

1. IL-EMPOWER grant funds, authorized under Title I, Part A, Section 1003 School Improvement of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), are allocated on a formula basis to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) serving the state's lowest-performing schools that are implementing comprehensive support and improvement activities or the state's underperforming schools implementing targeted support and improvement activities.
2. The purpose of the funding is to build the capacity of school leaders to implement effective school improvement practices, and the goal is to enable schools in improvement status to improve student achievement and performance outcomes and to exit status.
3. Funding must be used to develop, implement, and monitor School Improvement Plans (SIPs).
4. IL-EMPOWER grant funds, while allocated to the LEA, are calculated by school and must be used for school-level activities, respectively.
5. IL-EMPOWER grant funds may be used for the following types of planning and implementation activities:
 - Paying school personnel to collaborate and to develop, implement, and monitor SIPs.
 - Contracting for professional services from state-approved learning partners.
 - Conducting school-level needs assessments.
 - Analyzing data.
 - Identifying resource inequities.
 - Researching and implementing evidence-based interventions.
 - Purchasing standards-aligned curriculum and materials.
 - Purchasing and administering local assessments for progress monitoring.
6. LEAs with schools designated for comprehensive or targeted support can expect four years of continuation funding from the initial summative designation.
7. Improvement status defines the up-to four-year term that runs concurrently with the IL-EMPOWER grant program. Status and funding begin with an initial summative designation of comprehensive or targeted and continue through the remaining part of the first year in the planning phase of the grant and are followed by three consecutive years of implementation. School Improvement funding is awarded concurrently with improvement status.
8. Improvement status and grant funding continue concurrently for up to four years regardless of positive changes in annual summative designations because IL-EMPOWER is structured to support local efforts with scaffolded support of sufficient size and longevity to improve outcomes for students and exit improvement status within a four-year grant term.
9. The standard four-year grant term has been stretched to five years for cohorts RC 2018 and RC 2019 to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. The extended timeline includes no additional money; it includes only additional time to use the funds that would otherwise have been granted during the four-year program.
10. Supplement, not supplant is in effect. LEAs shall use federal funds received under this part only to supplement the funds that would, in the absence of such federal funds, be made available from state and local sources for the education of students participating in programs assisted under this part, and not to supplant such funds.
11. School Improvement funding and services are for public schools only and are therefore not subject to proportional share for programs and services to benefit nonpublic school children. As such, timely and meaningful consultation is not required.

12. Unexpended fiscal year 2021 funds may be carried to FY 2022 at a rate of 100%. This carryover provision is not guaranteed in subsequent years, as School Improvement funding should be spent in the year it is allocated.
13. FY 2021 carryover funds will only be available after the FY 2021 final expenditure report is submitted and the FY 2022 grant application is approved. FY 2021 carryover funds may be upwardly amended into FY 2022 at that time.
14. School Improvement funds are allocated by schools, so all carryover must be returned to its school of origination. LEA grant amendments to access carryover will be reviewed by ISBE for this fiscal accounting requirement.
15. LEAs must meet the following reporting requirements.

Reporting period	Quarterly expenditure and program reporting	
	Report type	Due date
July 1-September 30	IWAS Fiscal Reporting: Quarterly Expenditure Report	October 20
July 1-October 30	IWAS Program Reporting: School Improvement Report	November 20
October 1-December 31	IWAS Fiscal Reporting: Quarterly Expenditure Report	January 20
November 1-February 28	IWAS Program Reporting: School Improvement Report	March 20
January 1-March 31	IWAS Fiscal Reporting: Quarterly Expenditure Report	April 20
March 1-June 30	IWAS Program Reporting: School Improvement Report	July 20
April 1-June 30	IWAS Fiscal Reporting: Quarterly Expenditure Report	July 20

16. LEAs must contract annually on behalf of each of its schools in comprehensive improvement status with an approved learning partner or a primary partner to address areas identified in the respective SIPs.
17. Districts with comprehensive schools have flexibility in annually partnering with approved learning partners and/or primary partners. This flexibility allows for:
 - Short-term partnerships
 - Long-term partnerships
 - Multiple partnerships and/or
 - Concurrent partnerships
18. While utilizing an approved learning partner or primary partner is required annually, budgeting a given percentage of the School Improvement allocation for related services is not required.
19. Contracts with approved learning partners are subject to available, continued funding and must not exceed the end of the grant agreement (i.e., June 30, 2022, or August 31, 2022, for extended programs).
20. Approved learning partners are contracted by ISBE and are authorized to provide direct professional learning services in evidence-based practices to LEAs and schools and are not permitted to subcontract with vendors not on the approved learning partner list.

21. LEAs must, at a minimum, fulfill the standard components of the IL-EMPOWER School Improvement Process and incorporate all required elements in each School Improvement Plan.

IL-EMPOWER School Improvement Process: Every Student Can Grow; Every School Can Improve	
Components	Elements
Identify local needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a school leadership team Build a stakeholder advisory group Conduct a school-level needs assessment Conduct a root cause analysis Present results to the stakeholder advisory group
Plan for school improvement	Develop an SIP with the following elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMART goals Key activities, milestones, timelines, funding sources, and people responsible for implementation Local assessment(s) to measure academic progress Monitoring Plan that includes all SMART Goals
Select relevant evidence-based practices and interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm evidence-based practices align with ESSA Identify primary and/or approved learning partner(s)
Implement and monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate the SIP to all stakeholders Implement the SIP Monitor implementation and progress toward SMART goals
Examine, reflect, and adjust course	Analyze and update the following elements within the SIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMART goals Key activities, milestones, timelines, funding sources, and people responsible for implementation Local assessment(s) to measure academic progress Monitoring plan that includes all SMART goals

SIP requirements	Comprehensive	Targeted
LEAs must in partnership with stakeholders, including school leaders, teachers, and parents, develop and implement an improvement plan that:	✓	✓
• Is based on a school-level needs assessment.	✓	✓
• Includes goals to improve student outcomes.	✓	✓
• Includes evidence-based interventions.	✓	✓
• Identifies resource inequities.	✓	✓
• Is approved annually by the school, the district, the local Board of Education, and ISBE.	✓	
• Is approved annually by the LEA and the local Board of Education		✓
• Is monitored by the LEA.	✓	✓

22. LEAs with schools in comprehensive status must also meet the following program requirements on behalf of each of its schools.
- Implement curriculum aligned to state learning standards.
 - Participate in site monitoring and program evaluation visits as part of a comprehensive review of teacher and administrator practices to gauge SIP efficacy with classroom instruction, building practices, standards-based curriculum, local assessments, and evidence-based practices.
 - Implement or continue use of local assessments to inform instruction in areas identified in the SIP.
 - Engage regularly with ISBE officials (e.g., director and coordinators). District leaders are the primary program contacts, with the inclusion of school-level leadership.
 - Attend program-specific information meetings hosted by ISBE.
 - Participate in program evaluation activities.
 - Participate in peer learning opportunities for district and school leaders during the Illinois ESSA Conference.
23. Grants management activities must comply with state and federal grant administration policies, fiscal requirements, and procedures as outlined in ISBE's State & Federal Grant Administration Policy, Fiscal Requirements, and Procedures Handbook found at www.isbe.net/documents/fiscal_procedure_handbk.pdf.
24. LEAs have 30 days from the release of the IL-EMPOWER grant in eGMS/IWAS to submit an initial application with a substantially approvable budget to secure a July 1, 2021, effective start date.