November 2025

Title III, Part A Guidelines

English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement Act

Introduction

In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law, which reauthorized the Title III, Part A (Title IIIA) grant program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title IIIA is officially known as the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act and consists of two subgrant programs: English learners (ELs) and immigrant children and youth. Both subgrant programs aim to ensure that ELs, including immigrant children and youth, attain English language proficiency and meet the same challenging State academic standards that all students are expected to meet. The purpose of this guidance is to provide eligible entities with Title IIIA program information and requirements.

Background

ELs are among the fastest-growing populations in our nation's schools. In the school year 2019-20, ELs comprised over 10 percent of the student population nationwide, according to the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of English Language Acquisition. Iowa's EL population is currently over six percent and growing, as reported by the Iowa School Performance Profiles for 2023. With this in mind, regardless of EL enrollment in a local education agency (LEA), all Iowa LEAs need to be prepared to serve ELs, including immigrant children and youth (see the following Subgrant Requirements and Recommended Actions section for more information).

ELs are a widely heterogenous group, bringing a depth of linguistic and cultural assets to the schools in which they are enrolled. Despite these assets, there are significant academic achievement and opportunity gaps between ELs and their non-EL peers. ELs tend to be underrepresented in gifted and talented programming, extracurricular activities, and high-level courses and often are over- or under-identified for special education services. While ELs face such challenges, they can achieve English proficiency and achieve success academically with effective, evidence-based support and access to excellent educators.

Purposes

In carrying out activities with Title IIIA funds, the eligible entity shall use effective approaches and methodologies for teaching English learners and immigrant children and youth for the following purposes:

- Developing and implementing new language instruction educational programs and academic content instructional programs for English learners and immigrant children and youth, including early childhood education programs, elementary school programs, and secondary school programs.
- Carrying out highly focused, innovative, locally designed activities to expand or enhance existing language instruction educational programs and academic content instructional programs for English learners and immigrant children and youth.
- Implementing, within an individual school, schoolwide programs for restructuring, reforming, and upgrading all relevant programs, activities, and operations relating to language instruction educational programs and academic content instruction for English learners and immigrant children and youth.
- Implementing, within the entire jurisdiction of a local educational agency, agency-wide programs for restructuring, reforming, and upgrading all relevant programs, activities, and operations relating to language instruction educational programs and academic content instruction for English learners and immigrant children and youth (ESEA § 3115(a)).

Allocations and Subgrants

The Iowa Department of Education (Department) calculates and allocates Title IIIA funds to subgrantees based on the number of ELs and immigrant students in Iowa and by the number tested on the annual English language proficiency assessment (ELPA21). Ninety-five percent of the apportionment is allocated as Title IIIA subgrants to eligible entities serving ELs and immigrant students (ESEA § 3111(b)(1)).

Allocations for English Learners

Eligible entities that qualify for subgrants for Title IIIA—English Learners must:

- Generate a minimum of $10,000 (ESEA § 3114(b));
- Annually complete and submit a program application plan;
- Have an approved plan for funds allocated for that fiscal year; and
- Meet evaluation and reporting requirements (ESEA §§ 3114(a), 3115(a), & 3121(a)-(b)).

LEAs generating less than $10,000 must access Title IIIA funds by participating in a Title IIIA consortium.

Allocations for Immigrant Students

Eligible entities that qualify for subgrants for Title IIIA—Immigrant Students must show substantial increases in immigrant children and youth compared to the average of their immigrant student counts from the previous two years. Immigrant children and youth are not born in any state and have not been attending one or more schools in any one or more states for more than three full academic years (ESEA §§ 3111(3)(b) & 3201(5)).

Subgrant Requirements

To receive a Title IIIA subgrant, the eligible entity must complete a list of requirements in the Consolidated Application for ESEA Title Programs, which is located in the Consolidated Accountability and Support Applications (CASA). Among these requirements, the eligible entity must submit cross-program assurances that they maintain and annually review the EL provision of services plan (e.g., Lau Plan) to ensure English learner students can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs and to comply with Iowa Administrative Code chapter 281–60,[1] a program application by October 15 of each year, and reimbursement claims each quarter. For a full list of the subgrant requirements, see the following table.

ESEA Citation	Action
3116(c)	**Ensure that all LIEP EL teachers are properly trained** (available on AEA PD online, or ELPA21 standards training, or group-wide PD approach) **to implement Iowa's adopted ELP Standards:** • CCSSO English Language Proficiency Standards • English Language Proficiency Standards for English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities.
3113(b)(2)	**Follow established Standardized Entrance and Exit Procedures for Iowa's English Learners, including assessing all potential ELs within 30 days of enrollment in an Iowa school.**
1111(b)(2)(G)	**Ensure all ELs participate in the State's adopted ELP assessment, including ELs with disabilities, in accordance with section 1111(b)(2).** Iowa has adopted the ELPA21 as its annual ELP assessment. The ELPA21 summative assessment is required for ALL identified ELs regardless of participation in the EL program or special education programs. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may be eligible to take the Alt ELPA.

[1] All school LEAs and state-accredited nonpublic schools must provide these assurances in the CASA system.

ESEA Citation	Action
1111(h)(1)(C)(iv)	**Provide information by subgroup, including ELs, on the State academic content assessments (e.g., Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress [ISASP]) for the state and local accountability report cards under section 1111(h)(1)(C)(iv).**[2] All ELs must participate in not only ELP assessments (ELPA21) but also state academic content assessments (ISASP), regardless of time in a US school. *Former ELs are included in the EL subgroup for academic indicator accountability purposes for two years.* For academic content accountability: • Year 1—only participation is included. • Year 2—only participation and the measure of growth are included. • Year 3 and beyond—like all other students, assessment scores count for all accountability measures: participation, growth, proficiency, and average scale score.
8501(c)(1)	**Engage in meaningful consultation with the appropriate nonpublic school administrators within the LEA and complete the nonpublic consultation agreement for the upcoming school year by March 15.** For additional information on the equitable services procedure and process, see the Equitable Services for Nonpublic School Students section of the ESSA Guidance and Allocations page.
3116(a)	**Complete and submit the first quarter reimbursement claim for Title IIIA in the CASA system between Nov. 1 and Nov. 30.**
3116(a)	**Complete and submit the second quarter reimbursement claim for Title IIIA in the CASA system between Jan. 1 and Jan. 31.**
3116(a)	**Complete and submit the third quarter reimbursement claim for Title IIIA in the CASA system between April 1 and April 30.**
3116(a)	**Complete and submit the fourth quarter reimbursement claim for Title IIIA in the CASA system between June 1 and July 15.**
3121(a)	**Report on the Title IIIA activities conducted and ELs served in accordance with section 3121(a)**, including: • A description of the language programs and activities; • The number and percent of ELs making progress in ELP, including ELs with a disability; • The number and percent of ELs attaining English proficiency; • The number and percent of ELs who exit the EL program based on attainment of English proficiency; • The number and percent of ELs meeting academic standards for each of the four years after they have exited the English language program and are no longer receiving services, including ELs with a disability; and • The number and percent of ELs who do not reach English proficiency within five years of initial classification.

[2] Iowa includes information on the number and percent of ELs making progress toward English proficiency on its Iowa Performance Profiles accountability webpage. Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(iv) further requires that State report cards include information on the number and percent of ELs achieving English proficiency

Program Application

Each eligible entity desiring a Title IIIA subgrant must submit a program application plan to the Department at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Department may require. At a minimum, the application must:

- Describe effective programs and activities, including language instruction educational programs, proposed to be developed, implemented, and administered under the subgrant that will help English learners increase their English language proficiency and meet the challenging State academic standards;
- Describe how the eligible entity will ensure that elementary schools and secondary schools receiving funds under this subpart assist English learners in—
    - Achieving English proficiency based on the State's English language proficiency assessment under section 1111(b)(2)(G), consistent with the State's long-term goals, as described in section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii); and
    - Meeting the challenging State academic standards;
- Describe how the eligible entity will promote parent, family, and community engagement in the education of English learners (ESEA § 3116(b)(1)-(3)).
- Assure that—
    - Each LEA that is included in the eligible entity is complying with section 1112(e) [Parents Right-to-Know] prior to, and throughout, each school year as of the date of application;
    - The eligible entity is not in violation of any State law, including State constitutional law, regarding the education of English learners, consistent with sections 3125 [State Law] and 3126 [Civil Rights Laws];
    - The eligible entity consulted with teachers, researchers, school administrators, parents and family members, community members, public or private entities, and institutions of higher education, in developing and implementing such plan; and
    - The eligible entity will, if applicable, coordinate activities and share relevant data under the plan with local Head Start and Early Head Start agencies, including migrant and seasonal Head Start agencies, and other early childhood education providers (ESEA § 3116(b)(4)).
- Include a certification that all teachers in each language instruction educational program for ELs that is, or will be, funded under this part are fluent in English and any other language used for instruction, including having written and oral communications skills (ESEA § 3116(c)).

Allowable Activities

Three Required Activities

An eligible entity receiving Title IIIA funds must use the funds to:

1. Increase the English language proficiency of ELs by providing effective language instruction educational programs that meet the needs of ELs and demonstrate success in increasing—
    - English language proficiency and
    - Student academic achievement;
2. Provide effective professional development to classroom teachers (including teachers in classroom settings that are not the settings of language instruction educational programs), principals and other school leaders, administrators, and other school or community-based organizational personnel, that is—
    - Designed to improve the instruction and assessment of ELs;
    - Designed to enhance the ability of such teachers, principals, and other school leaders to understand and implement curricula, assessment practices and measures, and instructional strategies for ELs;

    - Effective in increasing children's English language proficiency or substantially increasing the subject matter knowledge, teaching knowledge, and teaching skills of such teachers; and
    - Of sufficient intensity and duration (which shall not include activities such as 1-day or short-term workshops and conferences) to have a positive and lasting impact on the teachers' performance in the classroom, except that this subparagraph shall not apply to an activity that is one component of a long-term, comprehensive professional development plan established by a teacher and the teacher's supervisor based on an assessment of the needs of the teacher, the supervisor, the students of the teacher, and any local educational agency employing the teacher, as appropriate; and
3. Provide and implement other effective activities and strategies that enhance or supplement language instruction educational programs for ELs, which:
    - Must include parent, family, and community engagement activities; and
    - May include strategies that serve to coordinate and align related programs (ESEA § 3115(c)).

Authorized Activities of Title IIIA—English Learners

Subject to the required activities, the eligible entity may use the funds to achieve any of the purposes previously described by undertaking one or more of the following activities:

- Upgrading program objectives and effective instructional strategies.
- Improving the instructional program for ELs by identifying, acquiring, and upgrading curricula, instructional materials, educational software, and assessment procedures.
- Providing to ELs—
    - Tutorials and academic or career and technical education; and
    - Intensified instruction may include materials in a language that the student can understand, interpreters, and translators.
- Develop and implement effective preschool, elementary, or secondary school language instruction educational programs coordinated with other relevant programs and services.
- Improve the English language proficiency and academic achievement of ELs.
- Provide community participation programs, family literacy services, and parent and family outreach and training activities to ELs and their families:
    - To improve the English language skills of ELs; and
    - To assist parents and families in helping their children improve their academic achievement and participate in their children's education.
- Improve the instruction of ELs, which may include ELs with a disability, by providing for:
    - The acquisition or development of educational technology or instructional materials;
    - Access to and participation in electronic networks for materials, training, and communication; and
    - Incorporation of the resources described above into curricula and programs.
- Offer early college high school or dual or concurrent enrollment programs or courses designed to help ELs succeed in postsecondary education.
- Carry out other activities that are consistent with the purposes of Title IIIA (ESEA § 3115(d)).
- Administrative costs (2% cap; ESEA § 3115(b)).

Authorized Activities of Title IIIA—Immigrant Students

Immigrant student subgrantees experiencing substantial increases in immigrant children and youth must use funds to pay for activities that provide enhanced instructional opportunities. Such activities may include:

- Family literacy, parent and family outreach, and training activities designed to assist parents and families in becoming active participants in the education of their children;
- Recruitment of support for personnel, including teachers and paraprofessionals who have been specifically trained, or are being trained, to provide services to immigrant children and youth;

- Provision of tutorials, mentoring, and academic or career counseling for immigrant children and youth;
- Identification, development, and acquisition of curricular materials, educational software, and technologies to be used in the program carried out with awarded funds;
- Basic instructional services that are directly attributed to the presence of immigrant children and youth in the local educational agency involved, including the payment of costs of providing additional classroom supplies, costs of transportation, or such other costs as are directly attributable to such additional basic instructional services;
- Other instructional services that are designed to assist immigrant children and youth in achieving in elementary school and secondary schools in the United States, such as a program of introduction to the educational system and civics education; and
- Activities coordinated with community-based organizations, higher education institutions, private sector entities, or other entities with expertise in working with immigrants to assist parents and families of immigrant children and youth by offering comprehensive community services (ESEA § 3115(e)).
- Administrative costs (2% cap; ESEA § 3115(b)).

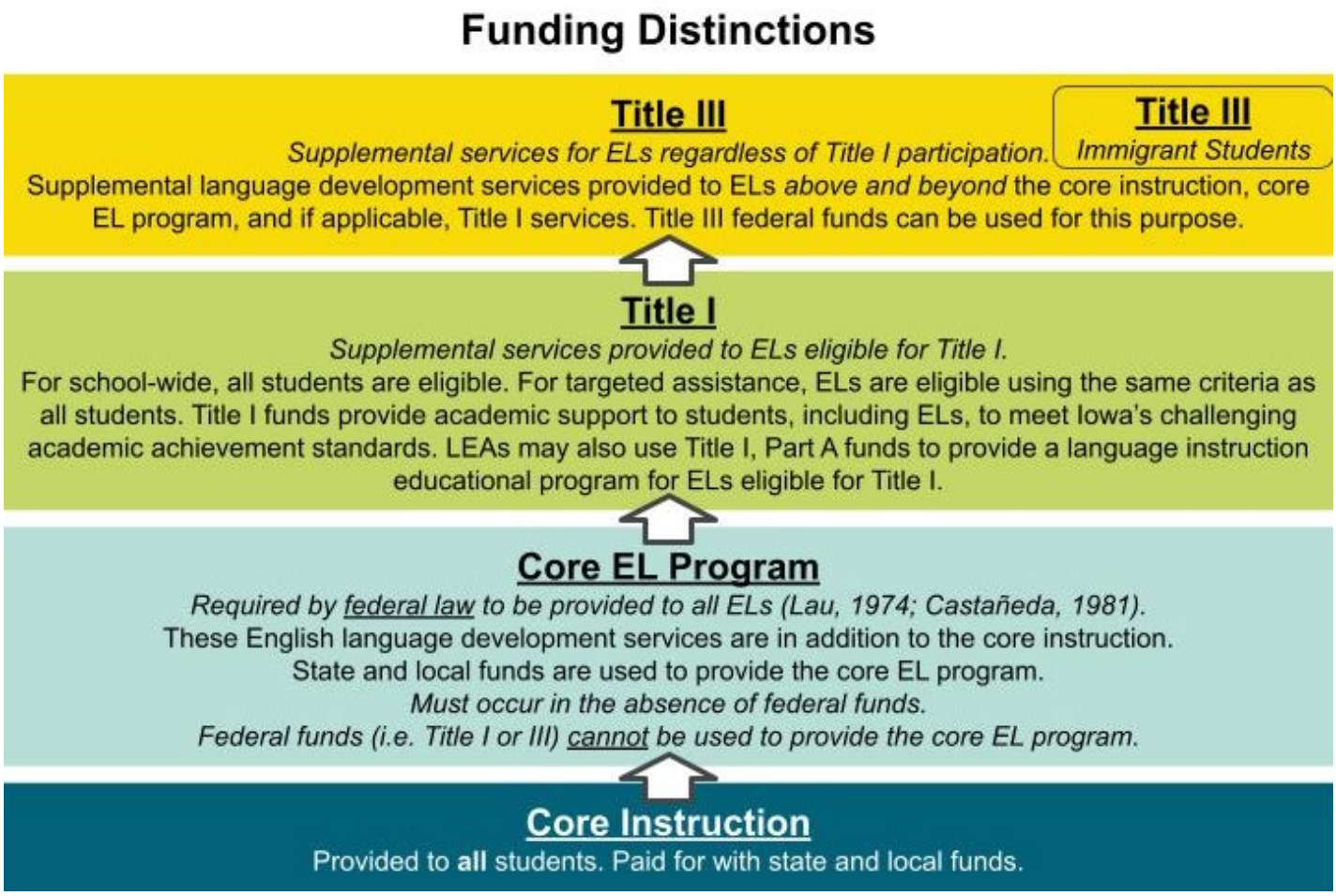
Supplement, Not Supplant, Requirement

The LEA must only use Title IIIA funds to provide additional (supplemental) services, staff, programs, activities, or materials that are not provided with State or local resources absent these specific Federal funds. Federal funds cannot pay for resources that would otherwise be purchased with State and/or local funds. Additionally, Title IIIA funds cannot supplant other Federal funds (ESEA § 3115(g)).

Use CARE Not to Supplant

Test of Supplanting	Questions to Consider
Civil Rights	Is it already required under civil rights laws?
All Students	Is it provided to all students?
Regulations	Is it required under State and local regulations?
Existed Previously	Did it exist previously under a different funding stream?

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, the activity is supplanting and is unallowable.



This graphic has been adapted from a resource produced by the Indiana Department of Education.

Federal Resources

- Title III Non-Regulatory Guidance and Addendum
- Raise the Bar: Lead the World, Secretary Cardona's Letter, November 2023

Questions and Additional Resources

For program contact information and resources, please see the Department's ESSA Guidance and Allocations, Consolidated Application for ESEA Title Programs, English Learners, and ELPA21 pages.