**Project SERV Quick Guide- Natural Disasters**
**Disaster Recovery Unit**

Project School Emergency Response to Violence (Project SERV) provides funding for local educational agencies (LEAs) and institutions of higher education (IHEs) in which the learning environment has been disrupted due to a violent or traumatic incident, to provide resources in response to the event and re-establish a safe environment conducive to learning. The US Department of Education (the Department) has not developed formal regulatory guidance to Project SERV, nor has it established any formal procedures for the program. This document is intended to provide general guidelines regarding how the program operates.

## Funding

Funds for Project SERV are appropriated under Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities National Programs, to remain available for obligation at the Federal level until expended.

The Department provides emergency, short-term immediate assistance to affected LEAs or IHEs. At the discretion of the Secretary, funding amounts and project periods may be identified (subject to the availability of appropriations) to reflect the scope of the incident and potential recovery needs.

## Eligible Applicants

For a LEA or IHE to qualify for funding, the organization needs to be able to demonstrate that the learning environment has been disrupted as the result of a significant, traumatic event. Any traumatic or violent event, that disrupted teaching and learning, is eligible for services under Project SERV if the LEA or IHE is able to: (1) demonstrate the traumatic effect on the learning environment including how the event has disrupted teaching and learning; and (2) demonstrate that the needed services cannot be adequately provided with existing resources in a comprehensive and timely manner, and that the provision of services and assistance will result in an undue financial hardship on the LEA or IHE.

## Awards

Applications are accepted continuously and vary in project length. Typically grants are awarded for 6-24 months. The specifics of each Project SERV grant will be negotiated between the applicant and Federal Program Officer and depend on the scope of the disaster and specific needs of the LEA or IHE.

## Application Process

Project SERV grants are considered “Immediate Services” grants and are intended to provide short-term support soon after a traumatic event. Immediate Services grants are intended to provide a limited amount of funds to meet acute needs and restore the learning environment. The application process is intended to be completed quickly, but flexible to the applicants’ needs. The DRU will assist the applicant through the process. Please contact Lindsay Booth at Lindsay.Booth@ed.gov to get started.

## Application Submission and Review Process

If it is determined that the LEA, IHE or SEA is eligible for a project SERV grant and the program is applicable to its disaster-related needs, the Federal Program Officer (FPO) will request a draft application: for review**.**

Applications should include a narrative which includes the following sections:

1. Description of the school district
2. Description of the incident

3. Description of the impact the incident has had on the learning environment.

## Reporting

Grantees are required to document project activities and outcomes of their Project SERV grant and to submit a final report documenting the effectiveness of the programs and activities funded under this grant. SERV FPOs will work with grantees throughout the monitoring process to prepare them to the final report.

## Allowable Uses of Funds

In general, Project SERV funds may be used for costs that are reasonable and necessary to restoring the learning environment. This may include, for instance, activities that help an impacted local educational agency (LEA) manage the practical problem caused by a traumatic event, help the LEA and schools provide a sense of safety and security, or help those individuals directly affected by the event to recover.

The following are types of services allowable under Project SERV:

- Targeted mental health assessments, referrals, and services related to the traumatic event with the goal of restoring victims/survivors to their pre-incident levels of functioning;
- Overtime for teachers, counselors, law enforcement and security officers, and other staff;
- Substitute teachers and other staff as necessary;
- Emergency transportation;
- Technical assistance on developing an appropriate response to the crisis;
- Transportation and other costs to operate school at an alternative site, e.g., leasing of space to substitute for damaged buildings;
- Temporary security measures, such as non-permanent metal detectors and additional security guards and security cameras.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive, and LEAs may add other services that are reasonable and necessary to restoring the learning environment, provided they comply with applicable Federal Regulations, such as the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 75-79, 81-86, and 97-99) and the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200 et seq.) and are not on the Unallowable Activities list.

The following types of services and activities are **not** supported by Project SERV:

- Construction;
- Claims recoverable under insurance coverage, including Medicaid reimbursements for related services to school staff;
- Payments of fines assessed upon the LEA, employees, and/or members of employees' or students' families;
- Payment of settlements assessed against the LEA, employees, and/or members of employees' or students' families in civil court actions;

- Payment of legal fees or loss of wages due to court appearances incurred by the LEA, employees, and/or members of employees' or students' families;
- Costs for hospitalization, treatment of physical injuries, rehabilitation, or prescriptions;
- Payment for public relations consultants or activities;
- Services of existing county/public/private nonprofit mental health agency staff whose role is to respond to emergency mental health needs of children;
- Services normally provided by the LEA;
- Any activity for which other resources are available, e.g., insurance;
- Mental health services for persons other than teachers, students, faculty, or members of the immediate family of a student, faculty member, or teacher;
- Emergency management planning

## Statutory Authority

**SEC. 4631. (20 U.S.C. 7281) NATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOL SAFETY.**

(a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—From the funds reserved under section 4601(b)(1), the Secretary—

(A) shall use a portion of such funds for the Project School Emergency Response to Violence program (in this section referred to as ''Project SERV''), in order to provide education-related services to eligible entities; and

(B) may use a portion of such funds to carry out other activities to improve students' safety and well-being, during and after the school day, under this section directly or through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements with public or private entities or individuals, or other Federal agencies, such as providing technical assistance to States and local educational agencies carrying out activities under this section or conducting a national evaluation.

(2) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts reserved under section 4601(b)(1) for Project SERV are authorized to remain available until expended for Project SERV.

(b) PROJECT SERV.—

(1) ADDITIONAL USE OF FUNDS.—Funds made available under subsection (a) for extended services grants under Project SERV may be used by an eligible entity to initiate or strengthen violence prevention activities as part of the activities de- signed to restore the learning environment that was disrupted by the violent or traumatic crisis in response to which the grant was awarded.

(2) APPLICATION PROCESS

(A) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity desiring to use a portion of extended services grant funds under Project SERV to initiate or strengthen a violence prevention activity shall—

(i) submit, in an application that meets all requirements of the Secretary for Project SERV, the information described in subparagraph (B); or

(ii) in the case of an eligible entity that has already received an extended services grant under Project SERV, submit an addition to the original application that includes the information described in subparagraph (B).

(B) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—An application, or addition to an application, for an extended services grant pursuant to subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

(i) A demonstration of the need for funds due to a continued disruption or a substantial risk of disruption to the learning environment.

(ii) An explanation of the proposed activities that are designed to restore and preserve the learning environment.

(iii) A budget and budget narrative for the proposed activities.

(3) AWARD BASIS.—Any award of funds under Project SERV for violence prevention activities under this section shall be subject to the discretion of the Secretary and the availability

of funds.

(4) PROHIBITED USE.—No funds provided to an eligible entity for violence prevention activities may be used for construction, renovation, or repair of a facility or for the permanent infrastructure of the eligible entity.

(c) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—In this section, the term ''eligible entity'' means—

(1) a local educational agency, as defined in subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) of section 8101(30), or institution of higher education in which the learning environment has been disrupted due to a violent or traumatic crisis; or

(2) the Bureau of Indian Education in a case where the learning environment of a school operated or funded by the Bureau, including a school meeting the definition of a local educational agency under section 8101(30)(C), has been disrupted due to a violent or traumatic crisis.