

Illinois State Board of Education



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Education Jobs Fund Q&A

The following is a list of questions and answers the Illinois State Board of Education has compiled at this time. We will continue to update the document as more information becomes available. Questions have been compiled from districts, stakeholders and federal government guidance documents, which are available at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/educationjobsfund/applicant.html>.

*** For what purposes may an LEA use its Ed Jobs Funds?** An LEA must use its funds only for compensation and benefits and other expenses, such as support services, necessary to retain existing employees, to recall or rehire former employees, and to hire new employees, in order to provide early childhood, elementary, or secondary educational and related services.

*** What categories of expenses may an LEA support with Ed Jobs Funds?** For purposes of this program, the phrase “compensation and benefits and other expenses, such as support services” includes, among other things, salaries, performance bonuses, health insurance, retirement benefits, incentives for early retirement, pension fund contributions, tuition reimbursement, student loan repayment assistance, transportation subsidies, and reimbursement for childcare expenses.

*** Which employees may an LEA support with Ed Jobs funds?** An LEA may use the funds to pay the salaries of teachers and other employees who provide school-level educational and related services. In addition to teachers, employees supported with program funds may include, among others, principals, assistant principals, academic coaches, in-service teacher trainers, classroom aides, counselors, librarians, secretaries, social workers, psychologists, interpreters, physical therapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, information technology personnel, nurses, athletic coaches, security officers, custodians, maintenance workers, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers.

Are there rules that govern the amount of Ed Jobs Funds that a State or its LEAs may draw down at any one time? Yes. The State must minimize the time that elapses between a drawdown and the expenditure of funds by the State or its LEAs. (See 34 C.F.R. 80.21(b).) States and LEAs must promptly, but at least quarterly, remit to the Department interest earned on advances. (See 34 C.F.R. 80.21(i).) The Department will take appropriate actions against States and LEAs that fail to comply with this requirement.

The State may not draw down any Ed Jobs funds from the Department's G5 system, on its own behalf or on behalf of an LEA, unless the State or the LEA intends to spend the funds to meet immediate expenditure needs (i.e., needs within 3-5 days).

Will school districts be receiving the Ed Jobs Funds in addition to their regular GSA funding? Yes.

Will school districts receive one lump sum payment or will they receive Ed Jobs Funds over the course of the entire fiscal year, as extra funding with their normal GSA payments? It will not be distributed under the bi-monthly payment schedule currently used for General State Aid. The guidance states that a "State may not draw down any Ed Jobs funds ... on its own behalf or on behalf of an LEA, unless the State or the LEA intends to spend the funds to meet immediate expenditure needs (i.e., needs within 3-5 days)." This statement lends itself to a reimbursement model for distribution.

Once the state receives the funding from the Department of Education, how long will it take for ISBE to begin disbursement to school districts? The grant award to the State is expected sometime in mid-September. Once the distribution method is determined it will be a matter of when the district asks for the funds. Vouchered Federal funds are normally receipted within 3-5 business days of the voucher.

Will flat grant districts receive Ed Jobs Funds? Yes.

Will the Ed Jobs Funds be used by the State to pay down the backlog of bills from FY 2010? No.

Will Ed Jobs Funds be used by the State to substitute for FY 2011 shortfalls in state revenues? No.

Will Ed Jobs Funds funds be used by the State to pay FY 2011 General State Aid? No.

Will Illinois be able to meet the Maintenance of Effort Requirement (MOE) of the Ed Jobs program, which allows states to meet MOE in one of four ways (i.e., Comparing FY 2011 Dollar Levels of Support with FY 2009 Levels; Comparing FY 2011 Percentages of Support with FY 2010 Percentages; Comparing FY 2011 Dollar Levels of Support with FY 2006 Levels; and Comparing FY 2011 Percentages of Support with FY 2006 Percentages)? The Governor's Office of Management and Budget has been working with the U.S. Department of Education and they are confident that Illinois will be able to meet the Maintenance of Effort Requirement.

The Ed Jobs Funds must be obligated by 2012. What will districts do once this one-time money is no longer available? Districts have local autonomy to make critical decisions and balance the immediate use of these funds for critical staff needs in the

2010-11 school year as well as plan for how these staff will be paid in the next school year.

Under the Illinois Pension Code (40 ILCS 5/16-158), an additional and significant contribution is required to the Teachers' Retirement System for federally-funded salaries (currently, the combined contribution for federally-funded salaries is approximately 25%). With respect to salaries paid out of ARRA State Fiscal Stabilization Funds, TRS issued an Employer Bulletin (09-05 in April 2009) stating that such Funds were not considered federal for purposes of the Pension Code. Will districts have to pay the 25 percent to TRS for payments made from the Ed Jobs Funds? It is unknown as of yet. ISBE has been seeking an answer from TRS as to this question and will update this document as soon as an answer is received.

Will the remitting process look similar to the ARRA IDEA and the ARRA Title One process? Yes, ARRA reporting procedures will be followed. Quarterly reports must be submitted through the ARRA Reporting System in IWAS and data is due within five calendar days from the end of the quarter that the Ed Jobs Funds are expended.

What are the reporting requirements? The same reporting requirements that govern all other ARRA programs will be applied to the Ed Jobs Funds. The full-time equivalent must be reported for all employees funded with the Ed Jobs Funds. An employee's FTE is determined by how many hours the employee worked and was paid in relation to the number of hours in a normal full-time schedule.

Current ARRA reporting requirements state that only full-time equivalent ARRA funded positions must be reported along with a general job description. The current reporting template does not allow for the type of position (i.e. retain, rehired or newly hired) to be reported. Is it correct that States are not required to collect the type of position from their districts? Under the reporting required by Section 1512 of ARRA, a State is not required to report this level of data and therefore districts will not have to identify positions as retained, rehired, or newly hired.

Will districts need to track Ed Jobs Funds separately from GSA? Yes. As with all ARRA funds, Ed Jobs Funds must be tracked separately on the revenue and expense side of the ledger.

Can Ed Jobs Funds be used for transportation? The federal guidance states that salary and benefit costs can be used for bus drivers and support personnel but other non-salary transportation expenses, such as contractual transportation costs, are not eligible.

Can a district use the Ed Jobs funds to pay for programmatic costs that were cut or supplies that were scaled back? No, the Ed Jobs funds can only be used for compensation and benefits.

Can the Ed Jobs Funds be used for new programs? Yes, the Ed Jobs Funds may be used for new programs if they are being used for new hires or other school-level employees to operate the program.

Can the Ed Jobs Funds be used for local training and development of staff? No. The intent of these funds is for salaries and benefits to retain, rehire or hire new staff. A stipend for a teacher to attend staff development training is not a salary cost and would not fall into this category.

Can a district use the Ed Jobs Funds next school year (i.e., 2011-2012)? Yes, these funds are available for obligation until Sept. 30, 2012. However, our understanding of the law's intent is that these funds would be used during the current school year (i.e., 2010-2011).

What if school districts did not lay off any teachers? Will they still get Ed Jobs money? Yes, the federal guidance indicates that Ed Jobs Funds can be used for retained staff as well as to rehire or hire new staff.

Can the Ed Jobs Funds be used for curriculum and instruction coordinators? Yes, if these coordinators are school-level employees of the district.

Can a district use Ed Jobs Funds to cover payments to teachers who worked summer school from June to August 2010? Only payment for services provided after August 10, 2010, the effective date of the federal law, can be covered with Ed Jobs Funds.

Can a district use Ed Jobs Funds for teachers working summer school between June 2011 to August 2011? Yes.

If a district had three reading associates whose salaries have in past years been covered by the State Reading Improvement Grant, and the district had not yet given these associates 30-day notice (and may not) due to the Reading Improvement Grant being zeroed out, may the district use the Ed Jobs Funds to pay the associates' salary for the 2010-2011 school year? Yes.

***May Ed Jobs funds be used to support the compensation and benefits of individuals who are employees of a charter school that is not an LEA, but is a school within an LEA?** Yes. An LEA may use Ed Jobs funds to pay the salaries and benefits of individuals who provide school-level services and are employees of the charter school, even if those individuals are not considered to be employees of the LEA for other purposes. As noted earlier, an LEA may not use Ed Jobs funds to pay for school-level educational and related services that are provided by employees of a charter management organization or an educational management organization.

*Indicated questions and answer came directly from federal guidance documents

Compiled by the Public Information Division, September 2010