



How to Access Title IV, Part A Federal Funds for Music Education

The federal education law, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), includes an opportunity for school districts to apply for funds to meet the mandate of ESSA – that all public-school K-12 students have access to a “well-rounded” education. Music and arts are designated as “well-rounded subjects” within ESSA.

This document outlines the steps you can take in collaboration with your school or school district to access federal funds available via Title IV, Part A to advance music education in the curriculum.

• **Step 1** – Needs Assessment and Application Review

School districts, or Local Education Agencies (LEA) are required to complete a needs assessment as part of the Title IV Part A application. To determine the most effective path, meet with a music educator, identify the district-level staff person that manages federal funds, and have a collective conversation about the need for, and use of, these funds. Community stakeholder engagement is also a requirement of ESSA so involvement of community members is an asset to the application process.

Refer to the National Association for Music Educations (NAfME) [Opportunity to Learn \(OTL\) Standards](#) site that provides needs assessment checklists, and summary sheet templates to match “desired curriculum content and materials” to the current needs of your district’s music education offerings. This will help you make the case for Title IV, Part A funds (as well as for existing funds) in your LEA’s regular budget that may be used for your program in your district.

Supplemental areas to explore in your needs assessment:

- Additional Music Courses (Adding a piano or guitar class)
- Content Area Specific Professional Development
- Curriculum Materials
- General Music Supplies/Textbooks
- Music Related Field Trips
- Music Technology (computers, tablets, software)
- Musical Instruments
- Performance Space Upgrades
- Sheet Music



- **Step 2 – Apply for Funding**

School districts, or Local Education Agencies (LEA) will be required to complete a Consolidated Application describing the need for, and the proposed use of supplemental funds available via Title IV, Part A. Review your state Department of Education website or discuss the timeline with those in your school district handling federal funding for available information and application guidelines. Your state may also have an arts education consultant serving in your state department of education; this person may also be a member of [SEADAE](#) – State Education Agency Director of Arts Education. Contact this person in your state for additional information.

Things to Consider:

You are competing for funds: Music education won't be the only subject area requesting these funds, so it's important to do your research and provide a compelling argument that shows the value and need for your requests.

Supplemental: These federal funds are meant to be supplemental to local funds for education; they cannot be used to replace existing funding. You'll need to demonstrate the need for additional funding through the needs assessment and show that federal funds aren't replacing local funds. Requests should be considered supplemental or "above and beyond" what the school district currently provides for music education.

One-time use: A school district must submit a new application each year, and funding is not guaranteed as appropriations from the federal government can change year to year. As noted above, you are competing for funds with other subject areas and other needs in the school district, so making the case to use these funds for any program requiring an ongoing investment is not the best route.

No effort wasted: The needs assessment will highlight areas where improvement is needed to expand or strengthen the music education curriculum and provide well-rounded subject learning opportunities for all students. This documented rationale for expanded music learning opportunities can also strengthen local support for music education as well as bolster the reasons for requesting funds as part of the Federal Funds Consolidated Application.



- **Step 3 – Stay in the process**

The process will continue each year as long as the terms outlined in ESSA remains the federal education law and Congress appropriates dollars for Title IV, Part A. Even if you don't receive funds for your program this year, stay a part of the process and request funds in subsequent years. What you learn along the way will also contribute to local advocacy for music education.

Key Terms, Resources and Contacts:

Consolidated Application (ConnApp): The ConnApp is used by your state Department of Education to distribute federal program funds, usually those associated with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, currently ESSA. Since timelines vary from state-to-state, contact your state Department of Education to confirm the LEA application timeline.

Funding Formulas: School funding is made up of federal, state, and local monies. Most states have developed formulas that determine how funds are allocated to their school districts.

Local Education Agencies (LEA): A general term to describe a school district or other schooling entity that is public and oversees the policies for a given school or sets of schools. For example, a school district is an LEA; a public charter school and its governing board, is an LEA.

Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (SSAEG): refers to the \$1.1 billion in federal funds allocated in fiscal year 2018 (FY18) by Congress to improve students' academic achievement by financially supporting the capacity for each state to: provide all students with access to a well-rounded education; improve school conditions for student learning; and improve the use of technology to improve academic achievement. This is another name for **Title IV, Part A**. Note: Your state Department of Education website may list the funding formula levels for the districts in your state. If not, please [contact](#) Lynn Tuttle, National Association for Music Education's (NAfME) Director of Public Policy, Research and Professional Development for details.

Resources:

NAfME Everything ESSA

<https://nafme.org/advocacy/essa/>

NAfME OTL's, Title IV and You

<https://nafme.org/archived-webinar-otls-title-iv-lynn-tuttle-ronny-lau/>

NAMM Music Education Resources

<https://www.namm.org/issues-and-advocacy/music-education/music-education-policy-updates>

The SupportMusic Coalition on Coalitions State Advocacy Network

<https://www.namm.org/issues-and-advocacy/support-music-coc>

U.S. Department of Education

<https://www.ed.gov/essa>

State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education

<http://seadae.org/>

Contacts:

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