

Title V, Part B: Rural Education Achievement Program FAQ

Department of District/School Leadership

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Table of Contents

Rural Education Achievement Programs Comparison.....3

Locale Codes.....7

Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates.....9

REAP Resources.....10

Rural Education Achievement Programs Comparison

	Small, Rural School Achievement	Rural and Low-Income Schools	Dually Eligible
Purpose	The purpose of the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program is to provide rural Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with financial assistance to fund initiatives aimed at improving student academic achievement.	The purpose of the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) program is to provide rural LEAs with financial assistance for initiatives aimed at improving student achievement.	N/A
Who is eligible for REAP funds?	<p>An LEA is eligible to participate in the SRSA program if it meets the statutory criteria of being both small <u>and</u> rural. (See Elementary and Secondary Education Act [ESEA] Section 5211(b).)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>To be considered small</u>, an LEA must have a total average daily attendance of fewer than 600 students <i>or</i> exclusively serve schools that are located in counties with a population density of fewer than 10 persons per square mile. 2. <u>To be considered rural</u>, all schools within the LEA must have a school locale code of 41, 42, or 43 (assigned by the National Center for Education Statistics [NCES]) <i>or</i> be located in an area of the state defined as rural by a governmental agency of the state. 	<p>An LEA is eligible to participate in the RLIS program if it meets the statutory criteria of being both low-income <u>and</u> rural. (See ESEA Section 5221(b)(1).)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To be considered low-income, 20 percent or more of the children ages 5 to 17 served by the LEA must be from families with incomes below the poverty line, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) (e.g., for FY 2025 funding, income year 2022 data are utilized). Rural non-geographic LEAs for which SAIPE data are not available that are eligible based on the same state-derived equivalent of SAIPE data that the state uses to make allocations under Part A of Title I of the ESEA, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.72, are also eligible for RLIS funds. 2. To be considered rural, all schools in the LEA must have a school locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43 (assigned by NCES) <i>or</i> be located in an area of the state defined as rural by a governmental agency of the state. 	An LEA is dually eligible if it meets the requirements for both SRSA and RLIS programs.

	Small, Rural School Achievement	Rural and Low-Income Schools	Dually Eligible
Who is the administrator of an LEA's grant award?	The U.S. Department of Education (ED)	ISBE	Dependent upon which grant the LEA chooses to apply.
How are LEAs notified of eligibility to apply?	<p>Eligible LEAs will receive an email from ED by the end of March each year notifying the LEA of its eligibility for SRSA funding.</p> <p>The email will provide each eligible LEA with instructions on how to apply for the funding, an estimate of the amount of funding the LEA will receive, and additional resources regarding SRSA funding.</p> <p>For additional information on the application process, please see FY 2024 Small, Rural School Achievement Grant Application Webinar Slides.</p>	ISBE receives notification of RLIS award from ED in July. ISBE will notify LEAs that are eligible for RLIS funding by the end of July. Information regarding the grant application process will be included in the notification.	<p>ED publishes the Master Eligibility Spreadsheet (MES) between January and March each year.</p> <p>The MES is located on the SRSA or RLIS Eligibility page. An LEA can view its eligibility status as well as estimated grant award amounts. Additionally, once the MES is posted to the SRSA and RLIS Eligibility pages, ISBE also will post the MES to the Rural School District Support webpage.</p> <p>If an LEA is eligible for the SRSA program, - it will receive email notification from ED to apply for the SRSA program and whether it is dual-eligible. If dual-eligible, the email provides the estimate of the LEA's award under each program.</p>
How does an LEA apply for the grant?	LEAs apply for SRSA funds according to ED's application procedure.	Eligible LEAs create and submit the IWAS application for ISBE approval.	Eligible LEAs follow the application procedures for the selected grant.

	Small, Rural School Achievement	Rural and Low-Income Schools	Dually Eligible
How can LEAs use their REAP awards?	<p>Grantees may use SRSA funds to carry out activities authorized under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I, Part A (Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs) • Title II, Part A (Supporting Effective Instruction) • Title III (Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students) • Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment) • Title IV, Part B (21st Century Community Learning Centers) 	<p>Grantees may use RLIS funds to carry out authorized activities under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I, Part A (Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs) • Title II, Part A (Supporting Effective Instruction) • Title III (Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students) • Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment) • Parent and Family Engagement 	<p>An LEA should make an informed decision regarding which grant to apply for and best meet the needs of the district. It is recommended that LEAs review the MES to identify the amount of funding that they could receive from each source.</p>
What is Alternative Fund Use Authority (AFUA)?	<p>AFUA allows SRSA-eligible LEAs greater flexibility in spending funds received under Title II, Part A and Title IV, Part A to best address the LEA's particular needs. Under AFUA, LEAs can utilize Title II, Part A and Title IV, Part A funds to pay for activities under any of the allowable uses for SRSA grant funds. (See Section 5211(a) of the ESEA, as amended, for more information.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An SRSA-eligible LEA does not have to apply for SRSA funds to exercise AUFA. • To exercise AUFA, an eligible LEA should select the REAP flexibility box on the ESEA Title II and/or Title IV grant applicant information page. Details regarding expenditures should be included on the program specific and budget detail pages within the grant application(s). 	N/A	<p>An LEA that is eligible for both SRSA and RLIS funds may exercise AUFA even if the LEA chooses to participate in RLIS instead of SRSA.</p>

Locale Codes

What are Locale Codes?

The NCES locale framework is composed of four basic types (City, Suburban, Town, and Rural) that each contains three subtypes. It relies on standard urban and rural definitions developed by the U.S. Census Bureau, and each type of locale is either urban or rural in its entirety. The NCES locales can be fully collapsed into a basic urban-rural dichotomy or expanded into a more detailed collection of 12 distinct categories. These subtypes are differentiated by size (in the case of City and Suburban assignments) and proximity (in the case of Town and Rural assignments). The NCES classifications and corresponding two-digit locale codes are as follows.

Locale Code	Type	Definition
11	Large City	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of 250,000 or more.
12	Midsize City	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.
13	Small City	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city with population of less than 100,000
21	Large Suburb	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of 250,000 or more.
22	Midsize Suburb	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.
23	Small Suburb	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of less than 100,000.
31	Fringe Town	Territory inside an urban cluster that is less than or equal to 10 miles from an urbanized area.
32	Distant Town	Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an urbanized area.
33	Remote Town	Territory inside an urban cluster that is more than 35 miles from an urbanized area.
41	Fringe Rural	Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster.
42	Distant Rural	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster.
43	Remote Rural	Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster



SRSA



RLIS

How can I find my school district's locale codes?

The REAP Master Eligibility Spreadsheet from NCES includes all the unique school locale codes that exist within an LEA. An LEA can review this information on the REAP Master Eligibility Spreadsheet posted on the SRSA and RLIS Eligibility website. Locale codes for individual districts can be found on [the National Center for Educational Statistics Locale Code Lookup Interactive Map](#).

How often are locale code designations updated?

NCES annually updates the school locale classification data item, based on data reported in the NCES Common Core of Data, an annual collection of administrative data about enrollment, staffing, and program participation for schools, LEAs, and State Education Agencies. As a result, an LEA with updated school rosters is encouraged to review the REAP Master Eligibility Spreadsheet annually to determine if it will be eligible for SRSA and/or RLIS for the upcoming school year.

SAIPE

What is SAIPE?

SAIPE is the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates that are provided by ED. These estimates are used to calculate Title I fund disbursements.

What data is used to determine if an LEA meets the RLIS requirement of 20% poverty threshold?

ED uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau's SAIPE program to determine, by LEA, the percentage of related children ages 5 through 17 who are from families with incomes below the poverty level. The department uses the most recent poverty data available (e.g., for FY 2025 funding, income year 2022 data are utilized) at the time it begins the annual process of determining REAP eligibility. To learn more about the U.S. Census Bureau's SAIPE program, visit the [U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Program webpage](#).

Who do I contact if I want to challenge the SAIPE data?

SAIPE data are provided to ISBE from the U.S. Department of Education each January for review. The SAIPE data are publicly posted on the ISBE [Census Estimates webpage](#) for review. There is a challenge period (January through mid-March) for LEAs to review the poverty and population data for certain non-statistical errors, which include errors the U.S. Census Bureau may have made in 1) processing input data or in running the estimation models/programs, or 2) preparing or processing information to define geographic boundaries (e.g., school district boundaries). LEAs may contact the SAIPE program at 301-763-3193 or sehsd.saipe@census.gov to obtain information on the process to challenge the data. More information and guidance concerning the U.S. [Census Bureau's challenge procedure](#), as well as information about the data sources and the methodology used to prepare this data, are available on the [U.S. Census Bureau website](#).

REAP RESOURCES

General Information on REAP

- [Informational Document on the Rural Education Achievement Program](#)
- [REAP FAQ](#)
- [Understanding the Rural Education Achievement Program](#)

ISBE REAP Resources

- [Rural School District Support](#)
- [Title I, Part A](#)
- [Title II, Part A](#)
- [Title III](#)
- [Title IV, Part A](#)

REAP Eligibility Resources

- [Considerations for Dual-Eligible LEAs](#)
- [RLIS Eligibility](#)
- [SRSA Eligibility](#)

REAP Funds Resources

- [Guide to Using REAP Funds](#)
- [Title V, Part B of ESEA-Rural Education Initiative](#)

RLIS Resources

- [Rural and Low-Income School Program](#)
- [RLIS Hold Harmless](#)

SRSA Resources

- [Accessing SRSA Grant Funds in G6](#)
- [Small, Rural School Achievement Program](#)
- [SRSA Application Overview Webinar Slides](#)
- [SRSA Application FAQ Webinar Slides](#)