

## EDTA Title IV-A Funding Guide

### Leveraging federal Title IV-A funds for theatre education

In 2017, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) created a new funding stream designed to ensure a “well-rounded” education for all students. Under ESSA, the arts are designated as well-rounded subjects. These federal funds, known as Title IV, Part A, or Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants (SSAEG), flow through each state’s department of education to school districts.

For 2021, Congress authorized \$1.6 billion for Title IV-A funding. The funding has increased every year since the launch of the program and is likely to increase again in 2022. Title IV-A funding is a good opportunity for theatre programs to obtain funds that can support teacher and their programs, particularly those who are in Title I districts.

This document explains how to access Title IV-A funds for your district that can potentially be used for theatre education.

### How to receive Title IV-A funds

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) or districts Title IV-A applications grant applications in the spring of each year. Generally, these applications are due back to the state Department of Education before the beginning of the school year. Ask for a meeting with your district’s Federal Programs Manager or the person in charge Title funds to discuss the needs of your theatre education program in the fall. You may also want to invite your principal or other administrators engaged in your theatre program to this meeting.

LEAs are required to complete a *Needs Assessment* to determine where Title IV, Part A funds can be used. Beginning in the spring, you should ask your administration how you can be involved in the process to determine the use of these funds. It’s likely you won’t know what the funding allocation from the federal government will be at this point. You should still participate in the process to bring attention to any deficiencies in your program.

### Areas to explore in your needs assessment

- Resources and equipment (lighting, sound, rigging, etc.)
- General theatre supplies/textbooks
- Performance space upgrades

- Theatre technology (computers, tablets, software)
- Curriculum materials
- Professional development
- Additional theatre courses

A foundational resource to review before making your case for additional resources for your theatre program is [EdTA's Opportunity to Learn Standards](#).

A consideration of these areas of programmatic need can help you make your case for Title IV, Part A funds, as well as funds from your LEA's regular budget that can impact your program.

Here are some things to bear in mind as you begin to plan your application for funds:

- Remember, you won't be the only subject area asking to use these funds, so it's important to do your research and provide a compelling argument.
- These federal funds are meant to be supplemental in nature – not to supplant what is already provided locally. You need to show need through a *Needs Assessment* and you need to show that federal funds aren't supplanting local funds to pay for it. As an example, if you would like to buy a new sound board you would show the value of using these federal dollars by explaining that there are no local dollars to cover the purchase. Perhaps your school simply doesn't budget for equipment upgrades, or there is a perception that what is available is adequate (despite however technically out-of-date it might be).
- These funds are not a lot in the grand scheme of a LEA's budget. So make sure to keep your ask reasonable. At this point, an LEA is likely to see in the \$10,000 range of funding, but continued advocacy at the federal level is trying to increase that amount.
- LEAs do have options under the federal law to combine their Title IV, Part A funds with other funding streams in the law, like Title I. If you provide a compelling enough argument for the use of funds for theatre, you may be able to convince your LEA to only use the funds under Title IV, Part A for a theatre related project.
- These funds are not recurring year-to year. So making a case to use these funds for any program that would require a yearly investment is not the best route. Each year, your LEA has to submit a new application for the use of these funds.

The current application states:

- LEAs receiving **at least \$30,000** in Title IV-A funding must complete the assurances below as it applies to your LEA.
- LEAs receiving **less than \$30,000** in Title IV-A funding only need to mark "yes" for one of the assurances below as it applies to your LEA.

## Assurances for grants of at least \$30,000 listed in the application

- The LEA assures that at least 20% of its allocation is spent on activities to support well-rounded educational opportunities.
- The LEA assures that at least 20% of its allocation is spent on activities to support safe and healthy students.
- The LEA assures that some of its allocation is spent on activities to support the effective use of technology.
- The LEA assures that it will comply with section 8501-8504, regarding equitable participation of private school children and teachers.
- The LEA assures that it will complete an annual State report regarding how funds for the SSAE program are being used.
- If the LEA receives less than \$30,000 in Title IV-A funding, mark N/A in the assurance below.
- The LEA or consortium assures the prioritization of the distribution of funds to schools based on one or more of several factors, including schools that:
  - Are among those with the greatest needs, as determined by the LEA or consortium.
  - Have the highest numbers of students from low-income families.
  - Are identified for Focus/Priority under Title I, Part A of the ESEA.
  - Are identified as persistently dangerous public school under section 8532 of the ESEA.

Once an LEA submits their application to your DOE, the Title IV requests, along with other parts of the application, are reviewed and monitored throughout the school year to ensure the funds are being spent as outlined in the plan.

The process will continue each year, as long as ESSA remains the federal law. Even if you don't receive funds for your program this year, stay part of the process. Your administrators will notice your tenacity and may find other areas of the budget to fill your program needs.