

Title I, Part A – Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies

What it is

The purpose of the Title I, Part A program is to provide federal dollars to **supplement** educational opportunities for student who attend schools with high numbers or percentages of children from low-income families and are most at risk of failing to meet the state’s challenging academic achievement standards. Title I, Part A funds are to be used to provide all students significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps.ⁱ

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) awards Title I grant funds to the Tennessee Department of Education (department), which subgrants funds to districts. Districts reserve funds for mandatory set-asides and other optional district-level instructional initiatives. The remaining Title I funds must flow to eligible schools through a formula known as “spiraling” (also referred to as “ranking and serving”). Eligible schools are determined by the district and are identified as Title I schools. Districts determine the amount of funding to be awarded to each Title I school based on the school’s student poverty percentage. Each Title I school determines the services provided by the Title I allocated funds through a series of steps. These steps include the development of a school-wide plan, a review to ensure the services meet the intents and purposes of Title I, and as defined by federal rule.

What it can fund

To utilize funds for expenditures, all of the following must be met: 1) reasonable in scope and cost, 2) necessary to meet program requirements, 3) allocable to the benefit received, and 4) based on a comprehensive needs assessment.

At the school level, there are two Title I program models:

- **School-wide program model:** Any school with at least 40 percent poverty, or a state-approved waiver, may operate a Title I school-wide program as long as the school conducts a comprehensive needs assessment and develops a school-wide plan for meeting those needs.ⁱⁱ The school-wide plan and its implementation must be regularly monitored and revised as necessary based on student needs to ensure that all students are provided opportunities to meet the challenging state academic standards.ⁱⁱⁱ The premise behind the school-wide model is that comprehensive improvement strategies – rather than separate, add-on services – are most effective in raising academic achievement for the lowest achieving students in a school. This is best accomplished by a school addressing the root causes of low performance.
 - All students and staff may participate in Title I-funded activities.
 - The school may use Title I funds to support any reasonable activity designed to improve the school’s educational program as long as it is consistent with the school’s needs and school-wide plan.
 - Depending on its needs, a school-wide program school could use Title I funds for various activities

- Upgrade the instructional material and equipment for
 - Implement an early warning system
 - Extend the school day or school year
 - Reorganize class schedules to increase collaborative teacher planning time
 - Provide tutoring or intervention services
 - Coordinate health and social services
 - Improve the school's discipline process
 - Hire intervention teachers
 - Restructure classes to promote personalized learning
 - Implement career academies
 - Provide early postsecondary opportunities
 - Implement school safety programs
 - Address school climate or culture issues
 - Provide counseling and services such as mental health or school counselors
 - Fund dropout prevention services
 - Organize professional development
 - Increase family engagement
 - *Non-Traditional:* Funds for the arts including instructional personnel, professional development, supplies, or education experiences/field trips
 - *Non-Traditional:* Provide early learning opportunities with preschool options
- **Maximize the school-wide program model.** Title I spending is most flexible at the school level in school-wide program schools. School-wide program schools can use Title I funds to support activities needed to upgrade the school's educational program as long as the activities are consistent with the school's needs and school-wide plan, including instructional and support services that benefit all students.
 - **Targeted assistance program model:** Any Title I school that does not operate a school-wide program (has less than 40 percent poverty or has opted not to operate a school-wide program) must operate a targeted assistance program, unless a state-approved waiver has been approved. In a targeted assistance program, the school uses Title I funds to provide additional supports only to identified students with skill deficits in order to help them to meet state standards.
 - Only eligible, identified students may participate in and benefit from Title I funded activities.
 - Students identified as failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet state standards, (based on academic need – not poverty)
 - Students who participated in Head Start or a Title I-funded preschool program within the past two years
 - Migrant, neglected, delinquent, and homeless students
 - The school must spend Title I funds on supplemental activities to improve the academic achievement of eligible, identified students, including:
 - Support for academic subjects, including but not limited to English language arts, reading, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography

- Positive behavioral supports, attendance incentive programs, parent/community engagement, and school climate interventions if needed to improve student achievement
- Health, nutrition, and other social services if funds are not reasonably available from other sources, and, provided the school has engaged in a comprehensive needs assessment and established a collaborative partnership with local service providers

At the district level, districts must retain funds for certain district-level activities:

- Parental engagement (if the district receives an allocation of \$500,000 or more)
- Services for homeless students within the district
- Equitable services for eligible private school students

In addition, districts may reserve funds to administer Title I programs.

- District-managed initiatives in Title I schools such as support to Priority and Focus schools, professional development, preschool, extended day/summer school, support for English Learners, foster care transportation, or additional support for neglected youth
- Administrative costs for public and non-public school services

ⁱ Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) § 1001.

ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Education. *Designing School-wide Programs*. [Web](#).

ⁱⁱⁱ Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) § 1114(b)(3)