

Instructions for Completing the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Spreadsheet For the Small, Rural School Achievement Program and the Rural and Low-Income School Program

I. Introduction

As part of the Department of Education's (the Department) efforts to ensure valid and reliable data for determining awards, to reduce data collection burden, and to improve the grant award processes for awarding grants under the Small, Rural School Achievement Program (SRSA) and the Rural and Low-Income School Program (RLIS), the Department has modified its processes for collecting eligibility- and allocation-related data for Fiscal Year (FY) 18 and forward. Many of these changes have occurred on the Department's end, and the processes State education agencies (SEAs) use to submit data remain similar. Nevertheless, SEAs are strongly encouraged to read these instructions carefully and in their entirety in order to understand the changes, comply with the required deadlines, and ensure Local educational agency (LEA) data are submitted correctly. The timeline for submitting data to ED has been modified. Rather than collect data in the spring, beginning with FY 18 awards, SEAs will submit data to the Department during the fall. The first collection under the new timeline will occur in fall 2017.

Part B of Title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), authorizes two separate formula grant programs that target funds to rural school districts – the Small, Rural School Achievement Program (ESEA section 5212¹) and the Rural and Low-Income School Program (ESEA section 5221). The SRSA program authorizes the Department to make formula awards directly to eligible LEAs to support a wide range of local activities that support student achievement. It also provides eligible LEAs with greater flexibility in using the formula grant funds they receive under certain State-administered Federal programs. This flexibility is better known as “REAP-Flex”². The RLIS program authorizes the Department to make formula grants to SEAs, which in turn award subgrants to eligible LEAs on a formula or competitive basis.

These instructions are to assist SEAs with providing data the Department needs to establish eligibility for, and make allocations under, the SRSA and RLIS programs. The data provided by SEAs will affect all SEA and LEA 2018 allocations and the date which they are received; therefore, SEAs are required to submit REAP eligibility data by **[insert fall 2017 date]**.

SEAs should provide the data in the Excel spreadsheet titled “[State abbreviation] - 18InitialEligibilitySpreadsheet” (referred to from this point forward as “Eligibility

¹ Throughout this document, unless otherwise indicated, citations to the ESEA refer to the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA.

² REAP-Flex is the term the Department has given to the “alternative uses of funds” authority under the Small, Rural School Achievement program. This authority provides flexibility to SRSA-eligible LEAs to use Title II, Part A and Title IV, Part A formula funds to support local activities under an array of Federal programs in order to assist them in addressing local academic needs more effectively. (See Section 5211(a) of the ESEA, as amended, for more information.) An SRSA-eligible LEA does not have to apply for SRSA funds in order to exercise its REAP-Flex authority. However, the LEA must notify its SEA on an annual basis on or before the notification deadline established by the SEA of its intent to exercise its REAP-Flex authority.

Spreadsheet”), which accompanies these instructions, and should submit the completed spreadsheet online at Max.gov. To help minimize the possibility of errors in the submission, the Department requests LEAs be provided an opportunity to review the data prior to submitting it to the Department. The Department will make the data publicly available on its website prior to opening the annual SRSA application window for LEAs.

SEA REAP contacts will receive a link via e-mail to join the State’s Max.gov page, which contains helpful information for submitting REAP data. This same information will also be provided during the REAP Annual Kickoff Meeting on [insert date]. If the SEA REAP contact does not have a Max.gov account, he/she should contact the SEA’s REAP program officer in order to establish one.

II. REAP Eligibility

SRSA Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in REAP-Flex and the SRSA grant program, an LEA must –

- (1) have a total average daily attendance (ADA) of fewer than 600 students, or serve only schools that are located in counties that have a population density of fewer than 10 persons per square mile; and
- (2) serve only schools that have been assigned a school locale code of 41,42, or 43 by the Department’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) or be located in an area of the State defined as rural by a governmental agency of the State. In instances in which a State agency defines the area in which an LEA is located as rural, the SEA and the Department must agree to the rural designation before the LEA may participate in either REAP-Flex or the SRSA grant program.

In addition, an LEA that is a member of an Educational service agency³ (ESA) is eligible to participate in SRSA, if the ESA does not receive SRSA funds and if the LEA meets the requirements described in (1) and (2) above.

RLIS Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in the RLIS grant program, an LEA must meet the follow criteria –

- (1) 20 percent or more of the children ages 5 to 17 served by the LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line; and
- (2) all schools served by the LEA have been assigned a school locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43 by NCES, or are located in an area of the State defined as rural by a governmental agency of the State. In instances in which a State agency defines the area in which an LEA is located as rural, the SEA and the Department must agree to the rural designation before the LEA may participate in the RLIS grant program.

³ Educational service agency, as defined in Title VIII, section 8101(18) of the ESEA, means a regional public multiservice agency authorized by State statute to develop, manage, and provide services or programs to local educational agencies.

Dual Eligibility

As part of the reauthorization of Title V, Part B of the ESEA, LEAs that are eligible to participate in both RLIS and SRSA (henceforth referred to as “dual eligible”) may choose to participate in either RLIS or SRSA. Section 5225(b) requires an LEA with dual eligibility to notify the Department of its preference to participate in either SRSA or RLIS. An LEA with dual eligibility will notify the Department of its choice based on whether or not it submits an SRSA application. If the dual eligible LEA applies for SRSA in accordance with the application submission procedures it will receive an FY 2018 SRSA award. If the dual eligible LEA chooses not to submit an SRSA application or its application is not submitted in accordance with the application submission procedures, it will be included automatically in the list of RLIS-eligible LEAs the Department provides to States. The final list of RLIS eligible LEAs will be used to determine State RLIS allocation amounts. SEAs have the option to award RLIS grants to eligible LEAs on a competitive basis or according to a formula.

A dual eligible LEA may exercise the REAP-Flex authority even if the LEA chooses to participate in RLIS instead of SRSA. An LEA that is only eligible for RLIS, may not participate in REAP-Flex.

ESA LEAs

As part of the reauthorization of Title V, Part B of the ESEA, an LEA that is a member of an ESA is eligible to participate in SRSA, if the ESA does not receive SRSA funds, and if the LEA meets requirements (1) and (2) described previously under *SRSA Eligibility*. ESAs and their respective LEAs must coordinate directly with each other to determine which entity will submit an SRSA application, as both entities may not apply for or receive SRSA funds.

Hold Harmless-LEAs

As part of the reauthorization of Title V, Part B of the ESEA, LEAs that were eligible and received an FY 2015 SRSA award, but are no longer SRSA-eligible because of amendments the ESSA made to the locale code designations referenced in section 5211(b)(1)(A)(ii), may continue to receive FY 2017, 2018, and 2019 SRSA awards at a reduced rate. LEAs that are not SRSA-eligible for other reasons will not receive an award.

III. General Information

In order to notify SEAs and LEAs earlier in the fiscal year of SRSA and RLIS eligibility and to issue awards in accordance with the July 1 statutory deadline, the Department implemented a series of procedural changes during FY 2017 with the intended goal of making future awards by July 1 of each year. These changes include collecting eligibility- and allocation-related data from SEAs in the fall of each year rather than the spring, as done previously.

For FY 2018, the Department utilized the NCES’ preliminary 2016-17 LEA Directory⁴ to determine its master list of LEAs, which are the LEAs included on the Eligibility Spreadsheet.

⁴ For more information about the National Center for Education Statistics’ Local Education Agency Universe Survey data, please visit the following website: <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/pubagency.asp>.

This list was populated with the most recent locale code, population density, and poverty data provided by NCES and the U.S. Census Bureau. Not later than [insert October date], SEAs must provide new Average Daily Attendance data, alternate poverty data, Title II Part A and Title IV Part A data, State “rural” designations (if applicable), and LEA operational status. Using these data, the Department will determine for purposes of FY 2018 awards, which LEAs are eligible for SRSA, which are eligible for RLIS, which are dual eligible, and which may receive SRSA funding under the hold harmless provision. This information will be made available via the REAP webpage in late fall 2017 or early winter 2018. A final list of RLIS-eligible LEAs will be sent to SEAs after the SRSA application window has closed and applications have been reviewed.

In developing the NCES requirements, SEAs and LEAs should be aware of the following criteria and filters that have been applied:

- For FY 2018, the Department used preliminary 2016-17 LEA Directory data.
- SEAs are no longer asked to identify new LEAs for inclusion on the Eligibility Spreadsheet. New LEAs will be added automatically when they are reported in the following year’s LEA directory. In other words, an LEA not in existence in 2016-17 will not receive an FY 2018 award.
- LEAs not reported in the LEA Directory, are not included on the Eligibility Spreadsheet.
- LEAs with an operational status of closed, future, or inactive are not included on the Eligibility Spreadsheet.
- LEAs coded as LEA Type 5 (State-Operated Agency), 6 (Federally-Operated Agency), and 8 (Other Education Agency), are not included on the Eligibility Spreadsheet. If the SEA considers an entity with a 5, 6, or 8 LEA Type to be an LEA eligible for a REAP award, please see the section titled “Submitting Additional Information.”
- SEAs are no longer asked to review the U.S. Census Bureau’s population density data to determine if an LEA qualifies for the population density exception described in the statute. This data will be incorporated into the Eligibility Spreadsheet by NCES and will be taken into account automatically when determining SRSA and RLIS eligibility.

IV. Eligibility Spreadsheet Instructions

This section provides column-by-column instructions for submitting the data required to determine REAP eligibility and initial allocation amounts. The headings listed below refer to the respective columns on the Eligibility Spreadsheet. Please provide the data requested for all LEAs on the Eligibility Spreadsheet which,

(1) serve only schools that have been assigned a school locale code of 32, 33, 41,42, or 43 by NCES,

OR

(2) are located in an area of the State defined as rural by a governmental agency of the State.

The SEA may provide the data for all LEAs on the spreadsheet and not just the subsets described above, if it prefers.

In addition, if the SEA identifies ESAs as eligible recipients of REAP funds, it should provide the requested data for both the ESAs and their LEA members (to the extent the ESAs and their LEA members meet the requirements described in (1) and (2) immediately above).

More specifically, please provide data in columns 11 (ADA), 16 (Title II, Part A allocation), and 17 (Title IV, Part A allocation amount). In addition, please provide data in columns 10 (LEAs defined as rural by State) and 13A (Alternate poverty data provided by State), if this information is needed to help establish an LEA's eligibility for either program. The Department has already provided the necessary data in the other columns. Those pre-filled columns are highlighted in grey and should not be changed.

As stated previously, the Department will announce via the REAP webpage in late fall 2017 or early winter 2018, which LEAs are eligible for SRSA, which are eligible for RLIS, which are dual eligible, and which may receive SRSA funding under the hold harmless provision. A final list of RLIS-eligible LEAs will be sent to SEAs after the SRSA application window has closed and applications have been reviewed.

Column 10. Is the LEA in an area defined as “rural” by the State?: Only States that choose to use a rural definition as an alternative means of establishing part of an LEA's eligibility under the SRSA or RLIS program should complete this column. If no State governmental agency has an approved definition of rural or if all LEAs that are defined as rural by a State governmental agency already meet the locale code requirement for eligibility, the SEA may leave column 10 blank or enter “NA” (“not applicable”). If “yes” is entered in column 10, the SEA must provide the following additional information with respect to the applicable LEAs:

1. The identity of the State governmental agency that established the definition;
2. A copy of the rural definition, and
3. The SEA's concurrence that the use of the definition and inclusion of the LEA in the Small, Rural School Achievement Program is appropriate.

To be accepted, the definition must identify LEAs as being located in a rural area of the State; it may not only identify LEAs that serve significantly smaller numbers of children than other LEAs in the State. Instructions for submitting the additional information, if “yes” is entered in column 10 with respect to any LEA, are provided in section V of this document.

Column 11. Average Daily Attendance (ADA): In the Eligibility Spreadsheet, please provide the results of the census conducted to determine the number of students in average daily attendance in kindergarten through grade 12 at the schools served by the LEA. The census must be conducted not earlier than the start of the 2016-17 school year and not later than December 1, 2016. SY 2016-17 ADA is submitted to the Department in October 2017 and will be used to calculate FY 18 allocation amounts. The Annual Average Daily Attendance Census Determination is described in Part B, Subpart 3, section 5231 of the ESEA:

“SEC. 5231. ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE DETERMINATION.
“(a) CENSUS DETERMINATION.— Each local educational agency desiring a grant under section 5212 and each local educational agency or specially qualified agency desiring a grant under subpart 2 shall —

“(1) not later than December 1 of each year, conduct a census to determine the number of students in average daily attendance in kindergarten through grade 12 at the schools served by the agency; and

“(2) not later than March 1 of each year, submit the number described in paragraph (1) to the Secretary (and to the State educational agency, in the case of a local educational agency seeking a grant under subpart (2)).

Column 13A: Alternate Poverty Data provided by State: If U.S. Census Bureau poverty estimates are not available for a particular LEA, the Eligibility Spreadsheet will include the letter “M” (missing) in Column 13. An SEA may provide, in Column 13A, the alternative poverty data it uses to make allocations to LEAs under Title I, Part A.

Column 16. FY 2017 Title II, Part A, Formula Allocation Amount: Enter the amount of the FY 2017 Title II, Part A, Supporting Effective Instruction formula allocation. Provide allocation amounts only for LEAs that accepted program funds; if an LEA declined the allocation, the allocation for that LEA should be left blank.

Column 17. FY 2017 Title IV, Part A, Formula Allocation Amount: Enter the amount of the FY 2017 Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment formula allocation. Provide allocation amounts only for LEAs that accepted program funds; if an LEA declined the allocation, the allocation for that LEA should be left blank.

NOTE:

The following columns in the Eligibility Spreadsheet are included to help the SEA determine if an LEA is SRSA eligible, RLIS eligible, or dual eligible, or if the LEA may receive an award under the hold harmless provision. These columns serve only as an aid to the SEAs in completing the spreadsheets. They do not represent the U.S. Department of Education’s final determination of an LEA’s eligibility for a REAP program. SEAs should not enter any data into these columns—they are pre-filled in the Eligibility Spreadsheet.

Column 18. LEA Type: (Pre-Filled) This column represents the LEA type as submitted in the 2016-17 LEA Directory.

Column 19. SRSA Eligible: (Pre-Filled) This column will automatically show “SRSA” if the eligibility requirements for SRSA are met in the preceding columns.

Column 20: SRSA-Hold Harmless: (Pre-Filled) This column will automatically show “HH” if the LEA is eligible to receive an award under the hold harmless provision described in 5212(b) (4) of the ESEA.

Column 21. RLIS Eligible: (Pre-Filled) This column will automatically show “RLIS” if the eligibility requirements for RLIS are met in the preceding columns.

Column 22. Dual Eligible: (Pre-Filled) This column will automatically show “DUAL” if (1) columns 19 and 21 show “SRSA” and “RLIS”, or (2) columns 20 and 21 show “HH” and “RLIS”.

V. Submitting Additional Information

This section provides instructions for submitting additional information (as appropriate), such as operational status changes, LEA types excluded from the Eligibility Spreadsheet, locale code test requests, and supporting documents for State rural determinations. Please submit any additional information in response to these instructions through Max.gov. Please use the provided spreadsheets where appropriate.

Operational Status Changes

To ensure the Department has the most recent LEA operational status, the Department requests SEAs identify LEAs in the 2016-17 LEA Directory that are no longer in existence as of 2017-18 or will not be in existence during 2018-19. If an LEA on the Eligibility Spreadsheet is no longer in existence as of 2017-18, or will not be in existence during 2018-19, because of a closure or another reason, please copy the LEA record from the Eligibility Spreadsheet and paste the record into the document titled “Blank–CorrectionsSpreadsheet2018”. In addition, report the LEA as closed by typing “Closed” in the column labeled “Nature of Correction”. LEAs no longer in existence as of 2017-18 or that will not be in existence during 2018-19 will not receive an FY 18 award.

LEA Types 5, 6, and 8

If any LEA coded as LEA Type 5 (State-Operated Agency), 6 (Federally-Operated Agency), or 8 (Other Education Agency), should be considered for a REAP award because the SEA considers the entity to be an LEA eligible for a REAP award, please provide the LEA information on the document titled “Blank–CorrectionsSpreadsheet2018”. Label these LEAs according to their LEA Type in the column titled “Nature of Correction.” In addition, please provide the data requested for each of the columns referenced in Section IV Eligibility Spreadsheet Instructions.

Requests for Locale Code Tests

The NCES data we are using to determine REAP eligibility for FY 2018 is the most recent data available to the Department; therefore, we do not anticipate locale code tests. However, to determine locale codes for schools whose physical location no longer match what is in the NCES directory or in rare cases where the State believes the locale code is in error, SEAs may submit a locale code test request using the spreadsheet, “Blank-SchoolLocaleCodeTestRequests2018.xls,” which the Department has designated for that purpose. Locale code test requests will be accepted for FY 18 eligibility consideration if they are submitted to the Department by **[insert October deadline.]**

State Rural Designations - Supporting Documentation

As part of the eligibility requirements for the SRSA and RLIS programs, all of the schools in the LEA must meet the eligible school locale code criteria, **or** the Secretary must determine, based on a demonstration by the LEA and with the concurrence of the SEA, that the LEA is located in an area defined as rural by a State governmental agency. Therefore, if a State defines an LEA as rural, supporting documentation must be provided.

If the SEA enters “yes” in column 10 (“Is the LEA in an area defined as rural by the State?”), it must provide the following additional information with respect to the applicable LEAs:

1. The identity of the State governmental agency that established the definition;
2. A copy of the rural definition; *and*
3. The SEA’s concurrence that the use of the definition and inclusion of the LEA in the Small, Rural School Achievement Program or the Rural Low-Income School Program is appropriate.

If the SEA is submitting a State definition of rural for one or more LEAs, it must use the “[State]-LEAsDefinedasRuralbyState.doc” spreadsheet the Department has designated for this purpose.

NOTE: For convenience, the Department has provided the rural definition spreadsheet with the most current definition on file. If the definition of rural is left blank on the document, then the Department does not have an SEA approved definition of rural on file. If the SEA wishes to submit a definition, it should update the document with the most recent definition and send this back to the Department as part of the supplementary documents attached to the eligibility spreadsheet.

VI. Submission of Data

Once you have populated the Eligibility Spreadsheet with the required information, you should submit it along with any additional information that needs to be provided in response to these instructions through Max.gov on or before **[Insert October date]**.

VII. Contact for Assistance

For questions concerning the Rural Education Assistance Programs, these instructions, or the spreadsheets referenced in these instructions, please contact the SEA’s REAP program officer through the Comments Section of the SEA’s Max.gov page. SEA’s may also contact, the REAP Team Leader at:

Eric Schulz
Office of School Support and Rural Programs
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3E210
Washington, D.C. 20202
(202) 260-7349
REAPSEA@ed.gov

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0646. The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 38 hours and 15 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather and maintain the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. The obligation to respond to this collection is required If you have comments or concerns regarding this

collection, write directly to: Mr. Eric Schulz, Small, Rural School Achievement program, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3E210, Washington D.C. 20202.