



# Creating a safe passage for students coming back to school



After a year of remote learning, K-12 schools are on the verge of phasing back to in-person instruction.

Administrators can now take the opportunity to create the safest environment for the returning students. This will keep parents at ease, sending out the message that your school is responsive to potential danger.

One popular way of ensuring safety on the premises is by spending money on ZKTeco USA's Visitor Authentication and Management Systems (ZKVAMS) technology. For that purpose, the U.S. government has allocated funds through various education-based stimulus packages.

## The Stimulus Packages for K-12 Schools

The U.S. government has allocated approximately \$200 billion in stimulus funds to K-12 schools through two of its Educational Stabilization Fund (ESF) instruments:

- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER)
- Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER)

These instruments were filled through three stimulus packages over the course of the last 15 months:

- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)
- The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA Act)
- The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP Act)

## How the Funds Are Granted to K-12s

For purposes of convenience, we will focus on how these funds are allocated to SEAs and school districts in the country.

- The U.S. Department of Education (DoEd) has control over the entirety of the \$200 billion.
- The DoEd will allocate these funds based on applications by State Educational Agencies (SEAs).
- The SEAs will award subgrants to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) like K-12s, and even charter schools that are LEAs.

- An LEA must first file a local application with their SEA in order to receive an ESSER formula subgrant for their fund allocation. For example, the New York State Education Department (NYSDE), an SEA in the state of New York, announced its LEA fund allocations on their CRRSA website, where LEAs can apply.
- The LEA allocations will be calculated using the relative shares of grants awarded under the Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for 2020.
- These ESEA allocations for LEAs will depend on criteria such as the percent of economically disadvantaged students in your school, etc.

## For How Long are ESSER Funds Available to K-12s ?

Depending on which Act, funds can be held by SEAs until 30th September of 2022 (CARES), 2023 (CRRSA), or 2024 (ARP). In other words, all of the current funds held by an SEA will be available to LEAs until, at the earliest, Sept 30, 2022.

As was the case with the NYSDE above, each SEA will publish deadlines for submission of LEA applications on their websites. Make sure your school's LEA regularly checks there.

## How much Flexibility do K-12s have with their Funds?

All funds can be used for expenses going back as far as March 13, 2020, when the President declared a national emergency on account of the pandemic. Under the ARP, 20% of a LEA's ESSER funds are reserved "to address the academic impact of lost instructional time."

As for the remaining ESSER Funds, LEAs may use them for a variety of activities, like renovation/new construction, digitization & automation, and upgrading Indoor Air Quality & Ventilation. More importantly, under the B-7 section in its FAQ document, ESSER allows the use of its funds for projects that would promote social distancing and safe in-person instruction. And this can include:

- Access Control
- Health Check Screening
- Visitor Authentication Management Systems (ZKVAMS)

## How can ZKVAMS Help Schools Respond to COVID-19?

In many cases, K-12s and LEAs must publish on their websites a “reopening plan” for the safe return to regular school services. One way of ensuring public approval before implementing this plan is to notify the SEA that your K-12 is purchasing state-of-the-art ZKVAMS.

K-12 decision makers like superintendents, directors, risk managers, and security services can convene to flesh out a plan that includes the purchase of this technology.

ZKVAMS, a visitor management system designed by ZKTECO USA, has several advantages that would be beneficial to any K-12 looking for the best layer of protection.

By incorporating this, your K-12 school will set a responsible standard of safety.

And this standard will only reassure students, their parents, and their teachers alike for the crucial post-pandemic phase of education.

### References:

<https://www.mheducation.com/cares-act.html>

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