Federal Budgeting Timelines and Title III of the Every Student Succeeds Act

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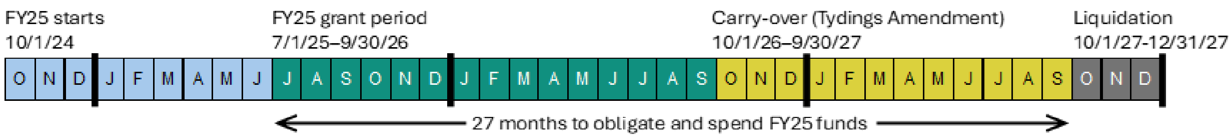
May 14, 2025

The federal budget and grant spending timelines can be confusing. Here are answers to frequently asked questions by Title III administrators.

1. How do federal fiscal years relate to school years?

The federal fiscal year (FY) runs from October 1 to September 30. For example, FY25 began on October 1, 2024 and will run until September 30, 2025.

Most federal funds are spent during the FY for which they are allocated. However, many Department of Education grants use forward funding to better align with the school year. Title III funds are available for 27 months (plus three additional months to liquidate remaining funds) along this timeline:



2. What is the timeline supposed to be for the federal government deciding how much Title III receives each year?

- Federal agencies may spend up to a year preparing their budget requests under the coordination of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.
- The President submits the budget to Congress by the first Monday in February for the following FY. Congress is not bound to follow the President's requests.
- Congress passes budget resolutions and appropriations bills by September 30. Title III is contained in the *Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.*

3. What is the difference between a continuing resolution and an appropriations bill?

Normally, Congress passes an appropriations bill by September 30. If it cannot do so, it passes a short-term continuing resolution (CR) to allow agencies to continue to fund their programs at existing levels until Congress finishes its deliberations.

Appropriations bills are accompanied by an explanatory statement providing specific funding levels for each program (such as Title III). For FY25, Congress passed a long-term CR instead of appropriations bills. The CR maintains departmental funding at FY24 amounts but does not include detail to the program level (e.g., for Title III specifically).

4. Where are we in that timeline/process as of May 2025?

As of mid-May, states had not yet received notice of their Title III funding allocation for FY25 although agency spending plans were due to be provided to Congress at the end of April.

It is important to remember that the process of developing a federal budget and then passing an appropriations bill is inherently and deliberately complex. As of this writing, the President has proposed a "skinny" budget for FY26 (which starts September 1, 2025), with overall numbers for federal agencies as well as specific amounts (and cuts) for certain programs. This proposal cuts Title III funding entirely, but as noted above, Congress does not have to act on the president's priorities.

The next step is a **budget resolution**, passed by the House of Representatives and Senate, which sets overall parameters for spending levels for FY26. As of this writing, the House and the Senate are far apart, and have yet to negotiate a budget resolution.

Assuming that Congress eventually does pass a budget resolution, the next step will be **appropriations bills**; in principle, 13 are required. In practice, the Congress has passed either a **continuing resolution**, which keeps funding at the levels set in the previous year, or an **omnibus bill**, which wraps all 13 appropriations bills into one giant package. It is not clear at the moment which direction Congress will choose.

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