



California's Expanded Learning Opportunities Grant

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During the 2020-21 school year, **California** used Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds, alongside other state and federal funds, to create the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Grant to tackle the effects of interrupted instruction through academic and social and emotional supports. The California Department of Education allows school districts to apply ELO grants toward a variety of support [strategies](#) to expand learning opportunities occurring before and after school, including increasing the number of instructional days, increasing tutoring services and offering community learning hubs.

Expanded learning programs provide enriching academic and social and emotional supports for students outside of normal school hours, which allows students to access wraparound services as well. [Research](#) demonstrates that [well designed](#) expanded learning programs, [particularly](#) when offered by a certified instructor, can result in positive academic and social and emotional outcomes for students. For ELO grants, districts are not required to implement every strategy; instead, they are encouraged to collaborate with community partners to design programs that fit their students' needs. However, these grants will dovetail federal requirements for ESSER funds to address the effects of [interrupted instruction](#) on students.

The original ESSER allocation for the ELO grants was approximately \$2.2 billion for [fiscal year 2020-21](#). California supplemented ESSER dollars with an [additional](#) \$2.54 billion in state funds for the same fiscal year. Grants [allocated](#) to districts amount to \$725 per student and \$1,000 for every student experiencing homelessness who attends the school district. The state will make further investments going forward in the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program, which is a separate state-funded program that is detailed in the Ensure Financial Sustainability section.



Identify the Needs of Local Communities

After consulting with local communities and stakeholders, California's [ARP ESSER plan](#) identified supporting student mental health and addressing the effects of interrupted instruction as its top two priorities. In outlining strategies districts may use to expend funds, the department of education tries to target these priorities with [strategies](#) one through three.

Strategy One encourages districts to extend instructional learning time. Districts may accomplish this by increasing the number of days or minutes provided during the school year or by offering summer school. Strategy Two highlights ways to close learning gaps by investing in tutoring, learning recovery programs and educator training in accelerated learning methods. Finally, Strategy Three points to ways districts can address barriers to learning such as providing health, counseling or mental health services, as well as programs to address student trauma, and social and emotional learning.



Implement Technology-Based Solutions

The department of education has identified the creation of [community learning hubs](#) as a key strategy for grant recipients. In addition to affording students more time and access to learning opportunities after school, community learning hubs can offer technology to students who lack access. School districts are permitted to partner with community organizations to provide access to technology, high-speed internet and other academic supports required for expanded programing and tutoring.

Community learning hubs have emerged as a promising practice from the COVID-19 pandemic, as some [researchers claim](#) that they can address equity gaps in device access and strengthen schools' partnerships with local communities. For instance, the City and County of San Francisco [used](#) libraries, recreation and community centers to provide students in kindergarten through grade 5 with access to Wi-Fi and academic services.



Ensure Financial Sustainability

After the allocation of the one-time ELO grants, California has committed itself to expanding learning time by establishing the [Expanded Learning Opportunities Program](#) in the [fiscal year 2021-22](#) budget, in addition to the state's [existing programs](#). The Expanded Learning Opportunities Program will offer expanded-day, year-round instruction and enrichment opportunities for students in kindergarten through grade six.

For [fiscal year 2022-23](#), the state will provide \$4 billion to districts for ELO expenditures — up to an additional \$2,750 per student depending on the percentage of students who are emerging bilingual learners or from low-income backgrounds. The legislation declares the state's intent to continue financial support for the Expanded Learning Opportunities Program for all participating school districts past the 2023-24 school year.

More Information

See additional state profiles in the series: [Innovative State Strategies for Using ESSER Funds](#).