Questions from *REAP: Changes to the Program in FY 2017 & FY 2018* webinar

February 14 & 16, 2017

Locale codes

1. *What are locale codes?*
   Answer: Locale codes are a geographic designation tool for individual schools that are assigned by the Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). In developing locale code assignments, NCES uses the physical location represented by an address that is matched against a geographic database maintained by the U.S. Census Bureau. The REAP program Office uses school locale codes to identify "what is rural" for purposes of REAP eligibility. For more information on locale codes, please visit the NCES website:
   https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/rural_locales.asp

2. *Can you define the new locale codes that are used with implementation of ESSA for RLIS or SRSA eligibility determination?*
   Answer: A **list of new locale codes** is available on the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) website.

3. *In the past, joint vocational schools have been eligible for SRSA. They serve students from multiple LEAs. With the new locale codes, is there a suggestion for how to determine joint vocational schools' locale codes?*
   Answer: As mentioned above, school locale codes are determined by NCES. If a joint vocational school does not have a locale code assigned to it on the NCES list, the entity may still be eligible for REAP funds if it meets the State definition of "rural," as determined by an agency of its State.

4. *If a district does not have a locale code, can it still be eligible for the RLIS or SRSA formula grants?*
   Answer: Yes. A school district may be eligible if it is considered to be "rural" by a governmental agency of the State, as defined in ESSA Title VIII, Part A, Section 8101 (30) (A), and it meets all other applicable eligibility criteria for either SRSA or RLIS.

Eligibility Spreadsheets

1. *When are eligibility spreadsheets due for the FY2017 grant cycle?*
   Answer: Eligibility spreadsheets for the FY2017 grant cycle are due no later than March 3, 2017. For the FY2018 grant cycle, eligibility spreadsheets will be due in the fall of 2017.

2. *What spreadsheet data does ED need by March 3, 2017, for the FY2017 grant cycle?*
   Answer: SEAs should provide: 1) missing state "rural" definition data for SRSA and RLIS; 2) missing 2015-16 average daily attendance data for SRSA and RLIS; 3) LEAs' FY 2016 Title II-A allocations for all LEAs; and 4) spreadsheet data for LEAs that are members of educational service agencies (ESAs), if the ESA under which these LEAs are organized is not itself eligible for the SRSA program.

3. *Will the spreadsheets be sent to [SEAs] automatically?*
   Answer: The spreadsheets are available in MAX.gov. SEA Authorizing Representatives must be registered in Max.gov to access the spreadsheets.

4. *With the exception of "program allocation," my state's eligibility spreadsheet already included the data requested by ED. Do I need to verify that the prepopulated data is correct?*
   Answer: Yes. The prepopulated information is from the prior award year. Please check to ensure that the data is still correct, and correct any missing data or data that has changed. You will also need to submit FY 2016 Title II-A data for all Districts. This data was not pre-filled.

5. *Are the eligibility spreadsheets just for state coordinators?*
   Answer: Only state coordinators have the responsibility and ability to make changes to the spreadsheets before the final versions are posted to the REAP website. Once posted, LEAs will be able to view them. The spreadsheets will indicate whether an LEA is eligible for SRSA, RLIS, both grants, or the Hold Harmless provision.

6. *How can a new SEA-REAP Coordinator gain access to Max.gov?*
   Answer: Please contact your [REAP Program Officer](#) to gain access to Max.gov.

7. *Should state coordinators ask LEAs to check their locale codes?*
   Answer: States are encouraged to invite LEAs to review the spreadsheet data. The Department needs to have received all eligibility data for the FY2017 grant cycle by March 3, 2017.

8. *Will ED provide a list of changes in eligibility for each state?*

Answer: As ED receives the data from each SEA, ED will review the data and post the finalized spreadsheets on each SEA Max.gov page. SEA coordinators who have access to Max.gov may review this information on their individual state page.

9. *My school has never used Max.gov in the past. Will Max.gov have spreadsheets for my school?*
   Answer: Individual schools, school districts, and local education agencies do not use Max.gov. Max.gov is a data collection portal through which States review and submit data related to RLIS and SRSA eligibility. The REAP eligibility spreadsheets are used for State-level data collection and are reviewed by State REAP coordinators for REAP.

SRSA Application

1. *How will we know an LEA submitted an application for SRSA?*
   Answer: After the Grants.gov application period closes, spreadsheets identifying which eligible LEAs have applied for the SRSA formula grant, among other information, will be posted on the REAP website.

Hold Harmless

1. *How many LEAs will no longer be eligible for the SRSA formula grant as a result of changes in their NCES local code?*
   Answer: ED will be able to identify LEAs that are no longer eligibilie for the SRSA formula grant after SEAs have submitted their updated eligibility spreadsheets. A list of LEAs that qualify for the Hold Harmless provision will be included in the final eligibility spreadsheets that are posted to the REAP website.

2. *Will LEAs receiving SRSA funds under Hold Harmless be able use the Alternative Fund Use Authority during their phase-out years (2017-2019)?*
   Answer: Yes. Under Hold Harmless, LEAs will be eligible to use the Alternative Fund Use Authority each year that the provision applies.

SRSA/RLIS Eligibility

1. *Will ED notify states of LEAs' eligibility status?*
   Answer: Yes. We will notify State authorizing officials via email when the eligibility spreadsheets have been posted to the REAP website. State REAP coordinators will also have access to the final eligibility spreadsheets on Max.gov prior to the spreadsheets being posted publicly on the REAP website. ED will also reach out directly to SRSA-eligible districts to inform them that they need to apply, and will also encourage States and other rural stakeholders to reach out to eligible districts.

Dual Eligibility

1. *Are all LEAs eligible for both the SRSA and RLIS formula grants?*
   Answer: No. The eligibility criteria for each formula grant are different and individual LEAs may be eligible for one or both programs. Only LEAs that meet the criteria for both RLIS and SRSA will be able to choose   which program they wish to participate.

2. *Who is responsible for notifying LEAs that are eligible for both the SRSA and RLIS formula grants?*
   Answer: After reviewing SEA eligibility spreadsheet revisions, the REAP program office will contact LEAs that have been identified as dually eligible to notify them of their status, and to explain the process for choosing the grant program in which they wish to participate.

3. *Will dual eligible LEAs know prior to the SRSA application deadline which grant will give them more money?*
   Answer: Because individual grant amounts for SRSA and RLIS formula grants are determined, in part, by the number of grantees in each SEA, it is not be possible for LEAs to know how much money they will receive under each grant before all SRSA applications have been processed in Grants.gov.

4. *Will dual eligible LEAs be able to choose which award they want?*
   Answer:
   Yes. After reviewing SEA eligibility spreadsheet revisions, the REAP program office will contact LEAs that have been identified as dually eligible to notify them of their status, and to explain the process for choosing the grant program in which they wish to participate.

Uses of grant funds
1. *Can RLIS funds be used for teacher recruitment and retention?*
   Answer: Yes. Teacher recruitment and retention are allowable uses of RLIS funds under Title II, Part A – Improving Teacher Quality State Grants.

Other
1. *What is an Educational Service Agency?*
   Answer: According to ESSA Title VIII, Part A [Section 8101], Subpart 18, an educational service agency is "a regional, multiservice agency authorized by

State statute to develop, manage, and provide services or programs to local education agencies."

2. *What is the REAP state coordinator's role as it pertains to identifying the data necessary for RLIS and SRSA formula grants? Are there additional duties than in prior years?*
Answer: ED is asking SEAs to assist by reviewing individual SEA eligibility spreadsheets for accuracy, identifying districts which are no longer in existence, and identifying specific data to include: 1) Title IIA award amount; and 2) average daily attendance. Begining with the FY 2018 grant cycle, SEAs will be able to submit updated rural definitions, ADA, and Title II-A data.

3. *Will ED send state coordinators spreadsheets that list LEAs with unspent funds from previous years?*
Answer: Yes. A quarterly LEA drawdown report will be provided to State REAP coordinators.

4. *Who is my ED program officer?*
Answer: The **program officers for each state** are listed on the REAP website.

5. *Does ESSA allow LEAs to apply for the RLIS formula grant directly from the U.S. Department of Education?*
Answer: No. ED determines which LEAs are eligible for the RLIS and SRSA grants. It is the SEA's responsibility to determine the process by which eligible LEAs apply for and receive RLIS formula funds. SEAs may award funds on a competitive or formula basis. ESSA Title V, Part B, Subpart 2, Section 5221 (b) (3) provides further guidelines for RLIS grant administration.

6. *The overarching aim of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was to increase student achievement and decrease dropout rates. Is this the intent for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), as well?*
Answer: Yes. The ESSA is a re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The ESEA aims to increase student achievement and decrease dropout rates, and those goals have not changed under the ESSA reauthorization.