

ESSER FUNDING FAQ

What is ESSER?

ESSER, or the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, is emergency federal financial assistance provided to public school districts across the country in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

How much has 4J received?

Our district has received a total of \$56.4 million from the three rounds of ESSER funding authorized by Congress. 4J has spent all of the \$19.6 million provided by the first two allocations (ESSER I and II). It has spent all but \$13.5 million of the \$36.8 million authorized to our district through ESSER III. School districts must spend all their ESSER III funding by September 30.

How has 4J used the money?

Our district has used the money to pay for, among other things, additional staffing, computer hardware and software upgrades, HVAC and ventilation system improvements at our school buildings, and agreements with community partners to support student learning and well-being.

Can 4J use ESSER funds to buy the downtown building?

Yes. The Oregon Department of Education has endorsed our use of up to \$9 million in ESSER III funding to free up our current district office to create additional learning opportunities for students.

But why not utilize ESSER funds to pay for additional staffing?

ESSER provided a temporary increase in federal funding, but it's not a reliable source for ongoing expenses like salaries. In fact, many districts that used ESSER funds to hire new staff are now facing layoffs as the federal COVID-relief funding is coming to an end. (See, [School Districts Prepare for Major Staffing Cuts as ESSER Winds Down](#), Education Week, August 23, 2023)