

Questions & Answers

ESSER Office Hours

Posted Sept. 8, 2022

This document contains questions and answers regarding the ESSER 3.0 planning addenda and FY23 ESSER 2.0 and 3.0 funding applications. For additional questions beyond what is covered in this document, please attend the next office hours meeting or contact the appropriate relief team [divisional coordinator](#).

Helpful Resources

- [Office Hours schedule and meeting link](#)
- [ESSER 2.0 Technical User Guide](#)
- [ESSER 3.0 Technical User Guide](#)
- [ESSER Checklist for LEAs](#)
- [FY23 ESSER 2.0 and 3.0 Grant ePlan Copying Instructions](#)
- [USED Use of Funds Detail Appendix](#)
- [ESSER 3.0 Allowability for Learning Loss Chart](#)
- [FY23 Learning Loss Tool](#)
- [ePlan> TDOE Resources](#) > Relief Funding > ARPA Act/ESSER Fund 3.0 > ESSER 3.0 Planning Addenda
 - [ESSER Grant Planning Documents slides](#)
 - [ESSER Grant Planning Documents webinar recording](#)

Due Dates:

- The ESSER 3.0 planning addenda are due every 6 months on **Sept. 15** and **Feb. 15** through **Sept. 30, 2023**.
- The FY23 ESSER 2.0 and 3.0 funding applications are due **Nov. 1, 2022**.
- The FY23 ESSER 2.0 and 3.0 board approval form is due **Dec. 1, 2022**.

Planning Addenda

1. Does the Public Facing Addenda and Safe Return Addenda need board approval?

Yes, but there is not a board approval form like with the funding application. We recommend LEAs keep the board approval documentation at the local level. The board needs to approve the addenda before it is posted to the website but not before it is uploaded to ePlan.

2. In the Health and Safety Plan-Section 3, what do we put in our addendum if those sections are no longer relevant?

All sections of each planning addenda must be revisited and answered with the most up-to-date policies and procedures that are in place in the LEA. We recommend using the current status in your area and the current guidelines from the health department, CDC, etc. You may wish to note that the LEA will continue to consult with the health department regarding different policies as things change throughout the year.

3. Do we have to complete and upload the stakeholder information documents like we did last year?

No, there are questions within the addenda about stakeholder engagement that will suffice. At this time, those are the only 2 documents regarding stakeholder information LEAs will need to complete moving forward.

4. *Where is the board approval form for the planning addenda?*

There is no form for the planning addenda, only for the funding applications. We recommend LEAs document the board approval for the planning addenda as they see fit and keep that documentation at the local level.

5. *We uploaded our addenda. Can we go ahead and work on the application before that is approved?*

The ESSER 3.0 application is not open yet. However, once it opens LEAs can begin working on the application. Please note, ESSER 3.0 applications will not be reviewed or approved by the relief team until the planning addenda are approved.

6. *Can ESSER 2.0 be approved before the Safe Return and Plan for Remaining Funds are approved?*

Yes, the planning addenda are only required as part of ESSER 3.0. LEAs can complete the ESSER 2.0 funding applications regardless of the planning addenda, and the relief team can review and approve.

7. *We are having trouble figuring out which categories of expenditures should go in because the categories in the budget summary of the planning addenda do not match what is in our accounting department's system. For example, a teacher may be providing tutoring as well as summer programming and could fit in both categories. Is anyone else having this issue, and how are they handling it?*

Unfortunately, there is not one simple answer as LEAs may handle their finances differently. It is important to keep in mind that this is a plan for your **intended spending** for public stakeholder information. LEAs should determine the amounts they plan to budget in each category to the best of their knowledge and provide narratives to indicate what expenditures are included in each category. These narratives may not perfectly align with each line item but should represent the LEA's plan for how they will utilize their remaining funds.

8. *We don't have board policies regarding the points under Section 3 in the Health and Safety Plan. We are not currently doing anything specific about those strategies. Should we leave those blank or just say N/A?*

No, each question must be revisited and addressed based on the most recent guidance and information available to the LEA. Keep in mind, that these may not be school board policies; but rather, operating policies and procedures that the LEA is using. You may also wish to note that the LEA will continue to consult with the health department regarding various policies as things change throughout the year. Questions that are left blank or answered with N/A, "no changes," "none," etc. will be returned to the LEA for revision.

9. *We are not sure how to answer the first question under Section 3 in the Health and Safety Plan (Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities concerning health and safety policies).*

It is best practice to mention how you are following other federal guidelines such as IDEA and Section 504 to ensure that every student has FAPE regarding their learning as it relates to health and safety.

Funding Applications

1. I am still unable to access the 3.0 funding application because the FER has not been approved at the TDOE level. Do we know a timeframe?

The FER is handled by fiscal. We know they are prioritizing ESSER and will check in to see if we can get a better timeframe. You may wish to reach out to your regional fiscal consultant as well.

2. If our ESSER 2.0 budget has been submitted, how long should approval or return take?

Typically, our turnaround to review and approve at the consultant level is 5 business days. Currently, our team is down to 2, so it may take a little longer, but we are working through applications and addenda as quickly as we can.

3. Whom would our point of contact be for our planning grant and best for all FER approvals and new budgets?

Dominique Davis is the contact for the planning grant and Best for All. If it is a question regarding FERs, LEAs should reach out to their [regional fiscal consultant](#).

4. Is there a listing of dates regarding "due dates" and such somewhere in ePlan?

There is a list of dates to remember on the ePlan homepage. There is also a calendar for the Division of Federal Programs that you can access by going to TDOE Resources > 4. Department Communications > 2022-23 Federal Programs Calendar.

5. If we are buying covers, cases, etc. for technology equipment can we put it in the equipment line?

If you are purchasing it all together and everything is included in one quote or bid, yes. However, if you are purchasing those items separately, we recommend they go in the Other Supplies and Materials line (499).

6. Please clarify. Is equipment considered items more than \$100 or \$500? I thought it was items over \$500 or more, but I think someone mentioned that equipment was \$100. I may be misunderstanding so I was just wanting to clarify.

This has recently changed as of July 1, 2022. Things that are considered sensitive electronic equipment are now at the \$500 threshold to be considered equipment. This is important to note as your put things in your budget as well as in your inventory. You may want to refer to the [TDOE Spring Fiscal Workshop](#) in ePlan for additional information.

7. LEAs don't inventory things under \$500?

It is not required; however, we recommend LEAs continue including items such as Chromebooks, calculators, etc. in your inventory even if they cost less than \$500.

8. Will the remaining balance be reflected in ePlan on the ESSER 3.0 budget once FER is approved?

Yes, once the FER is approved at the state level the carryover balance should appear in your ESSER 3.0 budget.

9. Will ESSER 2.0 be treated like ESSER 1.0, and we will not be able to spend out funds by September 30, 2023?

That will most likely be the case. We cannot say with certainty, but there will likely not be a carryover application for FY24. We recommend expending those funds in FY23.

10. Do we leave the information on the Program Details page for things that we have already done?

It is acceptable to leave that information regarding what your LEA has done in the previous year in the Program Details section. We suggest adjusting the verbiage to past tense to relay that information and adding any new, relevant information for the current fiscal year.

11. How do we copy over our budget information from FY22?

Navigate to the FY23 funding application and click "Draft Started." From there, go to the Budget section. At the top of the page click, "Copy 2022 Budget Detail." This will carry forward the budget information from the last approved FY22 application. Once it is carried forward, you may adjust, remove, etc. as needed.

It is best practice to copy and paste the Program Details and Spending Plan narratives from FY22 into a Word document. This will allow you to copy over that information into your FY23 application and edit it as needed. LEAs may also wish to use the Print Sections option on the main page of the funding application to create a PDF of the last approved funding application and copy your previous year's information from there.

12. Should I include summer school in ESSER 3.0 in case there isn't state funding?

At this time, we are only assured there will be funding provided by the state for summer bridge camp for the upcoming two years. LEAs may wish to include summer programming expenses in ESSER 3.0 for FY23.

13. Can you please clarify the timeline for ESSER 3.0...final date to Commissioner Schwinn, the final date for budget upload, and the final date for board approval?

Planning addenda are due **no later than September 15**. The Commissioner's office is not reviewing the planning addenda this year. Those reviews will be done by the relief team. ESSER 2.0 and 3.0 funding applications are due **November 1**. The board approval form for the ESSER 2.0 and 3.0 funding applications is due **December 1**.

14. Are districts focusing the ESSER 3 funds on summer school that would support the law (maybe K-4) or are they still focusing on K-8 and Bridge?

At this time, several LEAs we have spoken to are planning for all students. Some are including high school for initiatives like credit recovery as well.

15. We are hoping to build a playground for special needs students to be more inclusive of their needs. We are having difficulty getting 3 bids. The vendors all have different equipment, so the bids are not necessarily for the same things. Is it appropriate to get quotes from 3 vendors that qualify as bids? We would like to create a playground using items from various vendors. Would this be ok?

We suggest you contact your [fiscal consultant](#) to get more clarity and information regarding what you might need to do for that bid process.