Program Overview: American Rescue Plan Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools (ARP EANS)

Background

On March 11, 2021, through the American Rescue Plan Act, Congress created the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools (EANS) funding program- referred to as the ARP EANS. This program will provide $3,677,205 in support to independent schools in Vermont and includes the same allowable costs and many of the same requirements as its predecessor, GEER EANS. However, there are two key differences between the original GEER EANS program and the ARP EANS program.

1. A state educational agency (SEA) may only provide services or assistance under ARP EANS to independent schools that enroll a significant percentage of students from low-income families and are most impacted by the novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) emergency. The ARP EANS state plan approved by the US Department of Education identifies a new metric that the Agency of Education (AOE) must use to meet these eligibility requirements.

    a. To be eligible for ARP EANS support, a school must demonstrate that at least 27% of the total student enrollment is comprised of students who meet the definition of a low-income student as defined in the ARP EANS Independent School Low Income Data Form. The AOE will provide independent schools with support in identifying and providing data on low-income student status.

2. An SEA may not use ARP EANS funds to provide reimbursements to any independent school for costs the school incurred to address the impact of COVID-19 emergency. The AOE will provide support to independent schools for allowable costs through procurement.

Eligibility

For purposes of the ARP EANS program, an eligible independent school is an elementary or secondary school that:

- Is non-profit;
- Is a Recognized or Approved Kindergarten, Elementary or Secondary Independent School in Vermont;
- Was in existence prior to March 13, 2020, the date the President declared the national emergency due to COVID-19; and

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information, please contact the EANS Program Team at aoe.geereans@vermont.gov

- Did not, and will not, apply for and receive a loan under the [Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)](15 U.S.C. 636(a)(37)) that was made on or after Dec. 27, 2020.

Key Dates

- Jan. 21, 2022 – AOE receives approval of ARP EANS state plan and is awarded funds
- Feb. 3, 2022 – Feb. 18, 2022 – [Intent to Apply webform] available
- Feb. 8, 2022 – [ARP EANS Overview Webinar] Teams Meeting 3:30-4:30 p.m.
- Feb. 18, 2022 - Deadline to submit Intent to Apply webform
- Feb. 28, 2022 – May 30, 2022 - Applications accepted
- July 21, 2022 – Deadline to begin procurement/contracting process with AOE
- Sept. 30, 2024 - ARP EANS funding support ends

Allocations and Intent to Apply

The AOE will create an allocation formula based on total student enrollment with an additional amount per low-income student as reported on the Low-Income Student Verification Form that is included on the Intent to Apply.

Sources for low-income data include (but are not limited to): Free and Reduced Lunch, Tuition Assistance/Financial Aid Scholarship, E-Rate, Medicaid, CEP, 2020 Census, Family/Parent Survey, or another data source. If a school needs assistance in collecting low-income student data, they may contact AOE.geereans@vermont.gov.

Application

What to Expect

The AOE will send out an email to all schools that have completed the Intent to Apply on or about Feb. 28, 2022, when the application goes live. It will be a webform, although paper copies can be made available by request.

Schools can expect that the ARP EANS team will be providing real-time technical assistance after the application is released. The team will also be working closely with each applicant during the review process to provide individualized technical support and guidance around procurement of services. Schools can expect that they will, after this consultation process, receive an approval or denial of their applications within 30 calendar days of submission.

Eligible Costs

A non-public school may apply to receive services or assistance from the AOE or its contractors to address educational disruptions resulting from COVID-19 for the following needs. Please note that due to the complexities of the procurement process, the AOE strongly urges schools to consider the procurement of staff and professional development and training to support student needs related to COVID-19 as the most effective use of ARP EANS support.

- Supplies to sanitize, disinfect, and clean school facilities.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Improving ventilation systems, including windows or portable air purification systems.
- Training and professional development for staff on sanitization, the use of PPE and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases.
- Physical barriers to facilitate social distancing.
- Other materials, supplies or equipment recommended by the CDC for reopening and operation of school facilities to effectively maintain health and safety.
- Expanding capacity to administer coronavirus testing to effectively monitor and suppress the virus.
- Educational technology.
- Redeveloping instructional plans for remote or hybrid learning or to address learning loss.
- Leasing sites or spaces to ensure social distancing.
- Reasonable transportation costs.
- Initiating and maintaining education and support services or assistance for remote or hybrid learning or to address learning loss.

Reimbursement or Procurement?

For the ARP EANS program, support to independent schools is through procurement only. The AOE will contract directly with educational service providers and/or additional staff on the school's behalf. For information regarding the contracting process, please see the ARP EANS Program Contracting Process and Checklist.

Questions

All questions regarding the ARP EANS program should be directed to the AOE.geereans@vermont.gov inbox. The AOE team will direct questions to the most appropriate team member.

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