



TITLE IV, PART A OF ESSA: STUDENT SUPPORT AND ACADEMIC ENRICHMENTS GRANTS

DESCRIPTION

The bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law December 2015, includes a flexible block grant program under Title IV, Part A. Title IV, Part A authorizes activities in three broad areas:

1. Providing students with a well-rounded education (e.g., college and career counseling, STEM, including computer science, music and arts, civics, IB/AP)
2. Supporting safe and healthy students (e.g., comprehensive school mental health, drug and violence prevention, training on trauma-informed practices, health and physical education)
3. Supporting the effective use of technology (e.g., professional development, blended learning, and purchase of devices)

Congress provided \$400 million in FY17, \$1.1 billion in FY18, and \$1.17 billion in FY19 for the program.

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

ESSA stipulates that each state receive an allocation based on the Title I funding formula. Using the same Title I formula, the states will then allocate funds to school districts.

Any school district that receives a formula allocation above \$30,000 must expend 20 percent of its grant on safe and healthy school activities and 20 percent on activities to provide a well-rounded education. The remaining 60 percent of the allocation may be spent on all three priorities, including technology. However, there is a 15 percent cap on devices, equipment, software, and digital content.

If a district receives an allocation below \$30,000, the law does not stipulate percentages for well-rounded or safe and healthy student programs. However, it must still direct the funds it receives toward activities in at least one of the three categories. The 15 percent technology purchase cap applies.

RECOMMENDATION

NACAC recognizes the importance of each of the three allowable funding uses. However, NACAC encourages districts to prioritize using their grant dollars to support college and career counseling. Students who have access to quality college counseling are more likely to complete the FAFSA and more likely to apply to and enroll in postsecondary education. On average, school counselors spend only 30 percent of their time on postsecondary admission counseling, with public school counselors spending even less. Investing Title IV, Part A grant funds in college and career counseling would enable counselors to dedicate more time toward assisting students with their college search and application processes.

NACAC is a member of the Title IV-Part A Coalition. Visit www.titleiva.org for more information.