

Supporting Music Education Locally with Title IV FAQ

How does an educator apply for funds?

Title IV-A funds are applied for by your school district, not applied by an educator, music program, or specific school.

As an educator, your specific role will be to participate in your district's needs assessment to address the deficiencies within your district's music programs. Contact your district's arts coordinator or curriculum supervisor to find out how you can participate and who you can collaborate with.

How do rural school districts apply for the funds? Are rural schools allocated the funds automatically or do they need to apply for the money?

Regardless of a district's size or geographical location, all school districts must submit an application to receive their Title IV-A allocation. Because Title IV-A is a block grant, each district is carved its own specific allocation, but cannot access these funds until it submits an application to the State that indicates how they intend to use these funds.

Under the current funding level of \$1.1 billion, many rural school districts will receive an allocation of less than \$30,000. This will not require a needs assessment, but does not mean an assessment cannot be conducted.

How can I learn what the funds have been allocated for in my school district?

Contact your district's Title IV-A director or arts coordinator/curriculum supervisor. You can also ask them how you can participate in the upcoming fiscal year and how Title IV-A can benefit music programs in your district!

I am entering the freshman year of my bachelor's in music education this coming fall. How do you expect this legislation to change within the next four years?

The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) will more than likely remain unchanged and continue to serve as the "law of the land" for K-12 public education, including music's listing in a well-rounded education. If you recall, *No Child Left Behind*, ESSA's predecessor, lasted for nearly fifteen years. Given Congress' dysfunction in recent years, it is hard to see ESSA revisited in the next four years.

This isn't to say music educators and advocates should not be engaged. ESSA is still very new to many, including to stakeholders and decision-makers at the local level. Thanks to a well-rounded education, music now has a seat at the table and these years should be used to educate all participants and parties, especially about the potential impact Title IV-A can have on music education.

Can charter and private schools get Title IV-A funding or is that just for public schools?

Charter schools can potentially have access to Title IV-A funds and be given an allocation. However, the charter school must be a non-profit organization and cannot be a for-profit charter school. Additionally, because the Title IV-A distribution formula is based on the Title I-A funding formula, the charter school must have a Title I-A allocation.

Private schools are eligible to participate in Title IV-A programs if the private school is providing education for students, mainly students of poverty, residing in a school district's boundaries that receives a Title IV-A allocation. In order to receive the programming, the private school would engage in "consultation" with a local school district, where the school district provides the program to meet a private school's specific Title IV needs, including access to music education.

Missouri's State ESSA Plan indicates that Title IV-A funds will be devoted towards STEM education. What does this mean for music education?

Keep in mind when reading your state's ESSA plan, your state is outlining how it intends to spend its minor allocation of funds. Under Title IV-A, all states receive a minor portion for the administration and management of Title IV-A grants, as well as funds for state-level activities and priorities.

The state, however, cannot affect how the school-districts justify their spending. If receiving an allocation of \$30,000 or more, ESSA requires districts to spend 20% of their funds on a well-rounded education. In addition, districts must adhere to the findings of their needs assessment for their remaining dollars, which could lead to more spending for a well-rounded education that includes music.

You mention \$131 billion dollars in discretionary spending for Fiscal Year 2018 and 2019. Does this mean we can hope to see a similar amount (\$1.1 billion) allocated for Title IV-A in FY 2019?

Yes, because of the raised caps, we do expect Title IV-A to be allocated around the \$1.1 billion level in FY 2019. Though, NAFME will continue to advocate \$1.6 billion for Title IV-A, which is the recommended authorized level.

Because the budget deal is only for two fiscal years, this is questionable from FY 2020 and on. Future funding depends on national priorities, the economy, and where the budget caps are set two years from now. That is why it is vital to demonstrate and provide Title IV success stories while we have increased funding in FY 2018 and FY 2019.

Do the requests have to be for new curricular programs, or can they be for both and also be used to maintain, sustain and/or build up existing programs?

Yes, in addition to establishing new curricular programs, Title IV-A funds can be used to sustain and build existing programs. This all ties back to your district's needs assessment. For example, if your district finds a deficiency in facility management or have a need for updated instruments, these all can be addressed with Title IV-A dollars to maintain, sustain, and provide support to existing programs. And

keep in mind that federal education dollars are meant to supplement, not supplant, existing dollars. These dollars cannot “replace” what your school district spends on music education already.

Is there a deadline to apply for FY 2018 funds?

Yes, there are deadlines for your district to apply for Title IV-A funds! However, these deadlines vary state by state and district by district. The best way to find out is to contact your district’s Title IV-A director or arts coordinator/curriculum supervisor.

Can Title IV-A be used to hire new educators?

Absolutely. If found as a deficiency by your school district’s needs assessment, Title IV-A funds could be used to help hire additional music educators, specialists, supplement teacher salary, or create partnerships with local community partners.

However, this may be a difficult ask for many. Like all federal funds, Title IV-A dollars are used to supplement, not supplant (or replace) state and local dollars. So, if your school district is routinely paying or providing salary for music educators, it may be difficult to make the supplemental case when your local funds are already being used for that hiring purpose. Our best advice is to focus on how additional hiring would improve access to music education, so it ties back to Title IV’s intent.

Can a local 501(c)3 non-profit apply for Title IV-A funds?

No, Title IV-A funds are directly allocated to school-districts and dedicated for public education.

However, if the program being offered by a 501(c)3 can help provide and broaden access to music education, a non-profit may have an opportunity to partner with local school districts. There is a possibility a school district may request through its Title IV-A application to use these dollars in partnership with a non-profit organization. A stretch, but a possibility.

Can Title IV-A funds be used for extended learning opportunities, such as field trips, or festival and competition participation?

Absolutely. Like new hiring, this is largely dependent on the result of your school district’s needs assessment. If many music programs within your district are struggling to provide their students access to competition participation, performance festivals, and other adjudication opportunities, Title IV-A funds could be used to help with transportation, lodging, and other logistical costs.

Again, the primary ask is to tie how these off-campus experiences may enrich and provide greater access to music education in your district.