes. You will receive an email confirming receipt of the survey once you submit it. Within a week, you will receive an email that will confirm approval of the survey or an email with follow up questions. LTC staff will work with districts in the event questions about survey information need to be addressed before final approval of the survey information.

5. Is this a formula or competitive grant?

This is a competitive grant.

6. Is this grant related to the E-Rate Program?

No, E-Rate is a separate program.

Eligibility

7. What are the eligibility requirements for this grant?

Illinois Public School Districts, charter schools that are LEA's, and regional safe schools and alternative programs run by Regional Offices of Education, and have an EBF Final Percent of Adequacy level of 70.00% or lower are eligible to apply.

8. How do I locate my district's Final Percent of Adequacy?

This data is located on the ISBE EBF page at

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/EvidenceBasedFunding.aspx>

Click on the EVIDENCE-BASED FUNDING DISTRIBUTION CALCULATION link:

Home > Finance, Budgets & Funding > Evidence-Based Funding

FINANCE, BUDGETS & FUNDING
EVIDENCE-BASED FUNDING

Governor Bruce Rauner signed into law Public Act 100-0465 or the Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act on August 31, 2017. This law enacts evidence-based funding (EBF) and comprehensively changes the way that school districts receive the bulk of state funds. EBF sends more resources to Illinois' most under-resourced students. EBF takes the necessary first steps toward ensuring all schools have the resources they need to provide a safe, rigorous, and well-rounded learning environment for all students. EBF demonstrates new mindsets for understanding the relationship between equity, adequacy, and student outcomes.

Evidence-Based Funding

- Evidence-Based Funding Distribution Calculation
- Evidence-Based Funding Enrollment
- Evidence-Based Funding Spending Plan
- Property Tax Relief Grant

RESOURCES

- Education Funding Proposals
- Funding and Disbursements
- Historical General State Aid

FY 2021 EBF Distribution Calculations

For FY 2021 Organizational Units will receive their Base Funding Minimum. The amount to be distributed can be found on the EBF Distribution Calculation page.

Then click on the CALCULATIONS tab to expand the listing and then click on the FULL FY 20 EBF CALCULATION link:

What's New?

- FY21 EBF Base Funding Minimum

Calculations

FY 2021

- FY21 EBF Base Funding Minimum

FY 2020

- Full FY 20 EBF Calculation
- FY 2020 Student Population Funding Allocation - Full Calculation

Once the Excel spreadsheet is open, click on the BASE CALC workbook at the bottom of the Excel screen.

Look up the district name in column 2. The district's final percent of adequacy is listed in column 20:

District ID	District Name	Per Student Investment Cost (Subject to CW)	Additional Investments Cost	Per Student Investment Cost (Not Subject to CW)	Adequacy Target	Regionalization Factor (CW)	Final Adequacy Target (Adjusted for Regionalization Factor)	Final Adequacy Target Per Student (Adjusted for Regionalization Factor)	Adjusted Local Capacity Target	Adjusted Base Funding Minimum	Final Resources	Final Percent of Adequacy
0100000000092	ALT SCH-ADAMS/PIKE ROE (Was 46)	32,933.46	75,899.13	214,062.87	580,079.14	0.9	543,477.51	12,939.94	54,347.75	286,736.34	341,084.09	62.8%
0100000000093	SAFE SCH-ADAMS/PIKE ROE	76,844.74	178,519.96	486,304.88	1,326,910.95	0.9	1,242,850.34	12,682.14	124,285.03	475,018.05	599,303.08	48.2%
0100100102600	PAISON COMM UNIT SCHOOL DIST 1	412,475.90	896,613.27	2,524,321.90	6,804,339.61	0.9	6,376,337.84	12,121.62	1,950,521.74	2,126,265.03	4,112,965.59	64.5%
0100100202600	LIBERTY COMM UNIT SCHOOL DIST 2	451,462.84	717,004.03	2,674,404.03	7,005,455.37	0.9	6,572,350.23	11,415.28	2,437,027.46	2,189,850.36	4,685,495.29	73.3%
0100100302600	CAMP POINT C U SCHOOL DIST 3	669,153.01	1,353,543.40	4,056,841.74	10,881,662.07	0.9	10,199,180.04	11,951.65	3,432,024.08	3,389,161.65	6,830,895.65	67.0%

9. Are special education cooperatives eligible to apply?

No, special education cooperatives are not eligible to apply.

10. Are Vocational Cooperatives eligible?

No, vocational cooperatives are not eligible.

11. Are regional alternative schools eligible?

Yes, regional alternative schools are eligible.

12. If we are already receiving CARES funds are we still eligible for this grant?

Yes, if you meet the eligibility requirements for this grant.

13. Can you start an application and pause it to complete later?

Yes, make sure to click on the SAVE PAGE button at the bottom of each page as you work through each section of the application in IWAS.

Overview	General Information	Applicant Information	Amendments	FFATA	Program Specific	Budget Pages	Assurance Pages	Submit	Application History	Page Lock Control	Application Print
Abstract		Needs Assessment	Goals and Plans		Activities Pages		Staffing		Evaluation Plan		Funding Calculator
<p>Abstract</p> <p>WHEN COMPLETING THIS PAGE, DO NOT USE SPECIAL FORMATTING COPY/PASTED FROM WORD, SUCH AS NUMBERED OR BULLETED LISTS, CHARTS, GRAPHS, ETC. DO NOT USE SPECIAL CHARACTERS, SUCH AS SINGLE OR DOUBLE QUOTES, AMPERSAND SYMBOL, ETC.</p> <p>Provide a brief overview of the nature of the planned program and services to be provided.* (0 of 1500 maximum characters used)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">Save Page</p>											

14. The application asks me to enter the number of students. Which figure should I use?

Entities will use the March 16, 2020 low-income and total enrollment data.

15. Is an individual school or a non-profit organization eligible to apply?

No, only Illinois Local Education Agencies (LEAs), including charter schools that are LEA's and have an EBF Final Percent of Adequacy level of 70.00% or lower are eligible to apply.

Budgeting

- 16. The start date of the grant says September 7. In order to secure needed technology devices, we have already placed an order. Can technology orders prior to September 7 be included?**

Yes, expenditures that occurred on or after March 13, 2020 can be included.

- 17. On the budget pages, my allocation is 0 and when entering amounts into the budget detail page, my allotment is a negative number. Why is that?**

The values calculated from the funding calculator page will copy over to the budget page but allotments will be zero until the grant has gone through merit based review and awarded. As items are entered, the allotment remaining amount will go negative. Awarded grants will have the allotments adjusted and districts will have the opportunity to review the budget page at that time.

Non-Public Schools

- 18. Regarding nonpublic school participation (equitable share), is consultation required for only those nonpublic schools located within our LEA's residential boundaries?**

Yes, the LEA must consult with all nonpublic schools located within the LEA boundary, regardless of registration and/or recognition status. A PDF form is available in the application. This must be filled out and uploaded into the grant application.

- 19. Are non-publics eligible for funds or services?**

Non-Public schools are eligible for a share of services.

- 20. How is the non-public equitable share calculated for services?**

Calculate the share using:

- The number of low-income students in nonpublic schools (ESEA Sec. 1117) and the total number of students enrolled in nonpublic schools (ED Guidance 4.30.20). Please [see the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief step by step application webinar, slide 18](#).
- LEAs will engage in consultation and nonpublic schools will receive the services based upon the number of low-income children (ESEA Sec. 1117)
- LEAs will hold back the difference between the total ESSER LEA allocation and the amount calculated based upon total enrollment minus the low-income student proportionate share (like in an escrow account).
- The lesser of the two, number of low-income students or total number of students enrolled shall be used for the delivery of initial services.

- 21. What date should be used to determine the enrollment and low-income (i.e. March 1st?)**

Entities will use the March 16, 2020 low-income and total enrollment data.

22. Are public schools required to advertise meetings with the non-publics regarding this grant?

Evidence that the meeting took place needs to be documented on the Non-Public School Participation Form, which needs to be uploaded as part of the application. The meeting does not have to be advertised.

23. Does all of the purchasing of products and/or devices have to filter through the public school district?

Yes, all purchases must flow through the public school district. The title to materials, equipment, and property purchased with ESSER funds, remain the property of the LEA.

24. Must an LEA or another public agency maintain control of CARES Act funds used to provide equitable services?

Yes. Control of funds for services and assistance provided to non-public school students and teachers under the CARES Act programs, and title to materials, equipment and property purchased with such funds, must be in a public agency, and a public agency must administer such funds, materials, equipment, and property. In other words, no funds may go directly to a non-public school. In addition, services for non-public school students and teachers must be provided by a public agency directly or through contract with another public or private entity. (Section 18005(b) of the CARES Act).

Questions about devices and connectivity

25. Does a hotspot qualify as a device or connectivity?

A hotspot would qualify as connectivity.

26. Are mobile hotspots the only connectivity device that is allowable for funding with this grant or can we use this funding to work with a local ISP to expand their coverage area in our district?

Funds may be used to support home connectivity that directly impacts students' ability to connect to the internet for remote learning. If solutions besides mobile hotspots are available that meet this criterion, then they may be eligible. Note that funding is only available during FY21. Qualifying purchases include, but are not limited to: cellular hotspots, devices with internal cellular capability, solutions provided by local ISP's that provide internet access to students.

27. What about computer related devices such as carts (which would typically be considered a capital outlay)?

Expenses for computer carts would not be eligible. The intent of this funding opportunity is to provide funds for items that close the digital divide for students.

28. I know the connectivity is for the student's home; do the devices have to be for home use as well? or can the devices be used within the schools (we are not 1:1 in our schools and won't be fully remote, so there is a need for additional devices to keep in our buildings).

Yes, devices can be used at both home and school. As for connectivity options for the schools, while connectivity devices obtained via this grant can be used for internet at the school, there may be more comprehensive options available from the [federal E-Rate program](#) and/or the [state of Illinois K-12 Broadband Network](#) that can address school building connectivity needs, especially if an infrastructure buildout is needed to connect your schools to high speed internet.

29. Can funds be used to purchase technology for teachers?

No, the funds are intended to close equity issues of the digital divide for students.

30. Are we required to filter internet access provided through options obtained through this grant?

Districts are required to adhere to the filtering, monitoring, and internet safety provisions of the [Children's Internet Protection Act, or CIPA](#), in order to receive funding offered through the E-Rate program. While E-Rate is a separate funding program and primarily deals with on-campus internet connections, the [CARES Act](#) does not mention filtering. Districts may choose to offer filtering as a part of internet services provided to students.