



You Can Do a Lot With a Little:

Making Positive Impacts on Student Outcomes With Title IV, Part A Allocations Under \$30,000

INFORMATION SHEET

Purpose

This information sheet features strategies that State education agencies (SEAs) can share with local education agencies (LEAs) that receive Title IV, Part A (Title IV-A) allocations less than \$30,000. These strategies help LEAs to maximize the impact of Title IV-A funds and improve student outcomes. SEAs can use this information to encourage and support LEAs to retain and use their Title IV-A funds rather than transfer funds out of the program.

Introduction

In fiscal year 2018, more than 15,000 local education agencies (LEAs) received a subgrant as a part of the Title IV, Part A (Title IV-A) program, also referred to as the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) program under the Every Student Succeeds Act, according to the U.S. Department of Education report entitled *Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants: A First Look at Activities Supported Under Title IV, Part A*.¹ About two-thirds (more than 10,000) of the subgrantees included in the report received an award less than \$30,000. Although smaller allocations may limit the scope of activities an LEA may choose, State education agencies (SEAs) and State coordinators (SCs) have a unique opportunity – especially given statutory flexibility – to support LEAs as they think through creative uses of funds.

Using this information sheet as a springboard, SCs can help LEAs maximize small funding allocations to promote student success. It offers several suggestions for SEAs to guide LEAs to spend Title IV-A dollars effectively. It covers a variety of creative strategies that LEAs receiving small



allocations can implement — such as braiding and blending Federal funding streams, forming consortia with other LEAs, establishing community partnerships, and funding short-term projects.

The Statute

According to the [Title IV-A statute](#), SEAs are required to distribute at least 95 percent of SSAE funds to LEAs (Sec. 4104(a)(1)), and are required to ensure that allocations are based on an LEA's relative share of funds under its Title I, Part A allocation from the previous fiscal year (Sec. 4105(a)(1)). These awards cannot be less than \$10,000 (Sec. 4105(a)(2)); however, if there are insufficient funds to meet the \$10,000 requirement, an SEA may allocate funds to its LEAs in a lesser amount, known as a ratable reduction (Sec. 4105(b)).

LEAs that receive awards totaling less than \$30,000 are exempt from several statutory requirements. For example, such LEAs are not required to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment (Sec. 4106(d)(2)). Additionally, these LEAs are not required to allocate money to all three priority content areas (Sec. 4106(f)). That said, they are required to meet at least one of the following assurances:

- Use at least 20 percent of their funds to support one or more of the activities under Well-Rounded Education (WRE) (Sec. 4106(e)(2)(C)).
- Use at least 20 percent of their funds to support one or more activities under Safe and Healthy Students (SHS) (Sec. 4106(e)(2)(D)).
- Use a portion of their funds to support one or more activities under Effective Use of Technology (EUT), while complying with the 15 percent cap on purchasing of technology infrastructure (Sec. 4106(e)(2)(E)).

If an LEA chooses to dedicate its funds to WRE or SHS, those efforts should be coordinated with community-based services (Sec. 4107(a)(1); Sec. 4108(1)) and may be conducted with community partners (Sec. 4107(a)(2); Sec. 4108(4)). In general, all LEAs are required to consult community-based

organizations (CBOs) as they develop their Title IV-A application (Sec. 4106(c)(1)).

Strategies for LEAs With Smaller Allocations

There are several strategies SCs can share with LEAs with smaller allocations to help them maximize the impact of Title IV-A funds. The remainder of this information sheet provides an overview of these strategies as well as examples.

Strategy 1: Braiding, Blending, or Transferring

If an allocation is too small to carry out an LEA's planned activities, the SC can encourage the LEA to braid, blend, or transfer its Title IV-A funds. LEAs are permitted to transfer their funds to another Title program. However, SCs may encourage LEAs to explore braiding and blending Title IV-A funds with other funding streams as an alternative to transferring funds.

Braiding funds involves coordinating two or more funding streams, while tracking and reporting for each stream remain distinct. Additionally, braiding funds does not require statutory authority to implement. Braiding funds allows LEAs to prioritize one goal without substantially affecting program requirements. **Blending funds**, on the other hand, combines funding streams into a single pot to meet a common goal. Each funding stream involved loses its program-specific identity and requirements. Though it typically requires statutory authority,

Resource

For more information on braiding and blending, see this T4PA Center product: [Braiding Funds to Enhance Title IV-A Program Efficiency and Outcomes](#).

blending funds allows LEAs more flexibility and generally lessens staff workload.² LEAs may use either strategy if their Title IV-A allocation alone cannot support an identified need or priority in their district.

Braiding or blending allocations with other Federal, state, or local funds can help LEAs reach their goals in various ways. For example, if an LEA is interested in implementing multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) under SHS, it may consider combining funds with one or more of the following funding streams:³

- Title I, Part A funds may be used to implement some or all components of MTSS, specifically Tier 2 and Tier 3 services.
- Title I, Part C and/or Title III, Part A funds may be combined to carry out MTSS activities for migrant students and/or English learner (EL) students, respectively. Title I, Part C funds must prioritize ensuring that migrant students receive a high-quality education, while Title III, Part A funds must serve only EL students.
- Title II, Part A funds may be used to support professional development and learning opportunities for teachers on MTSS implementation.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B funds must be used to support students with Individualized Education Plans. Funding may be combined to provide for the hiring of staff trained in MTSS service delivery, such as special education teachers or school psychologists.

If braiding or blending is not possible, LEAs have the option to transfer funds. **Transferring funds** allows LEAs to move their Title IV-A funds out to support other Title programs, or to move funds in from other Title programs to support their Title IV-A activities.⁴ Figure 1 outlines which programs LEAs may transfer their funds to and from.

Figure 1: Funds Transfer Availability for LEAs

LEAs may transfer funds from

- Title II, Part A (Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants)
- Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants)

To

- Title I, Part A (Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs)
- Title I, Part C (Migrant Education Program)
- Title I, Part D (Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk)
- Title II, Part A (Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants)
- Title III, Part A (English Language Acquisition State Grants)
- Title IV, Part A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants)
- Title V, Part B (Rural Education Achievement Program)

Strategy 2: Forming a Consortium

Consortia offer another option for LEAs whose Title IV-A allocations are not large enough to achieve their planned activities. All LEAs, regardless of their allocation amount, are permitted to form a consortium with other surrounding LEAs and combine the funds to carry out joint activities (Sec. 4105(a)(3)). A consortium may allow LEAs that receive small allocations to meet goals that would have otherwise been difficult to achieve because of insufficient funding.

As an example, [eight LEAs in Nebraska](#) formed a consortium using Title IV-A dollars, which allowed them to maximize resources dedicated to providing improved mental health services for students, teachers, and families across their districts by hiring two part-time licensed mental health professionals. Notably, this was the first time such services were available to the communities within the consortium. Participating LEAs reported improvement in positive school climate survey measures and increases in mental health service referrals 1 year after implementation.

In another example, LEAs in Louisiana have formed a series of consortia across the state to deliver Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) programming that is allowable under the SHS priority area. The consortia are funded by IDEA Part B dollars, and the SEA supports member districts by providing technical assistance and professional development. Each consortium also has a dedicated Regional PBIS Facilitator to assist LEAs in delivering PBIS programming, collecting data, and reporting to the SEA. Though this particular example uses another funding stream to reach its goals, similar consortia can be formed to provide services or programming to LEAs across a state using Title IV-A funds to meet related goals (e.g., PBIS implementation).



Strategy 3: Establishing Community Partnerships

Given that LEAs with small allocations are not bound by some of the statutory requirements mentioned above, such as meeting funding assurances and conducting a needs assessment, LEAs have a lot of flexibility to apply their monies where they can be most useful. This could include working with community partners more extensively to develop programming that meets the needs of both students and the community. As mentioned above, LEAs are both required to consult CBOs as a part of their Title IV-A application and encouraged to coordinate services with CBOs.

When planning partnerships with CBOs, LEAs can start by inviting organizations that provide supports aligned with needs identified in the district. For example, LEAs may consider partnering with CBOs to provide integrated student supports, such as physical and mental health services and counseling services, all of which are allowable under SHS. The CBOs may be responsible for delivering services themselves while the LEA or schools might be best suited to identify students who may be eligible for service provision. Similarly allowable under SHS, LEAs may also consider identifying and coordinating with CBOs that provide nutritional or physical health services (e.g., local gyms or community centers) to provide low-cost or free access to services and facilities for students and their families. Regarding partnerships allowable under EUT, LEAs may work with CBOs to expand access to the Internet and electronic learning devices for students and families, especially in rural areas; CBOs may be able to subsidize these expenses partially or fully, either using their own funding or working through other external partnerships.

Funds may also be used to support time spent developing certain activities with community partners (Sec. 4107(a)(2); Sec. 4108(4)). This might include both mapping out details about partnership activities (e.g., what will be done, by

whom, and when) and developing solutions to potential barriers to coordination, collaboration, and integration of desired programming options into the schools. Examples of common barriers include fragmented data systems, administrative requirements, or difficulty reaching students who may be disconnected from the school community (such as students experiencing homelessness, students in rural communities, or students who may be chronically absent). Partnering with CBOs can help eliminate these barriers, as the CBOs may be uniquely suited to bridge gaps between schools and their students. For example, a CBO that operates a food pantry for folks experiencing homelessness or financial hardship may have existing relationships and connections with families. LEAs may have a hard time reaching students who are more likely to be disengaged, but this may be mitigated by partnering with CBOs that already have existing relationships.

Strategy 4: Funding Short-Term Projects

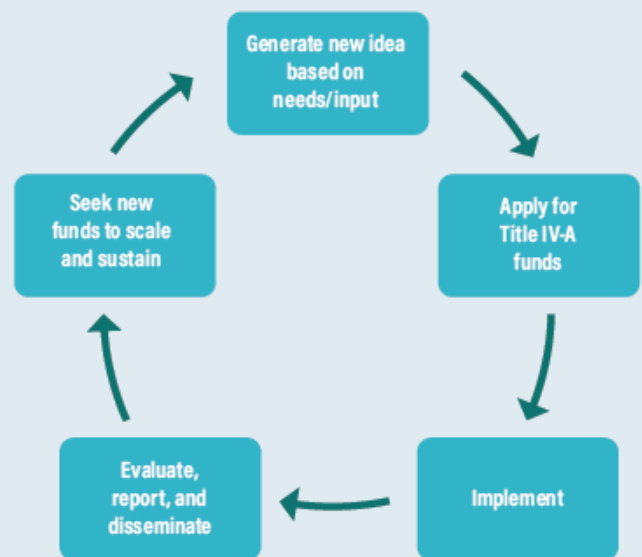
LEAs might also use small allocations of Title IV-A dollars to fund short-term projects or one-time events or expenses to begin to address needs. This could include early-stage development for activities allowable under WRE and SHS (Sec. 4107(2); Sec. 4108(4)). This is also referred to as “seed money.” A variety of options may be allowable under Title IV-A. The following are examples:

- Partnering with CBOs to fund a food drive or other community service project to benefit low-income students and their families or offer student service learning opportunities.
- Promoting environments conducive to SHS by holding events to celebrate underrepresented identities, including different racial and ethnic groups and LGBTQ+ communities.
- Purchasing supplies such as arts materials or equipment for fine arts activities allowable under WRE.

Resource

To learn more, the [Cycle of Innovation and Sustainability](#) information sheet explores ways to use Title IV-A funds to catalyze new and innovative programming and services.

Cycle of Innovation and Sustainability



- Funding opportunities for students to participate in short-term activities to increase equitable engagement in content areas, such as visiting a museum or seeing a theater production.

In addition, smaller allocations could be used to fund planning time to set up administrative protocols and processes that support any upcoming new activities or services relevant to Title IV-A priorities. For example,

- Determining the necessary funding, structures, schedules, and staffing for a new school-based health initiative.
- Developing a process for extracurricular enrichment activities to be hosted on school grounds.
- Meeting with information technology or data managers to review options for a new data management vendor and to discuss funding or rollout strategy.



Conclusion

There are many opportunities for SCs to support LEAs in using smaller allocations of Title IV-A funds creatively and effectively. Although receiving a small allocation may present challenges, SCs can bring together multiple LEAs with similar allocations or priorities to brainstorm and share ideas for what to do with small amounts of Title IV-A funds. LEAs can use the strategies discussed in this document to help maximize Title IV-A funds, support meaningful programming, and reach more students, still making a huge impact on student achievement and success.

Endnotes

¹ Boyle, A., & Wilkinson-Flicker, S. (2020). *Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants: A first look at activities supported under Title IV, Part A*. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development. <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/esea/title-iv-first-look-2020.pdf>

² Butler, S., Higashi, T., & Cabello, M. (2020). *Budgeting to promote social objectives – A primer on braiding and blending*. The Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/BraidingAndBlending20200403.pdf>

³ Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2020). *Unlocking Federal and state program funds to support student success*. https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/esea/pubdocs/Unlocking_State_Federal_Program_Funds.pdf

⁴ U.S. Department of Education. (2016). *Non-regulatory guidance: Fiscal changes and equitable services requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essaguidance160477.pdf>



Contact Us

Help Desk Toll-Free Number:
(833) 404-4845

Help Desk Email:
info@t4pacenter.org

T4PA Center Website:
<https://t4pacenter.ed.gov>

 [T4PACenter](https://twitter.com/T4PACenter)

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