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## ESSA and the Arts: Title IV, Part A Frequently Asked Questions

### How can arts educators get involved?

- Become part of the process. Volunteer to be part of your school planning committee, and your district's planning committee for Title IV, Part A. Local Education Agency (LEA) Needs Assessment Committees should be made up of a diverse representation of the district and community, which means that arts educators and parents can participate. ESSA states in Sec. 4106 the need for teacher and stakeholder participation.
- Identify [evidence-based arts education research](#) that can be used to satisfy the [level of evidence](#) required by ESSA.
- Collaborate with colleagues. The arts can be part of the request from those representing safe and healthy schools and those representing Education Technology in addition to a well-rounded education.
- Use existing [Opportunity to Learn Standards](#) (OTL) from national professional organizations for the arts to collect evidence that is needed for the Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

### What is required to apply for Title IV, Part A to support the arts?

As a part of a well-rounded education, districts can include the arts as a way to address gaps identified in the needs assessment. Examples include programs that seek to integrate the arts into other disciplinary subjects and those that use the arts as a strategy to reduce bullying.

LEAs can include arts education in their application for federal funds after they have identified gaps in learning opportunities. The LEA needs to identify a set of goals to work toward using their [Continuous Improvement Plan](#) (CIP).

- A [Comprehensive Needs Assessment](#) is required as the first step of the CIP.
- The CIP is used, in part, to create a Consolidated Federal Programs Application to apply for federal funds such as Title I, Title II Part A, and Title IV, Part A.
- All applications for federal funds need to be tied back to a need that was previously identified.

The CIP is submitted every year to receive federal funds, but amendments can be made at any time. The process will continue each year as long as ESSA remains the federal law. Even if arts programs do not receive funds this year, stay part of the process. [Vermont Agency of Education Consolidated Federal Programs \(CFP\) Timeline](#).

## **Are there any tools to assist arts educators with a comprehensive needs assessment?**

Title IV, Part A funds are meant to be supplemental in nature – not to supplant what is already been provided or must be provided with state or local funds. The need is identified through a Needs Assessment and it should be demonstrated that federal funds are not supplanting local funds to pay for it. There are three ways that supplanting can occur: federal funds are used for activities paid for with state or local funds in the past; federal funds are used in a school to pay for activities that are paid for with state and local funds in another; federal funds are used to pay for activities that are required by state or local law.

[Opportunity to Learn Standards](#) (OTL) are a national benchmark from professional organizations for [dance](#), [music](#), [theatre](#), and [visual art](#). OTL Standards can be used as the framing structure for a Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Checklist versions of the OTL standards are ready for use as a Needs Assessment. This will help make the case for Title IV, Part A funds but also for funds out of your LEA's regular budget that can impact your program. The OTL standards identify and outline resources that need to be in place for students to achieve artistic literacy. They are the best tool that exists for evaluating whether an arts program has the components necessary for all students to achieve the levels outlined by the [National Core Arts Standards](#).

## **What areas could be explored in a Needs Assessment?**

The Vermont Agency of Education has laid out [allowable activities for Title IV, Part A funds](#). Title IV, Parts A funds should be tied to broader programmatic need and not a single use.

- Items such as musical instruments, arts materials, sheet music, costumes, copyright permission, etc.
- Arts-related technology (Computers, tablets, software)
- Curriculum materials
- Content area specific professional development and training
- Arts-related field trips
- New staff or dedicate additional time for existing staff.
- Additional arts courses (Adding a guitar, graphic design, drama, dance class, etc.)
- New enrichment activities as part of expanded learning opportunities.
- Contract with outside providers to bring training to the district.
- Registration for student competitions.

## **Do the requests have to be for new curricular programs, or can they be used to maintain, sustain, and/or build up existing programs?**

Title IV, Part A funds can be used to build existing programs, provided this is done in a “supplemental” manner. This ties back to your district's comprehensive needs assessment and its overall prioritization of needs and to how building an existing program will help increase access to arts education for students in your district. For example, if your district identifies a need for purchasing additional instruments so more students can access an instrumental music program, this may be addressed with Title IV, Part A dollars to provide additional support to your program. Remember that federal education dollars are meant to supplement, not supplant, existing dollars. These dollars cannot “replace” what your school district spends on arts education

already. [Spending requirements](#) exist across the three categories of Title IV, Part A if the grant received exceeds \$30,000.

### **Can Title IV, Part A be used to hire new educators?**

Title IV, Part A funds could be used to hire additional arts educators or create partnerships with local community partners if found as a deficiency by your school district's comprehensive needs assessment. Like all federal funds, Title IV, Part A dollars must be used to supplement, not supplant state and local dollars. However, if the hire improves access to music education for students not currently participating in music education, the case could be made as the request ties back to Title IV's intent. Federal dollar allocations may also vary from year to year, making it difficult to maintain funding for a staff position year after year.

### **How is the amount of the Title IV, Part A fund calculated?**

Title IV, Part A is calculated based upon Title I funds. The amount will vary from LEA to LEA. Title IV, Part A funds statewide totaled roughly \$5,000,00 for the 2017-2018 school year.

### **Examples of Vermont Title IV, Part A investments:**

LEA received roughly \$230,000 for Title I, Part A and \$57,000 for Title IV, Part A

1. CIP goal of "Other":

Funds were used to support a community partnership with a local theater company to provide an opportunity for elementary students to participate in production of a play by Shakespeare. The project focused on addressing fine arts standards and ELA standards. The community theater's program allowed multiple schools to participate. Funds paid for program fees, transportation, and materials.

LEA received roughly \$450,500 for Title I, Part A and \$190,000 for Title IV, Part A

1. CIP goal of "Personalization"

Funds were used to promote constructive student engagement through the visual arts. The project focused on highlighting PBL grading tools in the arts and provided eight arts-based family engagement nights at each school created with teams of students; Costs include time and benefits of staff outside contracted hours 9 staff/5 one-hour planning meetings, and materials for nights.

2. CIP goal of "School Climate"

To promote conflict resolution skills linked to PBIS and Connect With Kids, Music Department holds district K-12 family music festival titled PROUD (self-confidence); Costs include materials, transportation, contracted services, time and benefits outside of contracted hours for 9 staff/4 hours each.

3. CIP goal of "Personalization"

To promote constructive student engagement through the visual arts highlighting art PBL grading tools and holding 8 visual art family engagement nights at each school created with teams of students; Costs include time and benefits for staff outside contracted hours (9 staff/5 one-hour planning meetings) and materials for nights.

## Resources for Level of Evidence Requirements:

A [Level of Evidence](#) must be identified and tied to the investment within application for federal funds [in Vermont including Title IV, Part A](#).

For more about Level of Evidence and the Arts see [Mapping Opportunities for the Arts: Tiers of Evidence](#) from Arts Education Partnership.

To find a curated list of arts studies and research that can be tied to a level of evidence, visit [Level of Evidence and the Arts](#).

## For more information about ESSA and the title funds:

- Link to [Non-Regulatory Guidance on Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants](#) from the United States Department of Education
- Link to [Non-Regulatory Guidance on Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments](#) from the United States Department of Education
- [Vermont state ESSA plan](#)
- [Title1arts.org](#) provides resources for school leaders who wish to embrace arts programming among their strategies for achieving Title I goals. It is intended for schools with schoolwide Title I programs, and includes tools for planning, implementing, and evaluating arts-based strategies in alignment with state and federal Title I regulations.

## References for ESSA and the Arts Introduction and Frequently Asked Questions:

- [Arts Education Policy and Funding](#) from Americans for the Arts
- [What School Leaders can do to Increase Arts Education](#) from Arts Education Partnership and the National Association of Elementary School Principals
- [ESSA: Mapping opportunities for the arts A Well-Rounded Education](#) from Arts Education Partnership and the Education Commission of the States
- [How Funding Works - Title IV](#) and [How Funding Works - Title IV, Part A Toolkit and Frequently Asked Questions](#) from the National Association of Music Educators
- [Leveraging Federal Title IV Funds in Pennsylvania for Music Education](#) from Pennsylvania Music Educators Association
- [ESSA and Arts Education 7 Basics to Know](#) from Americans for the Arts
- [Preparing Educators and School Leaders for Effective Arts Integration](#) from Arts Education Partnership and the Education Commission of the States
- [Title IV, Part A of ESSA: Student Support and Academic Enrichments Grants](#) from Title IV-A Coalition

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