



Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund II Application Requirements

Introduction

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act of 2021 was signed into law on December 27, 2020, authorizing over \$4 billion in additional coronavirus relief to governors across the country through the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER II) Fund. For Iowa, the GEER II Fund provides Governor Reynolds with \$37.8 million in supplemental coronavirus relief (see Table 1).

Of the \$37.8 million, the CRRSA Act requires that \$26.2 million be reserved for the [Emergency Assistance to Nonpublic Schools \(EANS\) program](#). The remaining \$11.5 million will be distributed as competitive grants awarded to local education agencies (LEAs) and community colleges that the governor deems most significantly impacted by COVID-19. The competitive grants will be allocated in the following manner:

1. 75% for public pre-kindergarten to 12th grade (PK-12) schools to provide mental health supports to students.
2. 25% for community colleges for GAP tuition assistance.

Table 1. GEER II Fund Breakdown by Program

Program	Appropriation
Competitive Grants for Mental Health Supports for Public PK-12 Schools (75%)	\$8,674,711
Competitive Grants for GAP Tuition Assistance (25%)	\$2,891,570
Total GEER II Discretionary Funds	\$11,566,281
Emergency Assistance for Nonpublic Schools	\$26,271,345
Total Section 312 Allocation	\$37,837,626

Competitive Grants for Mental Health Supports for PK-12 Schools

On April 15, 2021, Governor Reynolds announced that she will distribute \$8.67 million (75%) of Iowa’s discretionary GEER II funds for competitive mental health grants to public PK-12 schools. The details and requirements to apply for grant funds are provided in the following sections.

Please note that the Department will provide mental health guidance, training, and direct support to all Iowa schools through systemic delivery of state support in the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER II) and ARP ESSER (ESSER III) programs. The GEER II competitive grants are a supplement to statewide systemic supports.

Purpose

The purpose of this grant is to assist districts with urgent, specific, or significant needs in providing mental health supports to PK-12 students that have been created or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Services include coordination and delivery of mental health services and wraparound support to students, Youth/Child Mental Health First Aid training (YMHFA/Child MHFA), and suicide prevention services and programming.

Competitive applications should prioritize mental health services and supports that directly impact students and families. For more information about each of the qualifying areas of mental health services and grant application process, please see [GEER II Competitive Grants for Mental Health Supports for Public PK-12 Schools guidance](#).

Allowable Uses of Funds

Table 2. Allowable Uses of Mental Health Supports for PK-12 Schools Grant

Area	Allowable Uses of Funds
1. Mental Health Service Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire/train/expand district-employed mental health coordinator(s) or case manager(s)
2. Mental Health Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation/contracts/supports/materials for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social-emotional-behavioral health screening (e.g., at-risk, in need of supports, in need of referral) ○ Individual mental health diagnostic services ○ Individualized mental health treatment ○ Medication management ○ Psychiatric services ○ Behavioral-health services ○ Individualized mental health services for students and their family/caregivers • Non-clinical support services (e.g., bus tokens, child care) designed to improve access to and retention in prevention and treatment programs
3. Wraparound Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary/training for case management to support, expand, or establish new services • Consultation/contracts/supports/materials for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mental health therapy ○ Educational services (i.e., school-based programming with a focus on academic and social-emotional-behavioral health programming) ○ Educational services ○ Crisis care ○ Medical care ○ Family resource centers
4. YMHFA/Child MHFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire YMHFA/Child MHFA project director/coordinator position • YMHFA instructor certification for one or more district employees • Train district educators in YMHFA/Child MHFA • Train community partners (e.g., mental health agencies, law enforcement) • A “per diem” for individuals in overnight travel mode and participating in approved grant activities is allowed at the approved state of Iowa rates. Grant funds may also be used for light snacks, not to exceed \$2.50 per person during the Youth Mental Health “First Aider”

Area	Allowable Uses of Funds
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish partnerships with local mental health agencies • Establish partnerships with local law enforcement, first responders, and other community stakeholder organizations and groups (e.g., faith-based, community service) • Establish partnerships with families/caregivers • School leadership team planning to align YMHFA/Child MHFA training content with the school/district suicide prevention and crisis response plans
5. Youth Suicide Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation/supports with mental health partners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop suicide prevention and postvention plan, ○ Develop protocols for helping students at-risk of suicide, ○ Develop protocols for responding to suicide, ○ Support suicide prevention or response, and ○ Conduct suicide screening. • Materials/resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To enhance protective factors (e.g., mentoring, social supports, relationship building, connectedness) ○ For awareness campaign ○ For families (e.g., about suicide/related behavioral health issues, suicide prevention programming) • Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For assessing, referring, and following-up with students identified as at-risk of suicide ○ To support student's successful transition to/from hospitalization or residential treatment ○ For curriculum for students in mental health awareness, stigma reduction, and development of help-seeking behaviors
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital expenses necessary to meet the direct mental health services of students not exceeding 5% of the budget (e.g., technology for telehealth, software for telehealth)

Unallowable Uses

Examples of unallowable uses of these funds include:

- Co-pays;
- Psychotropic drugs;
- Direct payments to individuals to induce them to enter prevention or treatment services;
- Inpatient treatment or hospital-based detoxification services;
- Residential services;
- Inpatient hospital-based services;
- Construction and school facility repairs and improvements;
- Leasing space;
- Seclusion room or space;
- Purchasing internet connectivity;
- Resources, materials, software, supplies, and purchased services that are provided by the regular school program (e.g., core curriculum and instructional material, library materials, technology); and
- Leisure resources that are not appropriate for use in the typical age/grade classrooms (e.g., X-box, non-educational computer games, weighted blankets).

Requirements

ELIGIBILITY

Only LEAs for public PK-12 schools are eligible to apply for this grant, but LEAs may partner with area education agencies (AEAs), licensed mental health providers, institutions of higher education, and other community service organizations in implementing grant goals. To be eligible to apply for this grant, the public school district must have been in operation before March 13, 2020 and demonstrate a unique student and family mental health need related to COVID-19 (Gate 1 in Table 3).

APPLICATION

Each district must submit an application for GEER II funds in the Consolidated Accountability and Support Application (CASA) system. The application is titled Competitive Grants for Mental Health Supports for Public PK-12 Schools Grant Application and is found in the COVID-19 folder. **The application will open on May 1, 2021 and will be due by the close of business on May 31, 2021.** Each district applying for funding must complete questions regarding proposed services. The district's superintendent or school business official must review the application and required assurances about the use of CRRSA funds before submitting the application on behalf of the district. The content of the application is available on the Department's [COVID-19 Guidance webpage](#).

Competitive applications should prioritize mental health services and supports that most directly impact students and families. Categories of services and supports include:

- Direct Services to Students,
- YMHFA/Child MHFA, and
- Suicide Prevention – All Children and Youth.

QUARTERLY REIMBURSEMENT CLAIMS

In order to receive the GEER II funds, districts must submit quarterly reimbursement claims in the CASA.

Grant Award Selection Criteria and Process

COMPETITIVE CRITERIA

The Department will evaluate and score each application against the competitive criteria in Tables 3 and 4. To be considered, all district applicants must demonstrate unique mental health needs related to COVID-19 (Gate 1). District applicants who demonstrate need will then be evaluated on the competitive criteria (Gate 2). Districts may earn up to two bonus points for collaborations with agencies (e.g., AEAs, community mental health agencies, institutions of higher education, community service agencies) that strengthen the mental health services and supports outlined within the district's action plan.

Table 3. Mandatory Competitive Criteria for Gate 1

Gate 1 Area	Description	Pts
District COVID-19 Related Mental Health Needs	Extent to which the applicant provides evidence of unique student and family mental health need(s) as a function of COVID-19.	10

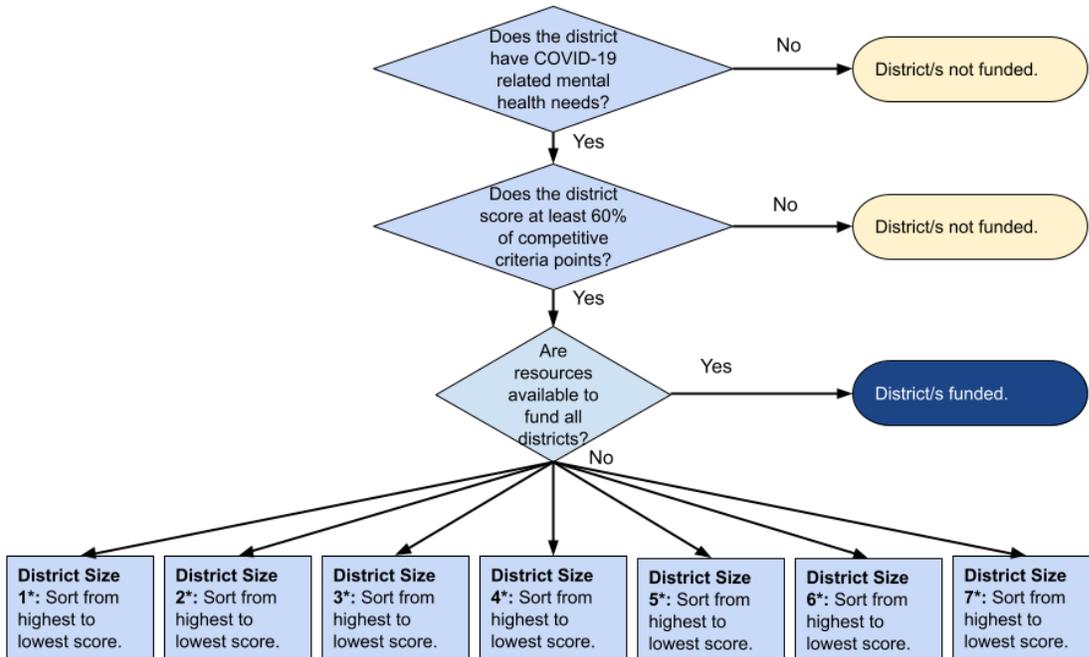
Table 4. Competitive Criteria for Gate 2

Gate 2 Area	Description	Pts
Goals & Impact	Extent to which the district applicant goals align to the COVID-19 related need(s) and have measurable impact.	10

Gate 2 Area	Description	Pts
Action Plan	<p>The extent to which the actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address one or more of the mental health services required by the grant (e.g., service coordination, direct services), • Address the district's identified mental health needs, • Are likely to lead toward successful implementation (i.e., actionable, reasonable goal, timeline), • Prioritize direct mental health services for youth/families, and • Address barriers to access or participation in the mental health services/supports (i.e., including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, age). <p>Extent to which the district is engaging community partners (e.g., AEAs, community mental health agencies, institutions of higher education, community service agencies) to strengthen the mental health services/activities outlined in the action plan. (Optional - up to 2 points)</p>	27
Budget Proposal	<p>The extent to which the budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizes resources toward direct mental health services/supports to students/families • Is aligned and necessary to support proposed services/activities • Reasonable and aligned to recommended district budget allowances 	15

SELECTION PROCESS

The following process will be used to select grantees after district proposals are evaluated by the Department based on the competitive criteria included in Tables 3 and 4.



Awards selected from the highest scoring districts and based on available funding. If tie scores occur, a district will be selected if the district has scored higher in COVID-19 Related Need category. If additional tie exists, the district will be selected which is in a Mental Health and Disability Service Region that has fewer applicants.

Iowa Department of Education guidance should be viewed as advisory unless it's specifically authorized by state statute, according to Iowa Code section 256.9A. This does not apply to administrative rules, declaratory orders, or materials required by federal law or courts.

*See the Allocations by District Size section for district size categories 1-7 in the [GEER II Competitive Grants for Mental Health Supports for Public PK-12 Schools guidance](#).

Competitive Grants Expanding the GAP Tuition Assistance Program

On April 15, 2021, Governor Reynolds announced that she will distribute nearly \$2.9 million (25%) of Iowa’s discretionary GEER II funds for competitive grants to expand the GAP tuition assistance program. The GAP tuition assistance program targets education and training for in-demand careers. The details and requirements to apply for grant funds are provided in the sections that follow.

Purpose

The purpose of this grant is to support community college efforts in expanding programming to help more Iowans earn short-term credentials needed for in-demand careers. Currently, programs offering training or a credential in an in-demand occupation are in the following industries:

- Information technology,
- Health care,
- Advanced manufacturing,
- Transportation and logistics, or
- Any other industry designated as in-demand by a regional advisory board.

Allowable Uses of Funds

Table 5. Allowable Uses of GAP Tuition Assistance Grant Funds

Area	Allowable Uses of Funds
<p>Student Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition • Direct training costs • Required books and equipment • Fees including but not limited to fees for industry testing services and background check testing services • Wrap-around personal support appropriate for short-term programs (excludes staff salaries)
<p>College Administrative Fees Administrative eligible expenditures for GEER II GAP Tuition Assistance expansion purposes shall be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% of any allocation of money to the two smallest community colleges, • 10% of any allocation of money to the two largest community colleges, and • 15% of any allocation of money to the remaining 11 community colleges. <p>Community college size shall be determined based on the most recent three-year rolling average full-time equivalent enrollment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing direct staff support services including (but not limited to): marketing, outreach, application, interview, and assessment processes • Instructor salaries • Upgraded/new program-specific equipment • Personal protective equipment necessary for the program • Temporary leasing of spaces for instruction

Requirements

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Community colleges are eligible to apply for GEER II GAP tuition assistance expansion funding. This funding can be used to support students enrolled in GEER II GAP tuition assistance eligible programs, regardless of financial need.

A student must have a demonstrated capacity to achieve the following outcomes:

- The ability to complete an eligible short-term credential;
- The ability to enter a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree program for credit;
- The ability to gain full-time employment; and
- The ability to maintain full-time employment over time.

A student must be eligible to work in the United States in order to be approved for tuition assistance under this program.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS

Programs that meet the following criteria are eligible for assistance under this program:

1. The program is not offered for credit but is aligned with a certificate, diploma, or degree for credit and does any of the following ([see the list of noncredit GAP approved programs](#)):
 - Offers a state, national, or locally recognized certificate.
 - Offers preparation for a professional examination or licensure.
 - Provides endorsement for an existing credential or license.
 - Represents recognized skill standards defined by an industrial sector.
 - Offers a similar credential or training.
2. The program is a short-term in-demand credit program that is not Pell eligible.

APPLICATION

Each community college must submit an [application](#) to the Department's Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation for GEER II funds. This application can be found on the division's [COVID-19 webpage](#). **The application will open on May 1, 2021 and will be due by close of business on May 30, 2021.** Community colleges must complete questions within the application regarding proposed services to students and administrative expenditures. Once approved, community colleges must sign several assurances about the use of CRRSA funds through the IowaGrants.gov site.

QUARTERLY REIMBURSEMENT CLAIMS

In order to receive the GEER II funds, community colleges must submit quarterly reimbursement claims (e.g., receipts, general ledger) in IowaGrants.gov.

Selection Criteria for Grant Awards: Competitive Criteria

Table 6. Competitive Criteria for GAP Tuition Assistance and Short-Term In-Demand Programs

Area	Description	Points
Goals & Impact	Extent to which the applicant goals align to the COVID-19 related need and have measurable impact that is specific to the grant.	10
Action Plan – Students	Student Impact – The extent to which the actions improve the ability for community colleges to serve students enrolling in noncredit GAP programs or short-term credit programs which are not Pell eligible.	50

Area	Description	Points
Action Plan – Programs	Program Impact – The extent to which the actions improve the ability for colleges to serve the eligible programs.	30
Budget Proposal	The extent to which the budget: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizes resources toward direct services/supports to students and • Is aligned and necessary to support proposed services/activities 	10

Reporting and Accounting

Required Reporting

Districts and community colleges will need to provide year-end reports to the Department documenting the amount of GEER II funds they have spent in each of the allowable categories. Districts should account for their GEER II expenditures on an ongoing basis, as the CRRSA Act allows the Secretary of Education to require additional reports from states on a more frequent basis at his discretion. In that case, the Department will ask districts and community colleges to provide spending information more frequently.

Accounting and Applicable Laws

SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT

GEER II funds are not subject to a supplement not supplant requirement. These are emergency relief funds and may be used to supplant state and local funds.

PERIOD OF AVAILABILITY

The spending window for GEER II funds begins retroactively on March 13, 2020 and will close on September 30, 2023. GEER II funds are subject to all provisions of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) and Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG) of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Questions and Additional Guidance

For additional COVID-19 guidance and information, please visit the Department's [COVID-19 webpage](#) and see the contacts below.

Mental Health Grants

If you have questions regarding the mental health grants, please contact Barb Anderson at barb.anderson@iowa.gov.

GAP Tuition Assistance Grants

If you have questions regarding the GAP Tuition Assistance grants, please contact mike.williams@iowa.gov or paula.nissen2@iowa.gov. If either are unable to assist you, we will connect you with the appropriate person. For claims or IowaGrants.gov assistance, please contact jeffrey.fletcher@iowa.gov.