



**Study of Experiences and Needs
of Rural Education Achievement
Program Grantees**

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December 2016

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Note to the Reader

This report discusses findings and recommendations on the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) as authorized in 2001 under Title VI, Part B of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)*, as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*. Data collection for this study took place in 2014–15, before the passage of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* in December 2015; the *ESSA* reauthorized and amended the *ESEA*, including REAP, which was moved to Title V, Part B of the *ESEA*. Therefore, the findings and recommendations in this report, as well as descriptions of REAP provisions and practices, reflect the program as authorized in 2001 and do not represent the program under the *ESEA* as amended by the *ESSA*. Unless otherwise indicated, all references in this document to the *ESEA* are to the *ESEA* as amended by *NCLB*.

Note that some districts and states expressed challenges or made recommendations related to aspects of the program that are set by statute and are therefore beyond the authority of the Department to address. Readers interested in the statutory changes discussed above may consult the *ESSA* revisions to *ESEA* at <http://www2.ed.gov/documents/essa-act-of-1965.pdf>, Title V, Part B, beginning at section 5201. If you have specific questions about the effect of the *ESSA* on REAP, please email essa.questions@ed.gov. Finally, we note that this report is not intended to reflect best practices. It describes conditions as they existed at the time of data collection, but the inclusion of a description of state or district practices does not necessarily mean that all practices comply with the law governing REAP, or that the Department approves all practices described.

Executive Summary

Nationally, 28 percent of all public elementary and secondary schools were in rural locations in 2013–14, serving 18 percent of all K–12 students (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics 2015). Rural schools serve students in sparsely populated areas and have smaller overall populations than schools in other communities. Rural school districts often face unique challenges such as geographic isolation, shortages of qualified educators, and underdeveloped infrastructure, including technology systems (Consortium for School Networking 2016; Porowski and Howley 2013).

Congress established the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) to provide flexible funding to help rural districts address these challenges and serve students more effectively.¹ REAP is composed of two programs: the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program and the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) program. Of the two programs, SRSA supports smaller and more isolated districts, and it provides additional funding and the opportunity for these districts to exercise “REAP-Flex” authority. REAP-Flex allows SRSA-eligible districts to use certain specific federal formula funds to support local activities under an array of other federal formula programs to assist them in addressing local academic needs more effectively.² RLIS serves rural districts that are generally slightly larger but have substantial concentrations of poverty, and it provides additional funding only, not the authority to exercise REAP-Flex.

The U.S. Department of Education (the Department) awards SRSA grants directly to eligible districts on the basis of a statutory formula, whereas the Department provides RLIS formula allocations to state education agencies, which in turn make subgrants to eligible districts, either by formula or by competition.

This study’s objective was to examine state and district practices and perspectives regarding REAP: the roles states and districts play in verifying the accuracy of the data used to determine district eligibility for REAP funds, how districts use REAP funds and REAP-Flex, and states’ and districts’ recommendations for improving program operations. We note that this report is not intended to reflect best practices. It describes conditions as they existed at the time of data collection, but the inclusion of a description of state or district practices does not necessarily mean that all practices comply with the law governing REAP, nor that the Department approves all practices described. In addition, some challenges and grantee recommendations discussed in this report are in response to provisions set by statute and/or controlled by Congress which are outside the authority of the Department to address.

¹ REAP was authorized in 2001 as Title VI, Part B of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965*, as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*. In 2015, the program was reauthorized and amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* as Title V, Part B of the *ESEA*. Data collection for this study took place in 2014–15, before the passage of the *ESSA*, which amended the program and relocated it under Title V, Part B. Therefore, the findings and recommendations in this report, as well as descriptions of REAP provisions and practices, reflect the program as authorized in 2001 and do not represent the program under the *ESEA*, as amended by the *ESSA*. Unless otherwise indicated, all references in this document to the *ESEA* are to the *ESEA* as amended by *NCLB*.

² At the time of this study, the only funded program eligible for REAP-Flex was Title II, Part A. However, the statute also allowed SRSA-eligible local education agencies to exercise their REAP-Flex authority with funds from three other ESEA programs — Title II, Part D; Title IV, Part A; and Title V, Part A (see *ESEA* section 6211).

Key Findings

- States supported the Department in determining REAP eligibility by providing district-level data and reviewing the accuracy of Department-provided data.
- All 43 states with RLIS-eligible districts chose to make subgrants to districts on the basis of a funding formula rather than on a competitive basis, and 28 of these states based the subgrant amount entirely on average daily attendance (ADA).
- Districts most frequently used SRSA and RLIS funds to improve or expand access to technology (71 percent of SRSA districts and 71 percent of RLIS districts) and to provide educator professional development (45 percent of SRSA districts and 58 percent of RLIS districts).
- Forty-six percent of SRSA district coordinators reported exercising REAP-Flex; of these, 82 percent reported that they used funds eligible for REAP-Flex to maintain a stable level of funding for ongoing activities.
- The majority of both district and state REAP coordinators were highly satisfied with REAP as a whole. However, they provided recommendations for improvement to REAP in three categories: (1) improved timelines for eligibility and award determination, (2) more information on allowable uses of funds and REAP-Flex, and (3) revised eligibility criteria.

Study Design

The study questions were the following:

1. What role do states play in supporting the Department's SRSA and RLIS eligibility and award determination process?
2. How do districts use their SRSA or RLIS funds?
3. To what extent do SRSA-eligible districts use REAP-Flex and for what purposes?
4. What recommendations do states and districts have for improving the operation of the SRSA and RLIS programs?

To address these questions, the study team conducted telephone interviews with state REAP coordinators in the 47 states that reported districts drawing down REAP funds in FY 2014, surveys of district coordinators in nationally representative samples of 669 SRSA grantees and 336 RLIS subgrantees, and follow-up telephone interviews with a subsample of 24 district coordinators who completed the surveys. All 47 states participated in the state interviews, and the combined response rate for the district surveys was 95 percent. Data collection took place between March and June 2015.

State Role in Eligibility and Award Process for REAP

To determine districts' eligibility for SRSA and RLIS, the Department asks state education agencies to provide data on ADA and review for accuracy the Department-provided data on districts' rural status and poverty rates. If the state chooses, it may provide for SRSA districts only county population density as an alternative to schools' ADA as a measure of size and a state rural designation as an alternative to NCES locale codes as a measure of ruralness.

Nearly all states that received REAP funds reported reviewing the Department-provided data for accuracy and/or providing additional data, including ADA. Forty-three states reported reviewing the Department-provided data for accuracy. Of the four coordinators that did not review the data, three state coordinators said that they assumed the data were correct and did not review them, and one state coordinator did not know whether the state reviewed the data because that responsibility belonged to other staff.

All 47 states reported providing additional data: 37 of these states reported obtaining and submitting data on ADA from state databases alone, five states obtained this information directly from districts, and two from a combination of district and state sources. Three states submitted the data, but the respondents were not directly responsible for obtaining the data and did not know the source.

The majority of states did not require a formal planning process from RLIS-eligible districts to receive their funds.

Of the 43 states with RLIS subgrantees, 18 required a formal planning process, 22 states required only a request, and three states required neither a request nor a formal planning process for their RLIS districts to receive funds.

All 43 states with RLIS-eligible districts chose to make subgrants to districts on the basis of a funding formula rather than on a competitive basis, and most of these states based the subgrant formula entirely on ADA.

Of the 43 states with RLIS-eligible subgrantees, all decided to award funds by formula rather than by competition. The majority of states (28 states) based formula awards entirely on ADA, three states used both ADA and poverty data, and two states used only poverty data in their formula. Six state REAP coordinators were not responsible for administering the formula, which was the responsibility of others in the state, and therefore did not know which data were used to determine RLIS subgrant amounts. Finally, four states had only one RLIS-eligible district and therefore awarded all RLIS funds to that one district. Although most states did not comment on why they chose to use a formula rather than a competition, four states said that they chose a formula to reduce the burden on state and district offices.

Although the majority of district and state REAP coordinators did not experience any challenges in the eligibility or award determination and notification process, some expressed concerns about criteria used for determining eligibility, the timing of notification, and states' ability to provide technical assistance to their districts.

The majority of SRSA (59 percent) and RLIS (54 percent) district coordinators reported that they experienced no challenges in finding out whether their districts were eligible for REAP awards. Likewise, 34 of 47 state REAP coordinators did not identify any challenges in the eligibility determination and notification process.

Nonetheless, some REAP coordinators encountered challenges in eligibility determination or notification. Seven state coordinators expressed concerns about the poverty and rural locale code criteria that the statute requires the Department to use to determine eligibility for REAP. Additionally, two-fifths of district coordinators reported they had finished their budget planning before they knew their award amount for REAP (44 percent of SRSA coordinators and 35 percent of RLIS coordinators). Finally, six state coordinators noted challenges answering SRSA districts' questions about the federal eligibility award process.

District Use of REAP Funds

REAP districts most frequently used their funds to improve or expand access to technology and to provide educator professional development.

The most frequently reported uses of REAP funds were to improve or expand access to technology (71 percent of SRSA coordinators and 71 percent of RLIS coordinators) and to provide educator professional development (45 percent of SRSA coordinators and 58 percent of RLIS coordinators).

In keeping with REAP's purpose as a supplemental funding stream, half of SRSA districts (51 percent) reported using the funds in combination with other funds from the Department, and 33 percent used REAP funds in combination with E-Rate.³ Similarly, 58 percent of RLIS district coordinators reported using REAP funds in combination with other funds from the Department, and 23 percent reported using them in combination with E-Rate.

More than half of REAP district coordinators reported targeting the use of REAP funds to improve the educational outcomes of particular subgroups of students.

Fifty-four percent of SRSA and 66 percent of RLIS district coordinators reported that they targeted funds to support specific student subgroups, such as low-performing students (87 percent of SRSA districts that targeted funds, 86 percent of RLIS districts that targeted funds), low-income students (70 percent SRSA, 78 percent RLIS), students with disabilities (40 percent SRSA, 28 percent RLIS), and English learners (29 percent SRSA, 33 percent RLIS).

REAP-Flex

The majority of district REAP coordinators reported being aware of REAP-Flex, but in interviews several coordinators provided examples that were inconsistent with the provision.

Seventy-three percent of SRSA district coordinators reported they were aware of the REAP-Flex provision before reading the survey's description of it, and 76 percent of SRSA coordinators reported they understood the provision to a moderate or great extent. In interviews, however, six of eight coordinators who reported understanding REAP-Flex described it in ways that were inconsistent with the provision, usually describing it as involving SRSA funds as opposed to using formula funds from other specific federal formula programs.

SRSA districts most commonly exercised their REAP-Flex authority to maintain a stable level of funding for ongoing activities.

Forty-six percent of SRSA district coordinators reported exercising their REAP-Flex authority in the 2014–15 school year; of these districts, 82 percent used it to maintain a stable level of funding for

³ Also known as the Schools and Libraries Program, E-Rate, operated by the Federal Communications Commission, provides funds for schools to purchase discounted Internet and telecommunications services (Federal Communications Commission 2016).

activities. Sixty-seven percent of SRSA district coordinators whose districts reported exercising their REAP-Flex authority reported using Title II, Part A funds to support activities under Title I, Part A.

SRSA districts that did not exercise their REAP-Flex authority reported lack of awareness and lack of information about the provision as reasons.

In districts that did not report exercising their REAP-Flex authority, 32 percent of coordinators reported they were not aware of the option, and 33 percent reported they did not have enough information to make an informed decision about whether or not to exercise it.⁴

Grantee Recommendations for Improving REAP

The majority of district and state REAP coordinators were highly satisfied with REAP as a whole.

Overall, 39 of 47 state REAP coordinators were somewhat or very satisfied with REAP, and 40 of 47 were somewhat or very satisfied with the Department's administration of the program. Nearly all SRSA district coordinators (93 percent) and RLIS district coordinators (96 percent) were highly or moderately satisfied with REAP.

Districts and states had recommendations for improvement to REAP in three categories: (1) improved timelines for eligibility and award determination, (2) more information on allowable uses of funds and REAP-Flex, and (3) revised eligibility criteria.

In interviews, state and district coordinators identified some recommendations for improving REAP. First, grantees recommended that the Department revise the eligibility determination and award timeline so that it aligns more closely with other *ESEA* funding and their own budget cycles. Second, both state and district REAP coordinators wanted more information about the program, particularly the REAP-Flex provision and allowable uses. Additionally, districts acknowledged that the allowable uses of REAP funds are broad, but they also indicated a desire for more allowable uses for REAP dollars. RLIS district coordinators also reported they would greatly value the kind of authority offered by REAP-Flex, which is currently available only to SRSA districts. Finally, state coordinators suggested changes to certain eligibility criteria, such as revising the rural locale codes used in eligibility determination and considering flexibility in the measures used to determine poverty rates. State coordinators were interested in the Department's applying or allowing the use of methods for measuring poverty rates that are less sensitive to year-to-year fluctuations and are therefore more likely to keep districts with poverty rates that are close to the 20 percent poverty threshold from dropping in and out of eligibility.

⁴ These proportions are not mutually exclusive. A proportion of those who reported not having enough information also reported not knowing the option existed.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Nationally, 28 percent of all public elementary and secondary schools were in rural locations in 2013–14, serving 18 percent of all K–12 students (Glander, 2015). Rural schools serve students in sparsely populated areas and have smaller overall populations than schools in other communities. These schools are located in incorporated communities or census-designated places with a population density of less than 25,000. Rural school districts often face unique challenges, such as geographic isolation, shortages of qualified educators, and underdeveloped infrastructure, including technology systems (Consortium for School Networking 2016; Horrigan 2014; Porowski and Howley 2013).

Key Features of the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP)

The Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) was authorized in 2001 under Title VI, Part B of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965*, as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* (see Appendix A for the full text of the statutory authority). In 2015, the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* reauthorized and amended the program, relocating it in Title V, Part B of the *ESEA*. This study used data collected before the reauthorization of REAP by the *ESSA*. Therefore, the findings in this report, recommendations from grantees, and descriptions of REAP provisions and practices reflect the program as authorized under the *ESEA*, as amended by *NCLB*, and do not reflect current law.⁵

The purpose of REAP is to help address the unique needs of rural districts, based on concerns that their formula grants may be too small for them to use effectively and that they may lack the capacity to compete successfully against larger districts for federal competitive grants. As defined under REAP prior to amendments by the *ESSA*, rural schools may be in small towns characterized as having populations between 2,500 and 25,000 (locale 6) or in smaller communities with populations of fewer than 2,500 people (locale 7 or 8) (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics 2016). REAP includes two programs, the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program and the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) program. Of the two programs, SRSA supports smaller districts, those that have the lowest population densities and that are remote from urban centers. SRSA provides these districts with supplemental funds and with flexibility to spend funding from certain *ESEA* formula programs on alternative uses through a provision called REAP-Flex. RLIS serves rural districts with relatively larger ADA, including small towns that have substantial concentrations of poverty.

The two programs have similar purposes, but they differ in four key dimensions (Exhibit 1): eligibility criteria (e.g., average daily attendance), funding and program administration, allowable uses of funds, and an option for SRSA districts to use REAP-Flex. REAP-Flex does not provide additional funds; rather, it

⁵ For specific information about changes to NCLB in current law, please consult the markup version of the ESEA which strikes certain REAP provisions in NCLB and replaces them with REAP provisions in the ESSA, at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/legislation/title-v.pdf>, beginning at section 5201. This document was compiled by the Division of Legislative Counsel (DLC) in the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) of the Department of Education. The document is not an official statement of the law and is not a substitute for the text of the ESEA as reflected in the Statutes at Large or the U.S. Code. The provision of this link is for reference only, and does not intend to describe changes to implementation of the REAP program under the ESSA.

provides SRSA-eligible districts with some flexibility in how they use funds from four other federal *ESEA* programs (referred to in the statute as “applicable funding”): Improving Teacher Quality State Grants (Title II, Part A), Educational Technology State Grants (Title II, Part D), Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (Title IV, Part A), and State Grants for Innovative Programs (Title V, Part A).⁶ SRSA-eligible districts may use these funds for the same purposes for which they may use funds they receive under SRSA. A complete list of allowable uses of funds is in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. Statutory differences between SRSA and RLIS

	SRSA	RLIS
Eligibility criteria	Average daily attendance (ADA) under 600 OR population density of less than 10 persons per square mile AND Serve only schools that have a National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) locale code ^a of 7 or 8 OR are located in an area defined as rural by a government agency of the state.	20 percent or more of children age 5 through 17 are from families with incomes below the poverty line AND Serve only schools that have an NCES locale code of 6, 7, or 8 AND Are ineligible for SRSA.
Funding and administration	The Department awards formula grants directly to eligible districts.	The Department awards formula grants to states, which subgrant the funds to eligible districts.
Allowable uses of funds	Districts may use their funds for local activities authorized under the following <i>ESEA</i> programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged (Title I, Part A) Improving Teacher Quality State Grants (Title II, Part A) Educational Technology State Grants (Title II, Part D) Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students (Title III) Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (Title IV, Part A) 21st Century Community Learning Centers (Title IV, Part B) State Grants for Innovative Programs (Title V, Part A) 	Districts may use RLIS funds for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities authorized under Title I, Part A (Improving Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged) Teacher recruitment and retention Teacher professional development Educational technology that meets the requirements of Title II, Part D Activities authorized under Title III (Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students) Activities authorized under Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (Title IV, Part A) Parental involvement activities
REAP-Flex	Available	Not available

^a Before 2006, NCES used eight locale codes to describe geographic locations on a continuum that ranges from “large city” to “rural.” A locale code of 6 denotes a small town with a population between 2,500 and 25,000, a locale code of 7 denotes a rural area that is not near a city, and a locale code of 8 denotes a rural area near a city.
Source: *ESEA* as amended by NCLB, Title VI, Part B.

⁶ At the time of data collection for this study, only Title II, Part A was funded.

Determining Eligibility for REAP

The Department, through the Office of School Support and Rural Programs (SSRP), determines district eligibility for SRSA and RLIS on the basis of statutory criteria related to ruralness and size for SRSA and ruralness and poverty for RLIS. SSRP initiates the eligibility determination process (Exhibit 2), and states play a role by reviewing federal data for accuracy and providing additional data. Districts also play a role in that states may request ADA and other data from them and may ask them to verify any of the data elements used to determine REAP eligibility.

Exhibit 2. Typical sequence of REAP grant-making

Step	Activity
1: Data collection	SSRP receives data from NCES with district-level locale codes and percentage of children from families in poverty. SSRP incorporates these data into preliminary REAP eligibility spreadsheets by state.
2: Technical assistance	SSRP holds a series of teleconferences and webinars with state offices to discuss their roles and responsibilities for reviewing and submitting data required to determine eligibility for SRSA and RLIS grants.
3: State data submission	States review data from SSRP and provide additional district-level data necessary to determine SRSA and RLIS eligibility. Data provided by SSRP include district locale code, poverty rate, and operational status. States verify the data provided by SSRP and report district ADA; Title II, Part A funds for the prior year; and optional state rural designations and county population density.
4: Grant eligibility identification	SSRP determines grantee eligibility for SRSA and RLIS grants, posts eligibility spreadsheets on the SSRP website, and requests that states verify the eligibility status of their districts. SSRP solicits and processes applications from districts not previously participating in SRSA.
5: Formula award determination	The Department uses the finalized list of SRSA- and RLIS-eligible grantees to calculate the grant award allocations.
6: Disbursement of grant awards	SSRP issues the grant award notification to SRSA and RLIS grantees.

Source: Communication with REAP Team Leader, Office of School Support and Rural Programs, spring 2016.

SRSA-eligible districts must be small: They must have an ADA⁷ under 600 students, or they must serve schools in counties with a population density of less than 10 persons per square mile. In addition, to be eligible for SRSA all the schools in the district must be rural: They must be in locales designated as a rural area (locale code 7 or 8), or its state must define it as rural using an alternative state-defined designation.⁸

RLIS-eligible districts must be rural and low income. Rural districts that are too large to qualify for SRSA funds may qualify for RLIS if 20 percent or more of the children in the district come from families with incomes below the federal poverty line. Districts with schools in small town locales (locale code 6) are

⁷ Average daily attendance, or students in average daily attendance, is defined as the aggregate number of days of attendance of all students during a school year divided by the number of days school is in session during that year. See *ESEA* section 9101(1).

⁸ Under section 6211(b)(2) of the *ESEA*, the Secretary of Education may waive the locale code requirements if a district is located in an area defined as rural by a governmental agency of the state.

eligible for RLIS, in addition to those with schools in rural locales (7 and 8). Some districts may meet the eligibility requirements for both SRSA and RLIS in a given year; that is, a district may meet the criteria for SRSA and also have a high concentration of families in poverty that makes it eligible for RLIS. However, per the statute, if a district is eligible for awards under both programs, it receives only an SRSA award.⁹

In 2014–15, the mean ADA of SRSA-eligible districts was 295 students, whereas the mean ADA of RLIS districts was roughly seven times larger, at 1,957 students (Exhibit 3). The average poverty rate for RLIS-eligible districts was 28 percent, compared with 20 percent in SRSA-eligible districts.

More than half of RLIS-eligible districts in 2014–15 had schools designated as locale code 6, whereas only 4 percent of SRSA districts had schools of this locale code.¹⁰ RLIS-eligible districts were thus comparatively larger and less isolated but also higher in poverty than SRSA-eligible districts (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3. Average daily attendance, district poverty rates, and locale codes of all SRSA- and RLIS-eligible districts, 2014–15

District characteristics	SRSA-eligible districts	RLIS-eligible districts
Mean ADA	295 students	1,957 students
Average proportion of children from families in poverty	20%	28%
Distribution by locale code		
6 (small town)	4%	55%
7 (rural not in vicinity of a city)	69%	56%
8 (rural in vicinity of a city)	27%	15%

Exhibit reads: The average SRSA-eligible district had an ADA of 295 students.

Note: Locale code percentages for RLIS sum to more than 100 because a district may have more than one locale code among its schools. The *N*s are 4,269 to 4,650 SRSA-eligible and 1,947 to 2,010 RLIS-eligible districts. The *N*s vary by row because not all districts provided data for each row in this table.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, SRSA Program, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, RLIS Program, 2016.

A total of 49 states had either RLIS- or SRSA-eligible districts or both in 2014–15. Forty states had both RLIS- and SRSA-eligible districts. States in the Southeast were more likely to have the majority or all of their REAP-eligible districts eligible for RLIS funds, whereas states in the West, Midwest, and Northeast were more likely to have a majority of SRSA-eligible districts (Exhibit 4). Five states had only SRSA-eligible districts (Connecticut, Delaware, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont), and four had only RLIS-eligible districts (Florida, Maryland, South Carolina, and West Virginia). Hawaii and the District of Columbia did not have any districts eligible for REAP funds in 2014–15.

⁹ Some SRSA-eligible districts may not receive funds for the fiscal year because the formula generates a \$0 award that year. These districts are still eligible for REAP-Flex.

¹⁰ These districts were eligible for SRSA because they were in an area defined as rural under an alternative state definition.

Exhibit 4. States with majority SRSA-eligible, majority RLIS-eligible, only SRSA-eligible, only RLIS-eligible, and no districts eligible for funding, 2014–15

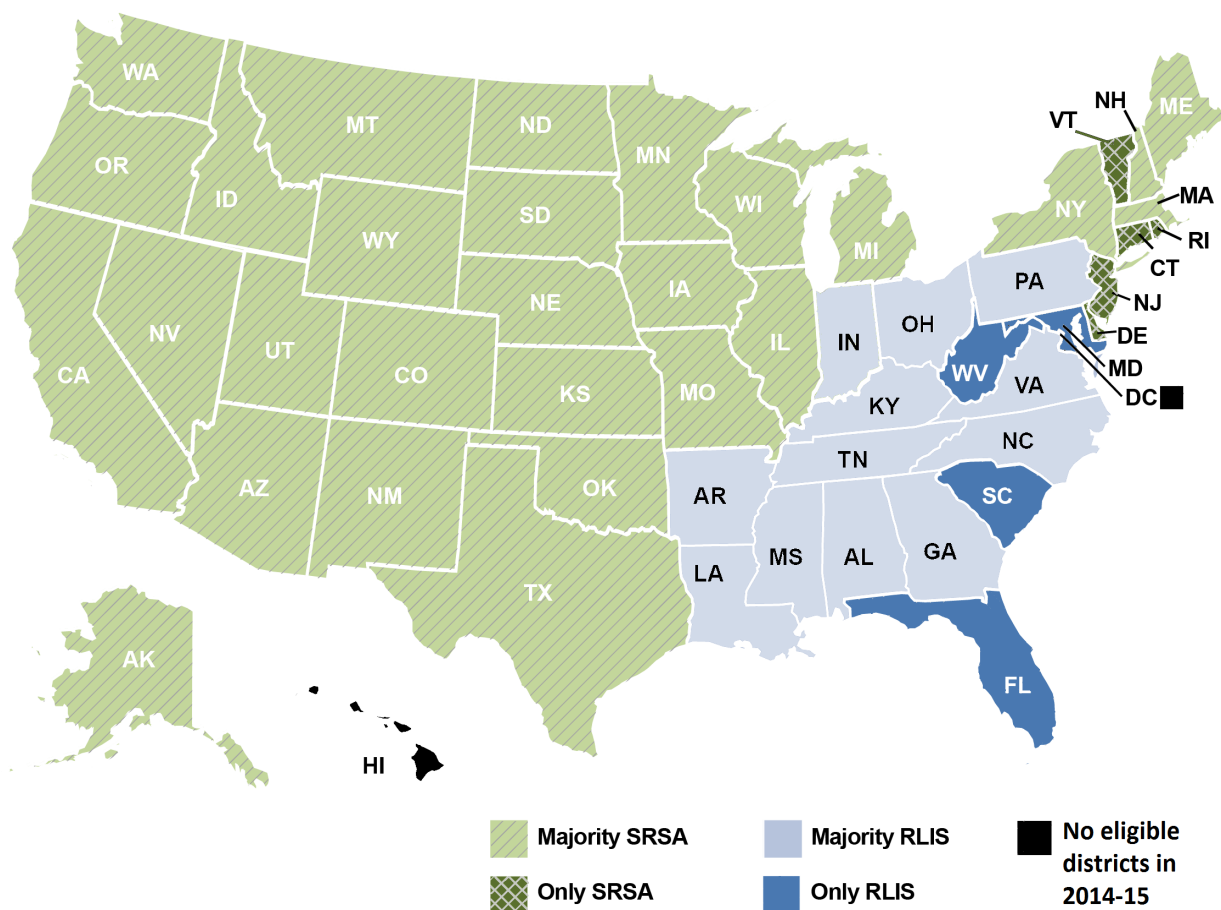


Exhibit reads: In Washington state in 2014–15, the majority of REAP districts were eligible for SRSA funds, but some were eligible for RLIS funds.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, SRSA Program, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, RLIS Program, 2016.

Funding and Program Administration

The statutory funding formulas and program administration approaches for SRSA and RLIS are different. For SRSA, the statute directs the Department to use a formula based on ADA and district subgrant amounts under Title II-A allocations¹¹ to calculate SRSA allocations and award grants directly to eligible districts. For RLIS, the statute directs the Department to use an ADA-based formula to allocate funds to state education agencies. States in turn make RLIS subgrants to eligible districts by competition or formula (after retaining up to 5 percent of the funds for administrative costs and the provision of technical assistance to eligible districts).

¹¹ By statute, other formula funds are a part of the SRSA award calculation. However, those other programs (Title II-D, Title IV-A, and Title V-A) were not funded in the 2014–15 school year.

The SRSA and RLIS programs also have separate application processes. SRSA-eligible districts are required to submit an application to the Department for funds only once, in the first year they receive funds. Thereafter, states submit updated district eligibility data annually to the Department. In subsequent years, as long as a district continues to be eligible for SRSA, the Department automatically rolls its application into the new fiscal year. However, depending on fund availability, the local education agency, although eligible with a current application on file, might not receive funds for the fiscal year because the formula generates a \$0 award that year. To receive and distribute RLIS funds, states are required to submit an initial application to the Department, which they update annually with district eligibility data, as with SRSA. RLIS districts receive subgrants from their states and so do not submit an application to the Department. States, however, can require a state application from their RLIS-eligible districts, and they award RLIS funds to districts by competition or formula, as discussed in Chapter 2.

For the 2014–15 school year, the Department awarded \$84.9 million in SRSA funds to 4,276 districts across 45 states. In that year, the Department awarded \$84.1 million in RLIS funds to 44 states with RLIS-eligible districts, and states allocated these funds to approximately 2,000 districts (Exhibit 5). Across the two programs, REAP funds were awarded to districts in 49 states.¹² The average SRSA district award was \$19,860, or \$75 per pupil (Exhibit 5). There is a \$60,000 statutory cap on SRSA allocations. The estimated average RLIS subgrant was \$41,722, or \$21 per pupil.

Although the average RLIS award was larger than the average SRSA award at the district level, the estimated per-pupil amount was smaller in RLIS districts (\$21 per pupil) than in SRSA districts (\$75 per pupil) because RLIS districts are on average larger than SRSA districts. Additionally, although the total amount of RLIS and SRSA funds has remained relatively stable, the number of RLIS-eligible districts has increased since at least the 2007–08 school year. Therefore, the average RLIS district award has decreased from \$67,052 to \$41,722, and the average RLIS per-pupil amount has decreased from \$33 to \$21, a change of almost 40 percent (see Exhibit 5). Although a similar pattern can be seen in SRSA districts, the change was not as large.

¹² Hawaii and the District of Columbia did not have any districts eligible for REAP in 2014–15.

Exhibit 5. Total awards, number of states and districts receiving awards, average award amount, and average per-pupil amount, by program type and fiscal year, fiscal years 2007–08, 2009–10, and 2014–15

	2007–08	2009–10	2014–15
Total awards			
SRSA (awards to districts)	\$84.5 million	\$86.5 million	\$84.9 million
RLIS (awards to states)	\$83.5 million	\$85.8 million	\$84.1 million
Number of states			
SRSA	44	42	45
RLIS	39	41	44
Number of districts			
SRSA grantees	4,101	4,105	4,276
RLIS-eligible districts	1,247	1,497	2,015
Average district award			
SRSA	\$20,632	\$21,071	\$19,860
RLIS (estimated)	\$67,052	\$57,310	\$41,722
Average district award per pupil			
SRSA	\$79	\$82	\$75
RLIS (estimated)	\$33	\$29	\$21

Exhibit reads: In 2007–08, rural districts received a total of \$84.5 million in SRSA grants.

Note: For SRSA, the exhibit displays the number of districts that actually received SRSA funds; 374 of the 4,650 SRSA-eligible districts received no funds in 2014-15 because the formula generated a \$0 allocation. For RLIS, the exhibit displays the number of districts that were eligible for RLIS funds and estimated RLIS awards because actual subgrant data were not available from the states.

Source: Budget tables supplied by U.S. Department of Education Budget Service, on October 24, 2016.

Whereas Exhibit 5 shows the total awards and average award amounts for the SRSA and RLIS programs, Exhibit 6 shows how these amounts varied by state in the 2014–15 fiscal year. The average district award per pupil for SRSA ranged from less than \$15 in three states (Alabama, Vermont, and Wyoming) to more than \$100 in four states (Arizona, California, Massachusetts, and Montana) (Exhibit 6). The Department bases RLIS state awards entirely on the ADA of RLIS-eligible districts, so the estimated per-pupil allocation for RLIS does not vary by state and is not shown in Exhibit 6. Additionally, Exhibit 6 displays the number of districts that were eligible for RLIS funds, rather than grantees, because the actual subgrant data were not available from the states.

Exhibit 6. Number of SRSA and RLIS districts, total award, average award amount per district, and average per-pupil amount, by state, 2014–15

	SRSA districts	RLIS-eligible districts	Total district SRSA awards	Total state RLIS subgrants	SRSA avg/district	RLIS estimated avg/district	Average SRSA/pupil
All states	4,276	2,015	84,920,000	79,867,263	19,860	41,722	75
Alabama	1	69	5,222	4,016,940	5,222	61,281	11
Alaska	19	1	200,751	82,738	10,566	87,093	62
Arizona	111	33	2,157,667	859,894	19,438	27,429	103
Arkansas	57	119	1,367,209	3,153,370	23,986	27,894	53
California	333	49	7,136,211	1,266,820	21,430	27,214	110
Colorado	93	14	1,819,941	565,196	19,569	42,496	73
Connecticut	42	0	1,044,779	0	24,876	0	88
Delaware	1	0	21,491	0	21,491	0	67
District of Columbia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Florida	0	25	0	1,819,700	0	76,619	0
Georgia	2	98	71,215	5,772,855	35,608	62,007	70
Hawaii	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	65	28	1,245,080	958,982	19,155	36,052	76
Illinois	253	48	5,169,689	1,118,327	20,434	24,525	72
Indiana	15	48	349,103	1,639,190	23,274	35,947	61
Iowa	145	11	3,798,839	314,097	26,199	30,057	71
Kansas	160	21	3,408,700	662,636	21,304	33,215	68
Kentucky	11	104	243,806	5,243,053	22,164	53,067	55
Louisiana	6	31	185,401	2,487,449	30,900	84,463	98
Maine	98	52	1,373,968	1,404,561	14,020	28,432	86
Maryland	0	2	0	202,369	0	106,510	0
Massachusetts	46	1	1,192,713	26,713	25,929	28,119	101
Michigan	146	103	2,571,332	2,586,800	17,612	26,436	72
Minnesota	161	14	3,328,884	394,875	20,676	29,690	67
Mississippi	3	106	75,372	4,725,910	25,124	46,931	63
Missouri	266	114	4,788,896	3,065,014	18,003	28,301	67
Montana	326	19	4,895,560	361,654	15,017	20,036	132
Nebraska	181	3	3,708,803	87,190	20,491	30,593	73
Nevada	8	1	159,647	165,133	19,956	173,824	30
New Hampshire	88	24	1,492,697	682,661	16,962	29,941	69
New Jersey	74	0	1,855,697	0	25,077	0	96
New Mexico	39	22	580,631	1,004,575	14,888	48,066	60
New York	114	58	1,877,089	1,442,124	16,466	26,173	49
North Carolina	23	56	620,241	5,848,419	26,967	109,933	97
North Dakota	95	2	867,043	45,791	9,127	24,101	49
Ohio	79	106	2,688,582	2,964,530	34,033	29,439	85
Oklahoma	315	129	6,714,254	3,331,164	21,315	27,182	75
Oregon	85	32	1,580,913	1,331,546	18,599	43,801	89
Pennsylvania	27	40	510,389	1,323,199	18,903	34,821	48
Rhode Island	7	0	111,577	0	15,940	0	68
South Carolina	0	38	0	2,208,570	0	61,179	0
South Dakota	84	4	939,711	74,654	11,187	19,646	42
Tennessee	4	74	99,095	4,274,108	24,774	60,798	59
Texas	419	179	8,832,651	6,357,495	21,080	37,386	68
Utah	21	1	641,675	63,989	30,556	67,357	71
Vermont	1	0	3,068	0	3,068	0	7
Virginia	2	40	48,138	1,952,273	24,069	51,376	63
Washington	113	34	2,033,446	1,141,831	17,995	35,351	90
West Virginia	0	36	0	2,291,447	0	67,001	0
Wisconsin	132	25	3,078,764	499,825	23,324	21,045	63
Wyoming	5	1	24,060	47,596	4,812	50,101	13

Exhibit reads: There were a total of 4,276 SRSA districts in 2014–15, with a total allocation of \$84.9 million.

Note: The total RLIS subgrant amount shown here is 5 percent less than the total allocation shown in Exhibit 5 because states may retain up to 5 percent of the funds for administrative costs.

Source: Budget tables supplied by U.S. Department of Education Budget Service on October 27, 2016.

Allowable Uses of Funds

SRSA and RLIS share many allowable uses of funds (Exhibit 1). Grantees can spend their funds on the following general activities: improving academic achievement for disadvantaged students; enhancing teacher quality, recruitment, and retention; purchasing or improving educational technology; offering language instruction for limited English proficient and immigrant students; and creating safe and drug-free schools and communities. SRSA districts may also use their grants for 21st Century Community Learning Centers and innovative programs, whereas RLIS districts may use their funds for parental involvement activities.

REAP-Flex

Only SRSA-eligible districts are eligible to exercise the REAP-Flex provision, which provides flexibility in how these districts can use certain non-REAP federal formula funds. REAP-Flex does not provide additional funds; rather, it allows SRSA-eligible districts to use all funds allocated to them under Title II, Part A; Title II, Part D; Title IV, Part A; and Title V, Part A¹³ for the same list of activities allowed under the SRSA grant program (see Exhibit 1). Chapter 4 discusses REAP-Flex in detail.

Scope of the Report

This report describes how grantees used the REAP funds provided through SRSA or RLIS, the technical assistance they received, and opportunities afforded and challenges experienced that were associated with REAP. The Department had commissioned two prior studies on REAP. The first study, conducted in 2005–06, focused on districts' use of REAP-Flex. The results showed that approximately half the eligible SRSA districts used REAP-Flex, with nonparticipation resulting from a lack of information. Those that exercised their REAP-Flex authority did so to target low-performing student groups, improve technology, and improve teacher quality (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service 2007). The second study, conducted in 2009–10, examined RLIS program implementation and showed that RLIS districts most often used their funds to purchase and use educational technology, to offer pay for teachers and persons who provided supplemental services, and to find innovative ways to provide professional development for geographically isolated teachers (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service 2010). Unlike the two earlier studies, which addressed REAP-Flex users and RLIS districts, respectively, the current study documented the practices and strategies of all grantees receiving REAP funding. Additionally, this study included interviews with REAP coordinators in all 47 states reporting SRSA or RLIS districts drawing down funds, providing perspectives from all states with districts that received REAP funds.

The study questions were the following:

1. What role do states play in supporting the Department's SRSA and RLIS eligibility and award determination process?
2. How do districts use their SRSA or RLIS funds?

¹³ At the time of study data collection, only Title II, Part A was funded.

3. To what extent do SRSA-eligible districts use REAP-Flex and for what purposes?
4. What recommendations do states and districts have for improving the operation of the SRSA and RLIS programs?

Study Methods

Data collection activities for this study were the following:

1. Telephone interviews with state REAP coordinators in all 47 states that reported districts drawing down REAP funds in 2014–15. These interviews had a structured protocol designed to solicit information on state administrators' role with the REAP eligibility and award process, state goals and priorities for REAP, coordinators' understanding of the REAP-Flex provision, the technical assistance states provided to REAP districts, and challenges and any recommendations for improving REAP.
2. An online survey of a nationally representative sample of district REAP coordinators. The survey included questions designed to collect information on district coordinators' role in the eligibility process, how districts use REAP funds, SRSA district coordinators' understanding and use of REAP-Flex, the technical assistance district REAP coordinators receive from the state and from the Department, and challenges and recommendations for improving REAP.
3. Telephone interviews with a random subsample of district REAP coordinators who completed the survey. The interviews enabled district coordinators to provide more detail on program administration and the opportunities and challenges REAP affords the local schools than was feasible via surveys. The interviews therefore expanded on information in the surveys, provided contextual details, and offered concrete examples of program implementation in ways that are difficult to collect in surveys.

The state interviews were with all 47 state REAP coordinators that reported districts drawing down REAP funds in 2014–15. While Vermont had five SRSA-eligible districts and Maryland had two RLIS-eligible districts in 2014–15, these districts did not draw down their REAP funds in FY 2014. Therefore, their data are not included in this study. Additionally, the focus of this report is the 50 states and District of Columbia; it does not include the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools or the U.S. territories. The state interviews were with all 47 state REAP coordinators that reported districts drawing down REAP funds in 2014–15. While Vermont had five SRSA-eligible districts and Maryland had two RLIS-eligible districts in 2014–15, these districts did not draw down their REAP funds in FY 2014. Therefore, their data are not included in this study. Hawaii and the District of Columbia also are not included, as they did not have any eligible districts.

The district survey was administered to a nationally representative random sample of 1,005 districts that drew down REAP funds in FY 2014 (669 SRSA and 336 RLIS), stratified by the U.S. Census Bureau's geographic division and REAP program type (SRSA or RLIS), from the 4,274 districts allocated SRSA funds in 2014–15 and from the 2,010 districts eligible for RLIS funds in the same year. Overall, the survey response rate was 95 percent, with response rates of 80 percent or higher for all items. Of the 950 district respondents, 316 were RLIS subgrantees and 634 were SRSA grantees — a response rate by program type of 94 percent and 95 percent, respectively. The district interviews were conducted with a sample of 18 SRSA grantees (10 that reported exercising REAP-Flex and eight that reported not exercising it) and six RLIS subgrantees.

This report presents percentages that represent estimates of responses from all SRSA or RLIS districts nationally that drew down funds in 2014–15. When the responses for SRSA and RLIS districts were substantially different (10 percentage points or more), the researchers tested the statistical significance of these differences. Discussions in the report include only differences that were statistically significant at the .05 level. Corrections for multiple comparisons were not made. For a full discussion of survey analysis methods, including weight construction, see Appendix B.

Respondent Background

In addition to their REAP coordinator responsibilities, district survey respondents often held other roles. In SRSA districts, REAP coordinators were most often superintendents (64 percent), financial officers (27 percent), and/or school principals (17 percent). In RLIS districts, survey respondents were most frequently general administrators for all federal programs (40 percent), superintendents (27 percent), and/or administrators for individual federal programs (19 percent). On average, district REAP coordinators held more positions in SRSA districts (1.5 roles) than in RLIS districts (1.2 roles).

State REAP coordinators reported an average of 12.6 years of experience in their state education agency. The overall range of experience, however, showed considerable variation within the sample, from less than one year to 40 years. District REAP coordinators reported an average of 6.6 years in their position, with a range from one year to more than 40 years.

Study Limitation

The study design had one main limitation: The district interviews took place with a small sample that was not designed to be representative of REAP districts nationwide. Therefore, the report includes examples from the interviews to illustrate survey responses when possible, but not all quantitative findings have accompanying qualitative data to support or provide detailed descriptions about the outcome. Furthermore, the examples provided in the interviews may not be nationally representative.

Report Structure

The remainder of the report consists of four chapters. Chapter 2 addresses the state role in the eligibility and award determination process for the SRSA and RLIS programs. Chapter 3 describes how districts used their SRSA or RLIS funds. Chapter 4 focuses on the REAP-Flex provision. Chapter 5 examines REAP grantees' recommendations for improving the operation of the SRSA and RLIS programs.

Chapter 2. State Role in Eligibility and Award Process for REAP

The Department is responsible for determining district eligibility and award amounts for REAP. It asks states to support the process for determining SRSA and RLIS eligibility. The Department and states offer technical assistance to districts to support their awareness and understanding of the eligibility and award process. This chapter describes the state role in the award process, technical assistance needs and services, and the questions and concerns states and districts raised regarding the process.

Determining Eligibility and Award Amounts for REAP

The Department uses statutory eligibility criteria to determine district eligibility for SRSA and RLIS. States support the eligibility determination process by providing district data that the Department needs to make eligibility determinations (ADA and optional state rural designations and county population density) and by verifying Department-provided eligibility data (district operational status, locale code, and poverty rate). The Department makes district awards for SRSA, and states make subgrants by competition or formula.

States supported the Department in determining REAP eligibility by providing district-level data and reviewing the accuracy of Department-provided data.

The large majority of states with districts that drew down REAP funds (43 of 47) reported reviewing the Department-provided data for accuracy. For example, one state REAP coordinator reported she focused her review on data for districts that were newly eligible or were no longer eligible for REAP (SRSA and RLIS) given initial data, as well as for charter schools, which she reported open and close more frequently than non-charter schools, requiring additions or deletions to the districts included on the spreadsheet. Of the four coordinators that did not review the data, three state coordinators said that they assumed the data were correct and did not review them, and one state coordinator did not know whether the state reviewed the data because that responsibility belonged to other staff.

The Department also asks states to submit ADA and state rural designations for their districts. All 47 states reported submitting this information. The majority of states (37 of 47) reported obtaining ADA only from state databases; five states obtained this information directly from districts, and two from a combination of district and state sources. Three states submitted the data, but the respondents were not directly responsible for obtaining the data and did not know the source.

States may allow or require districts to verify these data before submitting the spreadsheets to the Department. Of the states that obtained ADA from their own databases, more than half (21 of 39 states) reported that they encouraged or required their REAP districts to verify the data before submission to the Department. In states where the state REAP coordinator encouraged or required districts to verify the data, about one-third (35 percent) of SRSA district coordinators also reported they were required and 13 percent of districts reported that they were encouraged or allowed to verify the data.¹⁴ About half (44 percent) of SRSA district coordinators in these states did not know whether they were allowed

¹⁴ The RLIS survey did not include this question.

or required to verify these data before the state submitted them to the Department for REAP eligibility determination (Exhibit 7). In interviews, two SRSA district coordinators described performing a thorough review. In one case, the superintendent reviewed the data elements with the help of a consultant, and another district coordinator described how multiple reviewers in and outside the district assessed the data. A third SRSA district coordinator reported that she reviewed the eligibility spreadsheets on the Department’s website each year.

Half the district coordinators interviewed were unclear on the eligibility determination process (nine of 18 SRSA district coordinators and three of six RLIS district coordinators). For example, one SRSA coordinator was uncertain about why there was a two-year interruption in his district’s SRSA eligibility. One RLIS coordinator thought she had submitted free or reduced-price meal eligibility rate as part of the process, although this rate is not used in determining eligibility for RLIS. The poverty rate used for RLIS eligibility is distinct from eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.¹⁵

Exhibit 7. Percentage of SRSA districts that reported their state encouraged, required, or allowed them to verify ADA data before the state submitted data to the Department, 2014–15

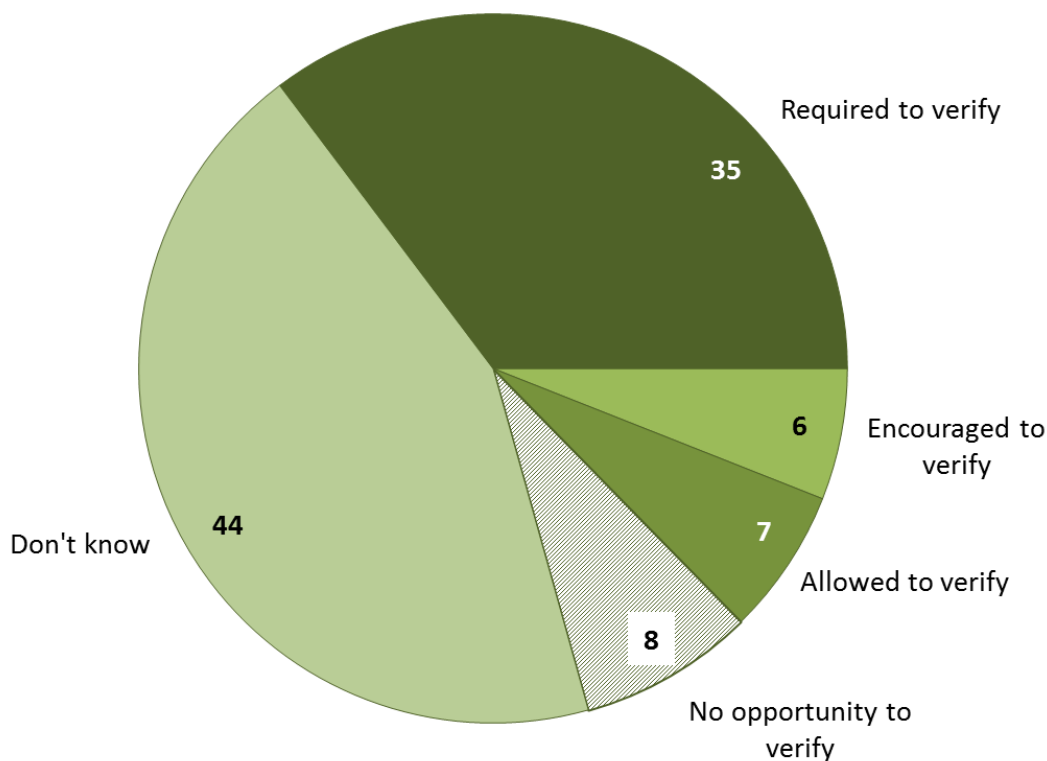


Exhibit reads: Thirty-five percent of SRSA districts reported being required by the state to verify ADA for their district before the data were submitted to the Department.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: District Survey, Question 3 (N = 633).

¹⁵ The federal free or reduced-price school meals program provides low-cost or free meals to students in U.S. public and nonprofit private schools whose families meet income guidelines (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2016).

The majority of states did not require a formal planning process from RLIS-eligible districts to receive their funds.

The Department allocates RLIS funds to states based on the ratio of the total ADA of RLIS-eligible districts in the state to the total ADA of all RLIS-eligible districts in the nation. In turn, states can choose to administer RLIS funds in several ways: They may require eligible districts to complete a state request, carry out a formal planning process, or do neither.

More than half the states with RLIS-eligible districts in 2014–15 (22 of 43 states) required only a request from RLIS-eligible districts to receive their funds. Another 18 states required a formal planning process in addition to or instead of a request.¹⁶ Three states required neither a request nor a formal planning process (see Exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8. Number of states with RLIS-eligible districts requiring them to take various steps to receive subgrants, 2014–15

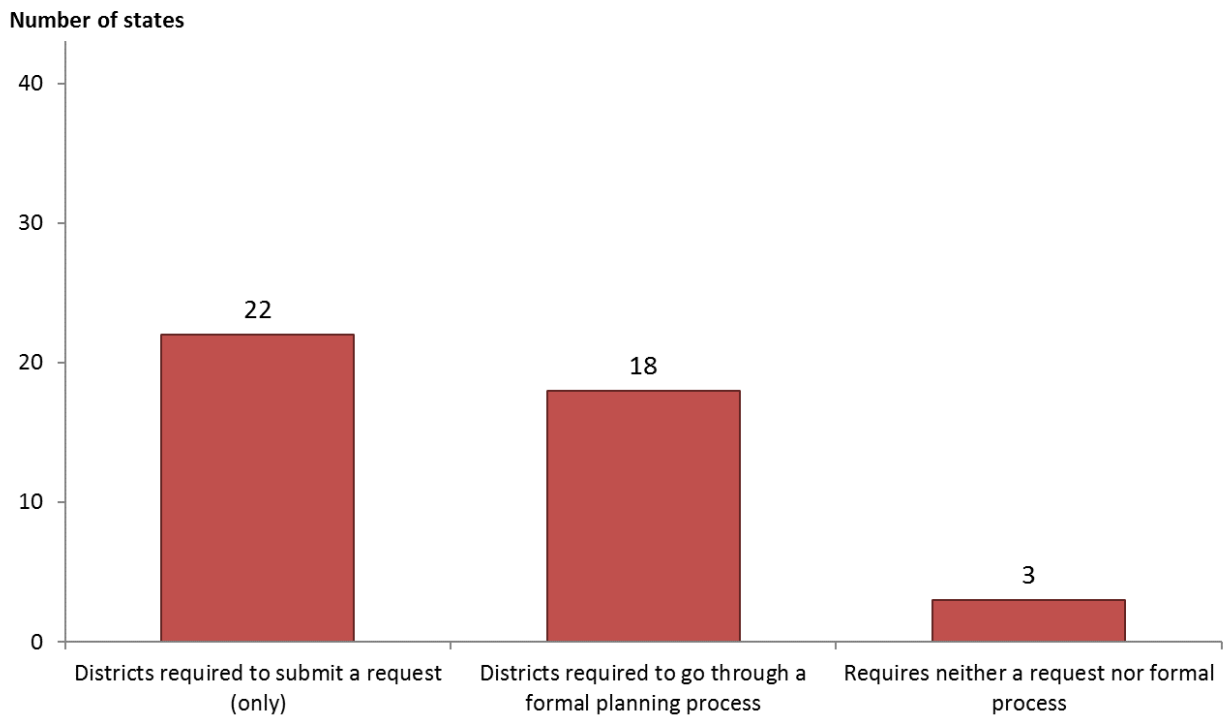


Exhibit reads: Twenty-two states required RLIS-eligible districts only to submit a request to receive RLIS funds.

Note: Although interview responses indicate that respondents thought of a “request (only)” and a “formal planning process (with or without a request)” as distinct, these terms were not defined on the interview protocol and respondents did not clarify what they meant by each term.

Source: State Interviews, Question 9 (N = 43 states).

¹⁶ This planning process may be for RLIS funds alone or in combination with other state and federal funds.

All 43 states with RLIS-eligible districts chose to make subgrants on the basis of a funding formula rather than on a competitive basis, and most of these states based the subgrant amount entirely on ADA.

In addition to setting requirements for RLIS-eligible districts to receive funds, states can choose to distribute the awards among their eligible districts by formula or by competition. All 43 states with RLIS-eligible districts in 2014-15 reported awarding RLIS subgrants to districts by formula. Although most states did not comment on why they chose to use a formula rather than a competition, four states said that they chose a formula to reduce the burden on state and district offices. If the state uses a formula, it must allocate funds on the basis of ADA across all RLIS-eligible districts or in a way that better distributes the funds to families with incomes below the poverty line.

Of the 43 states with RLIS-eligible districts in 2014–15, four states had only one eligible district, and thus awarded all RLIS funds to that one district. The remaining 39 states had more than one RLIS-eligible district and constructed a formula that distributed funds among districts. Nearly three-quarters of these states (28 of 39 states) used ADA as the sole determinant of the size of the award to each of their districts. Three states used ADA in combination with other data, particularly poverty rates, and two states used only poverty rates to decide the size of awards (Exhibit 9). Since at least 20 percent of students in all RLIS-eligible districts must come from families with incomes below the poverty line (see Chapter 1), states that used poverty rates in their formulas did so to further prioritize districts with even greater concentration of poverty than required to meet the eligibility threshold. Finally, six state REAP coordinators were not responsible for working with the formulas, which was the responsibility of others in the state; they did not know which data were used to determine RLIS subgrant amounts.

Exhibit 9. Number of states with more than one RLIS-eligible district whose subgrant formulas included various types of district data, 2014–15

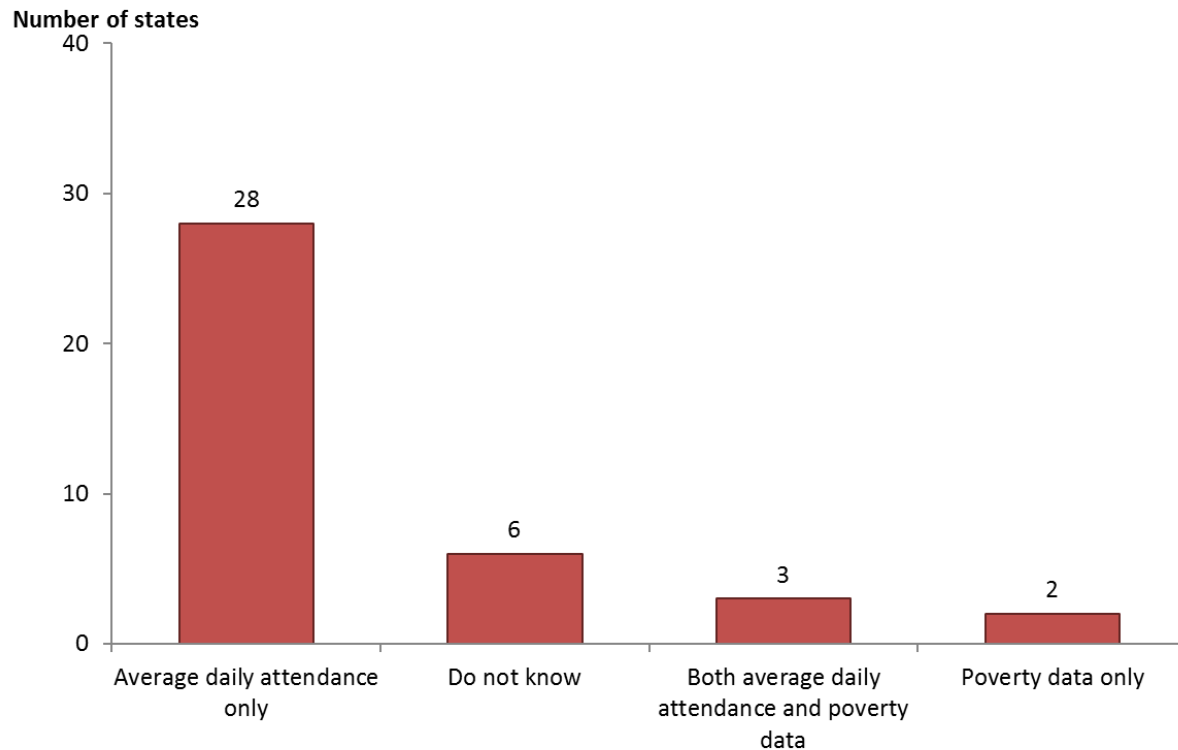


Exhibit reads: Twenty-eight states determined the amount of districts’ RLIS subgrants using only average daily attendance.

Source: State interviews, Question 9 (N = 39 states).

Once the Department completes the eligibility determination process, the SSRP office notifies each district of its eligibility and award amount. SRSA district coordinators most frequently reported learning about their eligibility (72 percent) and award amounts (72 percent) through direct communication from the Department. SRSA districts also checked the Department’s grant management system (known as G5) (49 percent of districts) or calculated the award amount using the funding formula (5 percent of districts). In addition, 34 of 44 of states with SRSA districts reported that they notified districts about their SRSA eligibility. Most RLIS district coordinators reported that their state notified them of their eligibility (87 percent) and award amounts (87 percent).

Technical Assistance on Eligibility and Awards

The majority of REAP districts reported receiving assistance in finding out whether they were eligible for REAP (58 percent SRSA, 71 percent RLIS) or finding out the amount of their award (61 percent SRSA, 74 percent RLIS). In keeping with how they learned about their eligibility and award amounts, SRSA grantee districts were more likely to receive technical assistance from the Department (31 percent on eligibility and 37 percent on awards) than RLIS districts (2 percent on eligibility and 3 percent on awards). RLIS districts were more likely to receive assistance from their states (66 percent on eligibility and 70 percent on awards). Less than 5 percent of SRSA and RLIS districts received assistance from

Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs), Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCCs), Content Centers, or other technical assistance providers.¹⁷

In interviews, state REAP coordinators discussed the types of support they provide to SRSA districts on the eligibility process. One state coordinator described facilitating the relationship between the Department and the districts, sharing resources received from the Department, and explaining eligibility requirements and any changes in eligibility from year to year. Another state coordinator mentioned easing the transition for new SRSA districts or new district SRSA coordinators. The coordinator reported that if a district was newly eligible for SRSA, the state contacted it about filling out the application to the Department. The state also determined whether districts were actually using their SRSA funds; if they were not, the coordinator contacted the districts to find out why not. This REAP coordinator reported that because of staff turnover, the districts in the state were often unaware they were eligible for SRSA funding. In particular, if the person who had completed the original application was no longer in the district, the current district personnel might not be aware of the district's eligibility for the grant.

REAP Coordinator Challenges in the Eligibility and Award Process

The majority of SRSA (59 percent) and RLIS (54 percent) district coordinators reported that they experienced no challenges finding out their districts were eligible for REAP awards, and similar but smaller proportions of SRSA (53 percent) and RLIS (45 percent) districts reported no challenges obtaining information about their award amounts. Nonetheless, some REAP coordinators encountered challenges in this process. We note that some of the challenges concern aspects of the program that are outside the authority of the Department to modify, as they are set by statute and/or controlled by Congress.

Several REAP coordinators expressed concerns about two of the REAP statutory eligibility criteria: poverty and locale code requirements.

Several REAP coordinators expressed concerns about two of the statutory criteria used in determining eligibility for REAP awards. We note that these eligibility requirements are controlled by statute and therefore are outside the Department's authority to change. First, two state coordinators mentioned concerns about the use of the U.S. Census Bureau's poverty rates to determine eligibility for RLIS. One concern was that for districts close to the threshold of the poverty level eligibility requirement (at least 20 percent of children are from families with incomes below the poverty line), small shifts in their poverty rates made them eligible for RLIS in some years and ineligible in others. Another concern was that poverty rates did not correspond with trends districts saw in a measure of poverty they often used for other programs: eligibility for the free or reduced-price meals program. One coordinator noted that districts do not understand how they can see sizable increases in free or reduced-price meal eligibility rates and declining Census poverty rates. Because the income threshold for eligibility for the free or reduced-price meals program is 185 percent of the income levels specified by the federal poverty guidelines, families may move out of poverty but their children may remain eligible for the free or reduced-priced meals program; families may also experience income decreases to the point that their

¹⁷ RELs support schools and districts in using data and research in their practice (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, Regional Educational Laboratory Program 2016). RCCs provide technical assistance to states to implement the *ESEA* and other related federal school improvement programs and help increase the capacity of states to assist their districts and schools (U.S. Department of Education, Office of School Support and Rural Programs, Comprehensive Centers Program 2016).

children are eligible for the free or reduced-price meals program without dropping below the federal poverty income guidelines.

Five state coordinators commented on the use of locale codes to determine eligibility.¹⁸ One state coordinator noted that districts found it confusing that REAP relied on locale codes that NCES no longer uses. Two other state coordinators thought the definition of rural using NCES locale codes excluded some rural districts because of their proximity to larger towns. Some states addressed this problem for SRSA districts by applying an alternative rural designation. For example, one state used a definition of rural that encompassed a population density of up to 100 persons per square mile.

While more than half of SRSA and RLIS districts knew the amount of their awards before they had finished their budget plans, the timing of notification about eligibility and award amounts was a challenge for some districts.

Although the majority of district REAP coordinators reported minimal challenges in the eligibility process, for SRSA 36 percent of district coordinators reported that their districts had finished their budget planning for the year before they knew whether they were eligible for an SRSA grant, and another eight percent had finished budget planning after they found out their eligibility but before they knew the amount of their award (Exhibit 10).

For RLIS 27 percent of district coordinators had finished their budget planning for the year before they knew whether they were eligible for an award, and another eight percent had finished planning after they knew their eligibility but before they knew the amount of their award (Exhibit 10).

¹⁸ In 2006, NCES changed its locale codes from “metro-centric” to “urban-centric.” However, as required by statute, the metro-centric locales continued to be used for REAP eligibility through 2014–15.

Exhibit 10. Percentage of SRSA and RLIS districts reporting that they had finished budget planning after they knew their eligibility or award amount for REAP, 2014–15

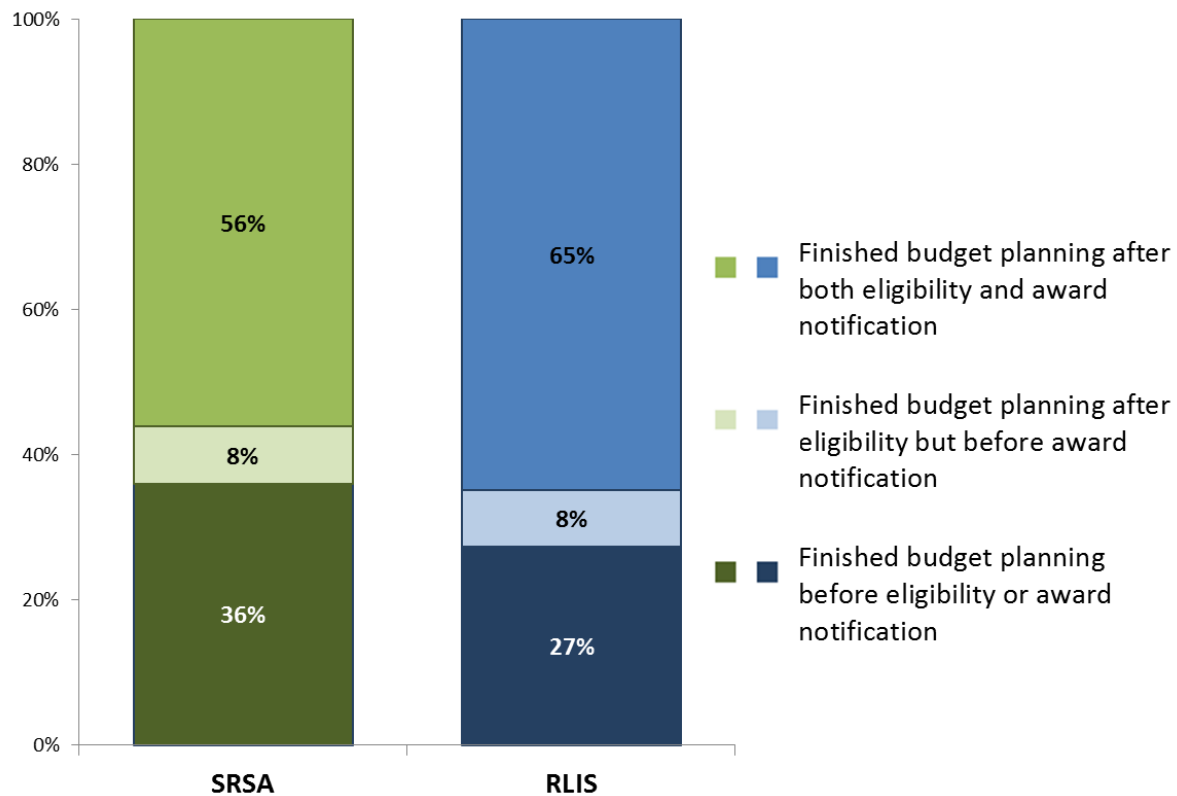


Exhibit reads: Fifty-six percent of SRSA coordinators finished their budget planning after they found out their SRSA eligibility and award amount.

Source: District Survey, Question 6 (n = 479 and 540 SRSA districts; 257 and 271 RLIS districts).

The timing of district notification was not the only challenge related to REAP awards; for districts that chose to estimate their award amounts, the predictability of the funds was also a challenge. If the congressional appropriation for REAP is not sufficient to make a full award to every eligible district, as determined by the allocation formula, by statute the Department proportionately reduces the allocations across all SRSA-eligible districts. As a result, an individual district may receive a smaller grant than in the prior year, even if its size and needs do not change. One district coordinator reported that his district keeps enough cash on hand to cover a shortfall should it not receive SRSA funds, another completed his budget planning as if his district would receive no SRSA funds, and a third SRSA coordinator reported that the district bases budgets each year on the allocation from the previous year, even though he knows the district may receive less money.

Six state coordinators noted challenges answering SRSA districts’ questions about the federal eligibility and award process.

In interviews, two state respondents noted that direct grants from the Department to districts, such as SRSA grants, could be confusing to districts because they were accustomed to working with their state education agency and expected the state to be able to answer their questions about the program. For

example, one state coordinator described the challenge of responding to districts' questions about SRSA:

The most difficult thing for SRSA districts to understand is that there is not an application for their grant in the state system and that they must work directly with the federal G5 system.... I don't know anything about the G5 system because I'm not a financial person here at the department. I don't use that system. So when they ask, "How do I access it; what does it look like?" I don't have answers for them. All I can say is, "Here is the help line and phone number."

Another state coordinator commented, "It's an odd relationship because the Department of Education is the one that notifies them, and they apply there...but we know the districts, and we do communicate with them." Two state REAP coordinators also indicated that receiving no allocation was a problem for districts. By statute, SRSA districts may be eligible for the program but receive no funds because their allocations under certain ESEA formula programs are large enough to reduce their adjusted award amount to zero. These districts are able to exercise REAP-Flex but do not receive any funds. While the effects are a result of statutory language and thus beyond the scope of the Department's authority, one coordinator of a SRSA district that did not receive funds noted that the result of applying this statutory provision felt punitive, especially if a district is not also eligible for RLIS.

Chapter 3. District Use of REAP Funds

The *ESEA* specifies the allowable uses of SRSA and RLIS funds and also articulates a dual purpose for the funding: first, to provide additional funds to small districts that may lack the staff capacity to win competitive federal grants and, second, to supplement these districts' formula grant allocations that may be too small to achieve their intended purpose.

District REAP coordinators often conducted a formal needs assessment to help them decide how to spend the REAP funds they received.

Nearly half of SRSA districts (44 percent) and two-thirds of RLIS districts (66 percent) conducted a formal district needs assessment in 2014–15. During interviews, SRSA district coordinators explained that they use a district needs assessment combined with district and state goals to determine how to spend SRSA funds. The process is not unique or specific to SRSA but rather is part of a larger needs assessment and planning process. For example, one SRSA district coordinator said, "It's hard to say how many hours we spent planning for REAP because REAP is a part of the larger [School Improvement Plan]." Likewise, one RLIS district coordinator described a planning process in which the district used the RLIS funds to fill in the gaps when they had finished applying all other funding sources. Another RLIS respondent described how the school administrative team developed a holistic professional development plan for the year for the district, allowed the school board and parents to comment, and then sought funding sources (including RLIS) that could cover the services they had identified.

The inclusion of REAP within the overall improvement plan may explain why districts reported a large variety of types of personnel involved in the planning process. Superintendents (93 percent of SRSA districts; 92 percent of RLIS districts), school principals (82 percent SRSA, 90 percent RLIS), and financial officers (77 percent SRSA; 77 percent RLIS) were commonly involved in deciding how to spend REAP funds (Exhibit 11).

Exhibit 11. Percentage of various types of district personnel involved in deciding how to spend SRSA and RLIS funds, 2014–15

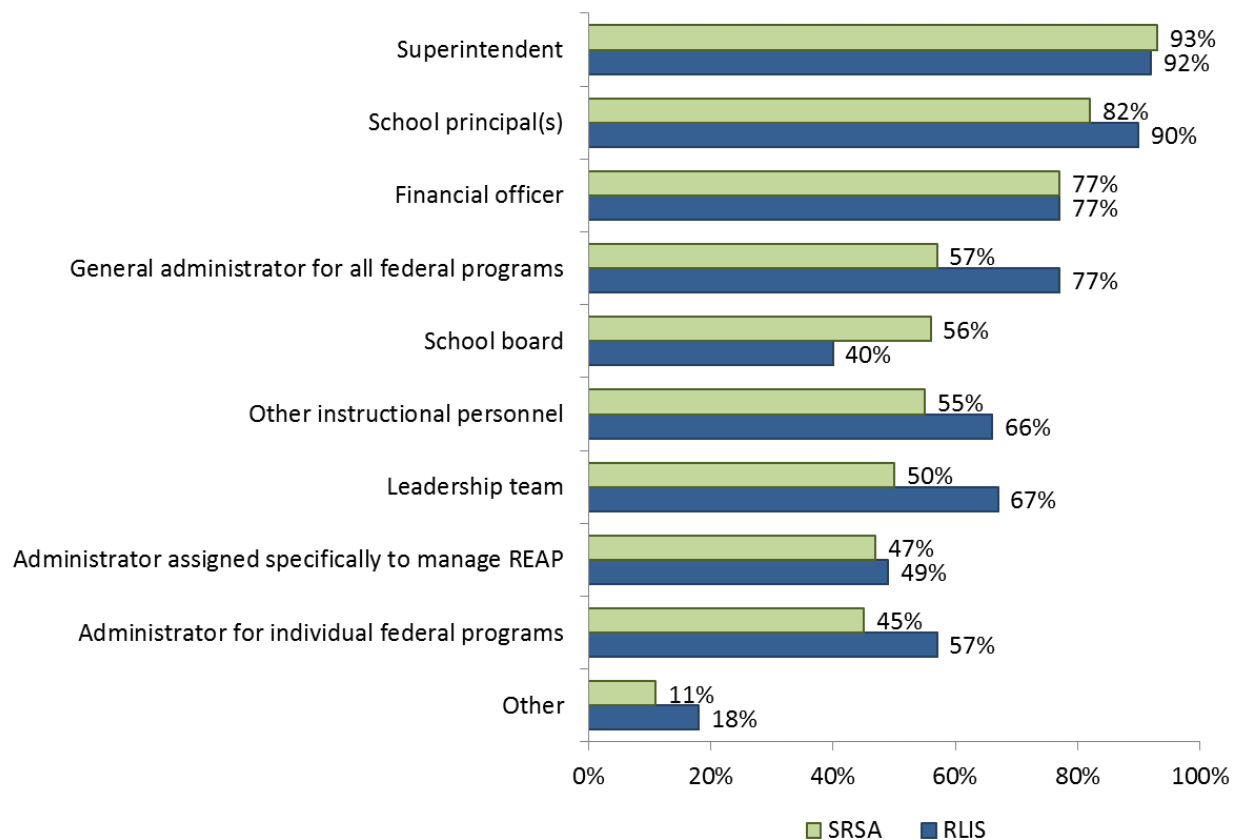


Exhibit reads: Ninety-three percent of SRSA district coordinators reported their superintendent was involved in deciding how to spend their SRSA funds.

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select all options that applied.

Source: District Survey, Question 8 (n = 580 to 628 SRSA; 279 to 310 RLIS districts).

Use of REAP Funds

REAP districts may use their funds for a range of activities, including improving academic achievement for disadvantaged students; enhancing teacher quality, recruitment, and retention; purchasing or improving educational technology; offering language instruction for limited English proficient and immigrant students; and creating safe and drug-free schools and communities.

REAP districts most frequently used their funds, alone or in combination with other funds, to improve or expand access to technology and to provide educator professional development.

More than two-thirds of district coordinators reported that they used their REAP funds to improve or expand access to technology (71 percent of SRSA districts and 71 percent of RLIS districts), and about half used REAP funds to provide professional development for teachers or administrators (45 percent SRSA and 58 percent RLIS) (Exhibit 12).

During interviews, district coordinators described how they used REAP funding. For example, one SRSA district coordinator in an isolated rural district without access to the state fiber optics or high-speed Internet reported using the funds to provide access to the Internet. Nine years ago, in 2005–06, the district used its SRSA grant to connect to the Internet for the first time via satellite; in 2014–15, it combined the SRSA funds with local taxes to fund an Internet hot spot for the district schools. Another SRSA district coordinator reported that the district chose to use its SRSA funds to support technology because the infrastructure it had was “antiquated” and SRSA offered an opportunity to update it. The district has continued to use SRSA in support of an ongoing technology plan. An RLIS district used its funds to purchase electronic interactive whiteboards and tablets and to train teachers on this technology.

A coordinator in one SRSA district that used its funds for professional development reported bringing in a speaker and sending individual teachers to professional development outside the district. Although the SRSA funds were a small part of the overall professional development budget, they enabled this district to send additional teachers and provide additional topics that it would otherwise not have been able to afford. This district reported that it used SRSA funds for teacher professional development because the district’s teachers identified the area as needing improvement.

Two RLIS district coordinators reported in interviews that their districts chose to spend RLIS funds on professional development because they did not have the budget to hire internal staff to provide specialized courses, and in their isolated locations, they had to send teachers long distances to receive training. One district coordinator described sending teachers to professional development on addressing mental health and behavioral issues among students. These teachers shared what they learned with their colleagues, and the district planned to use RLIS funds to send more teachers to similar trainings in coming years. A third RLIS district coordinator described purchasing a literacy program to improve reading mastery, along with a three-day intensive professional development session and quarterly visits from the developer of the program to provide one-on-one support to teachers in using the program.

Exhibit 12. Percentage of SRSA and RLIS districts that reported various uses for their REAP funds, 2014–15

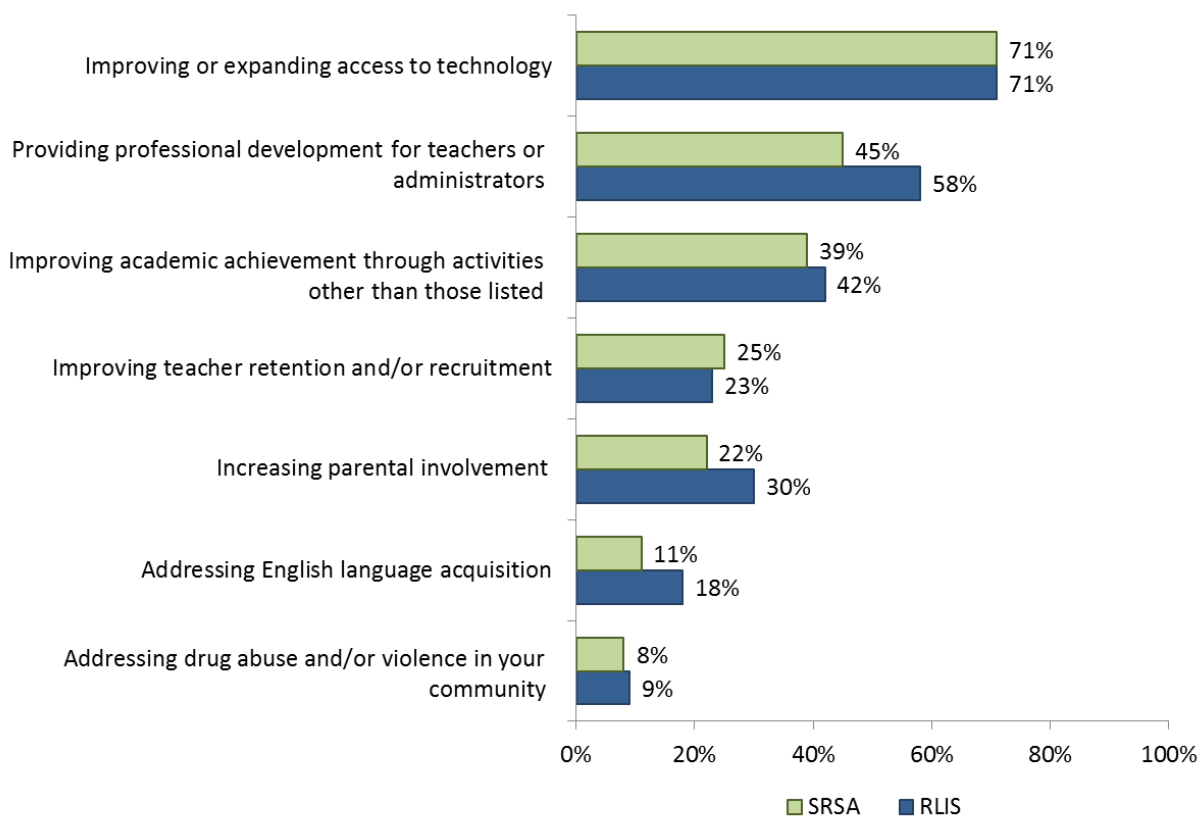


Exhibit reads: Seventy-one percent of SRSA district coordinators reported using SRSA funds to pay for improving or expanding access to technology.

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select all options that applied.

Source: District Survey, Question 10 ($n = 580$ to 628 SRSA; 290 to 304 RLIS districts).

The majority of REAP districts reported coordinating the use of REAP funds with other federal funds.

The average district SRSA grant amount was \$19,860 in 2014–15, an amount that may not be sufficient to fund activities or services in isolation. Therefore, 65 percent of the SRSA coordinators reported that their district used SRSA funds in combination with other funds: 51 percent supplemented activities funded with other Department funds, particularly Title I, Title II, and 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds (Title IV, part B); 33 percent E-Rate funds,¹⁹ and smaller proportions U.S. Department of Agriculture (6 percent), state (3 percent), or local funds (1 percent). For example, one SRSA district coordinator reported that the district combined SRSA funds with other *ESEA* funding to provide remediation for struggling students.

¹⁹ Also known as the Schools and Libraries Program, E-Rate provides funds for schools to purchase discounted Internet and telecommunications services (Federal Communications Commission 2016).

About two-thirds of RLIS districts (66 percent) also used their funds in combination with other funds. More than half of RLIS district coordinators used their RLIS funds in combination with other funds from the Department, including other *ESEA* formula funds, Investing in Innovation funds,²⁰ and *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* funds (58 percent). A lower proportion of RLIS districts (23 percent) than SRSA districts (33 percent) reported coordinating their funds with E-Rate. Five percent or less of RLIS districts combined their funds with Department of Agriculture (5 percent), local (2 percent), or state (1 percent) funds.

One district coordinator described using their RLIS funds in combination with Title II, Part A; Title I; and 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds to pay for a technology coordinator in the district. The technology coordinator visits classrooms and models how to use the technology the district has available. Another described combining RLIS funds with other funds to buy electronic interactive whiteboards and the accompanying projectors. Additionally, an RLIS district coordinator reported that the district used RLIS funds to pay for professional development and other funds to pay substitute teachers to cover the teachers' classrooms while they attended the professional development.

More than half of REAP district coordinators reported targeting the use of REAP funds to improve the educational outcomes of particular subgroups of students.

The districts that targeted their REAP funds to improve the educational outcomes of particular groups of students (54 percent of SRSA districts and 66 percent of RLIS districts) most frequently targeted low-performing students (87 percent SRSA; 86 percent RLIS) or low-income students (70 percent SRSA; 78 percent RLIS) (Exhibit 13). For example, one RLIS district coordinator used RLIS funds to help low-performing students in need of preparation to pass the state assessment. The coordinator reported using funds to pay for a technology intervention that enabled these students to practice taking state assessments. The proportions of SRSA districts and RLIS districts targeting their funds to particular groups of students were similar for all groups except students with disabilities. A lower proportion of RLIS districts (28 percent) than SRSA districts (40 percent) used their funds to support students with disabilities.

²⁰ Investing in Innovation (i3) funds are competitive grants given to districts and nonprofit organizations to fund and study programs that have been shown to improve student outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement 2016)

Exhibit 13. Percentage of SRSA and RLIS districts that reported targeting REAP funds to particular student groups, 2014–15

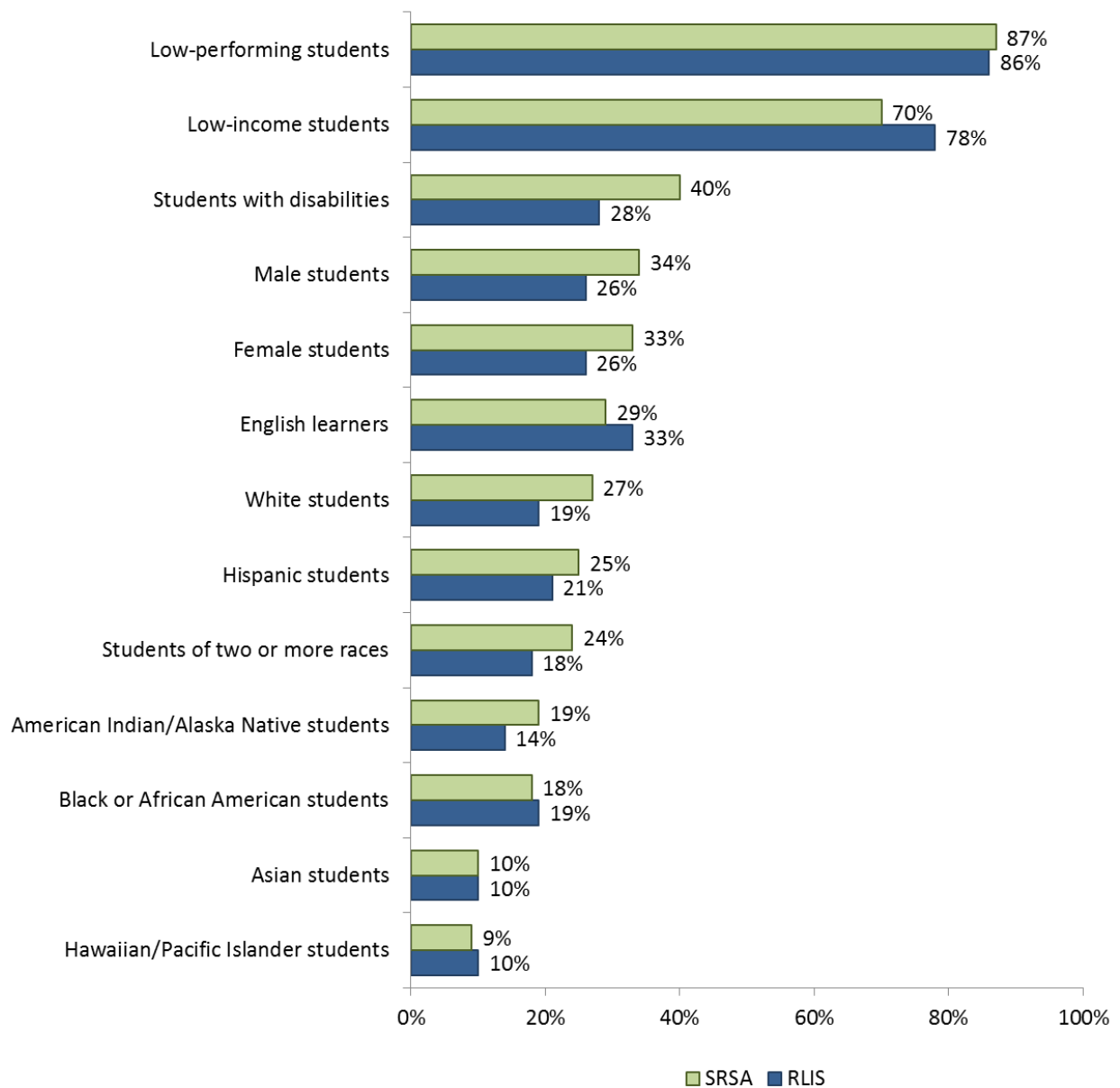


Exhibit reads: Of SRSA district coordinators who reported targeting their SRSA funds to particular student groups, 87 percent targeted them to low-performing students.

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select all options that applied.

Source: District Survey, Question 14 (n = 340 SRSA; 204 RLIS districts that targeted funds to particular student groups).

The large majority of district coordinators reported that their funds enabled their district to better meet its goals.

Approximately 90 percent of district coordinators reported that their REAP funds enabled their district to better meet its goals, alone or in combination with other funds (89 percent of SRSA coordinators and 92 percent of RLIS coordinators). In one SRSA district that used SRSA funds for professional development, the coordinator said,

Without REAP funding, there is a lot of professional development that we would not be able to attend just because of the cost of it.... Our teachers are very thankful for that. They have been given opportunities that without REAP they would not have received.

Another SRSA district whose goal for using REAP funds was to improve academic achievement hired a part-time teacher for a remediation program in mathematics and reading, serving about 30 students in grades 2 through 5. A district with a goal of improving access to technology for its low-income students used SRSA funds to improve the technology in the school library, which is available to both students and their families. That district also had laptops students could take home (funded through another source), and it used SRSA to fund outreach to parents about this initiative. One RLIS district that used its RLIS funds to send elementary school teachers to professional development on mental health issues among students did so because a district- and state-level goal was to improve these services for students.

Technical Assistance on Using REAP Funds

The majority of district REAP coordinators received assistance on using their funds from at least one source (59 percent of SRSA districts and 77 percent of RLIS districts).

When in need of technical assistance, SRSA coordinators reported relying on their states in addition to the Department, and RLIS coordinators reported relying on their states.

SRSA district coordinators who did receive technical assistance most often received it from the Department, followed by their states, whereas RLIS district coordinators most often received assistance from their states (Exhibit 14). Less than 10 percent of SRSA and RLIS district coordinators received technical assistance on any of these topics from RELs, RCCs, or other technical assistance providers.

Exhibit 14. The source of the assistance for SRSA and RLIS districts receiving technical assistance, 2014–15

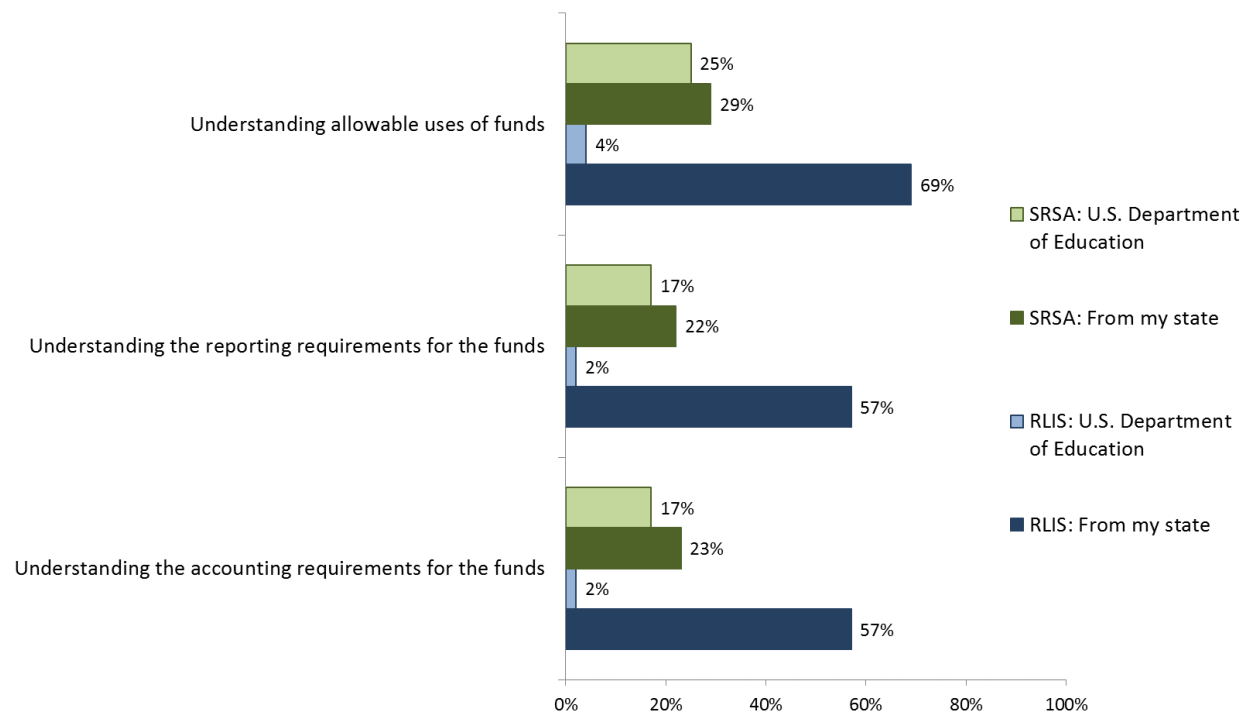


Exhibit reads: Twenty-five percent of SRSA district coordinators received technical assistance on understanding allowable uses of funds from the U.S. Department of Education.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because respondents could select all options that applied.

Source: District Survey, Questions 19 and 29 (*n* = 624 to 629 SRSA; 314 to 316 RLIS districts).

The majority of REAP grantees found the assistance they received to be moderately or greatly helpful. Depending on the topic, between 75 percent and 79 percent of SRSA districts and between 81 percent and 85 percent of RLIS districts found the assistance from their states to be moderately or greatly helpful. Likewise, between 73 percent and 82 percent of SRSA districts that received assistance from the Department reported that the assistance was moderately or greatly helpful.²¹

Challenges in Using REAP Funds

The district survey and interviews asked REAP coordinators about the challenges they faced in using REAP funds, and the state interviews asked about their challenges in supporting districts in using their funds.

²¹ The number of RLIS coordinators who reported receiving assistance from the Department was too low to report the helpfulness of the assistance.

Approximately two-thirds of REAP district coordinators reported minimal to no challenge in using their REAP funds.

When REAP district coordinators did provide feedback about the challenges they experienced, they most frequently identified the following as posing moderate or great challenges: understanding the allowable uses of funds (24 percent SRSA; 23 percent RLIS), understanding reporting requirements (23 percent SRSA; 13 percent RLIS), and understanding accounting requirements (21 percent SRSA; 10 percent RLIS) (Exhibit 15). For example, in interviews one SRSA coordinator reported that she was unclear whether she was allowed to use SRSA funds to purchase cell phones for administrators.

In interviews, three RLIS district coordinators also identified the need for more support on the allowable uses of their funds, especially for new coordinators. One coordinator noted that because the allowable uses of RLIS funds are broad, there can be uncertainty as to the specific activities for which the funding can be applied.

Exhibit 15. Percentage of REAP districts that reported various levels of challenge in using REAP funds, 2014–15

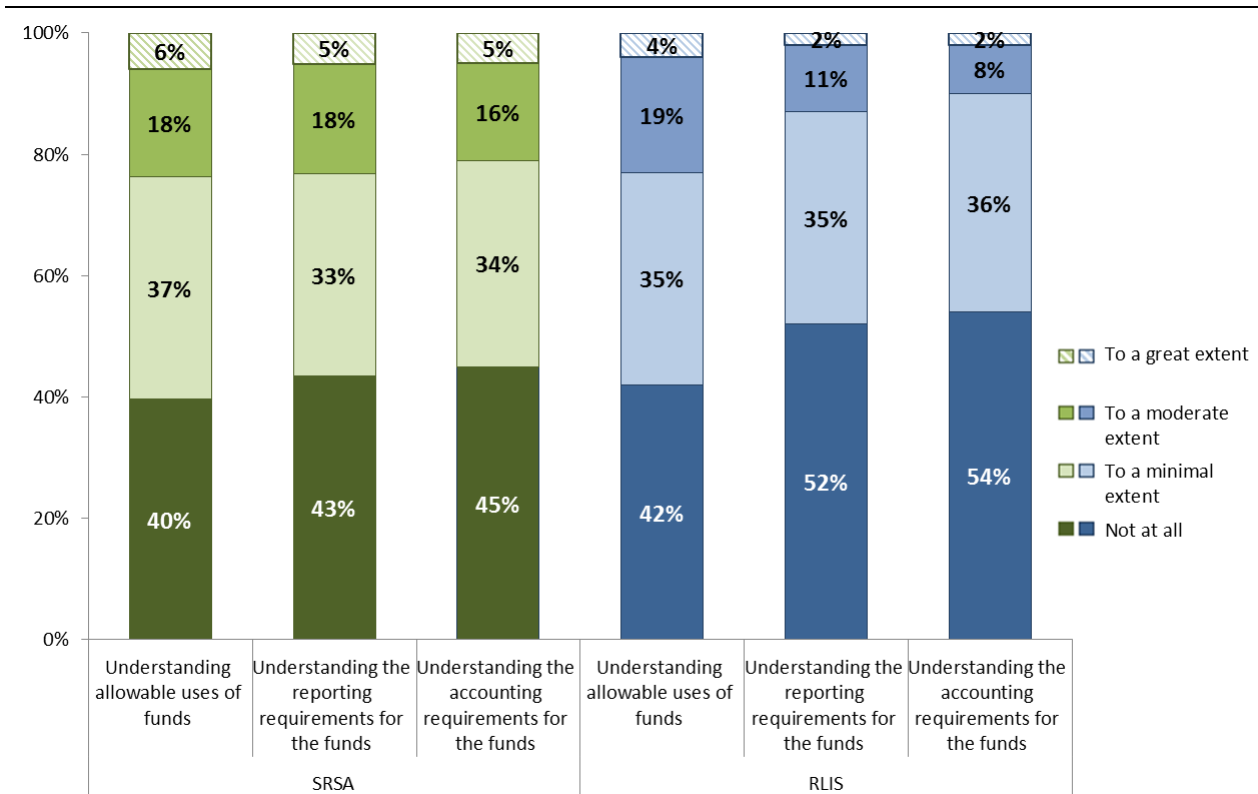


Exhibit reads: Six percent of SRSA district coordinators found understanding the allowable uses of funds to be challenging to a great extent.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: District Survey, Questions 19 and 29 (n = 625 to 629 SRSA; 310 to 312 RLIS).

As shown in Exhibit 14, states provided most of the technical assistance to RLIS districts on using and administering their funds. In interviews, however, state coordinators indicated they encountered challenges in providing this technical assistance. Four states mentioned limited district staff as a challenge. They noted that having staff from rural districts attend state trainings can be a problem

because the districts do not have the staff to spare. In addition, five state coordinators noted limited capacity at the state level to provide districts with this technical assistance.

States also identified challenges in assisting SRSA districts because the state staff are not the program administrators. These states reported that districts turned to them for information on SRSA, but the state coordinators did not feel prepared to support them adequately. For example, an administrator in one state that provided technical assistance to SRSA districts noted that “getting them [SRSA districts] to understand that the SRSA funding is not managed at the state level [is a challenge]. It’s tough for them to get because they look to us for the answers.”

Chapter 4. REAP-Flex

The REAP Alternative Uses of Funds Authority, or REAP-Flex, gives SRSA-eligible districts greater flexibility in using the formula grant funds that they receive under certain state-administered federal programs. The provision does not provide additional funds but rather allows districts to use funds from four *ESEA* programs (referred to in the statute as “applicable funding”) — Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, Educational Technology State Grants, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities, and State Grants for Innovative Programs — for activities authorized under certain other *ESEA* formula programs, the same programs for which SRSA districts may spend their SRSA funds.²² Of the four sources of applicable funding, only one (Improving Teacher Quality State Grants) was funded at the time of data collection. The Department does not require districts to report data on REAP-Flex directly to the federal government. However, it does require states to establish their own methods to collect information on local uses of funds under REAP-Flex.

This chapter describes state and district coordinators’ understanding of the REAP-Flex provision, district use of REAP-Flex, and reasons why some districts do not use REAP-Flex.

State and District Coordinators’ Awareness and Understanding of the REAP-Flex Provision

SRSA districts reported hearing about REAP-Flex from a variety of sources. Coordinators also reported that the usefulness of information they received from these sources varied in helping them determine whether to use REAP-Flex.

In addition to states and the Department, SRSA district coordinators reported hearing about REAP-Flex from their colleagues, professional organizations, and other sources.

Of the 73 percent of SRSA district coordinators who reported awareness of REAP-Flex, the sources of information about it they cited most frequently were the state (59 percent), the Department (49 percent reporting a Department website or publication, 16 percent direct communication), and colleagues (40 percent) (Exhibit 16). About two-fifths (43 percent) of those who heard about REAP-Flex from their state also learned of it from a Department website or publication or from direct communication with Department staff.

²² These programs are all the *ESEA* programs for which SRSA grantees may spend their SRSA funds: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged (Title I, Part A), Improving Teacher Quality State Grants (Title II, Part A), Educational Technology State Grants (Title II, Part D), Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students (Title III), Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (Title IV, Part A), 21st Century Community Learning Centers (Title IV, Part B), and State Grants for Innovative Programs (Title V, Part A).

Exhibit 16. Percentage of SRSA district coordinators who reported hearing about REAP-Flex from various sources, 2014–15

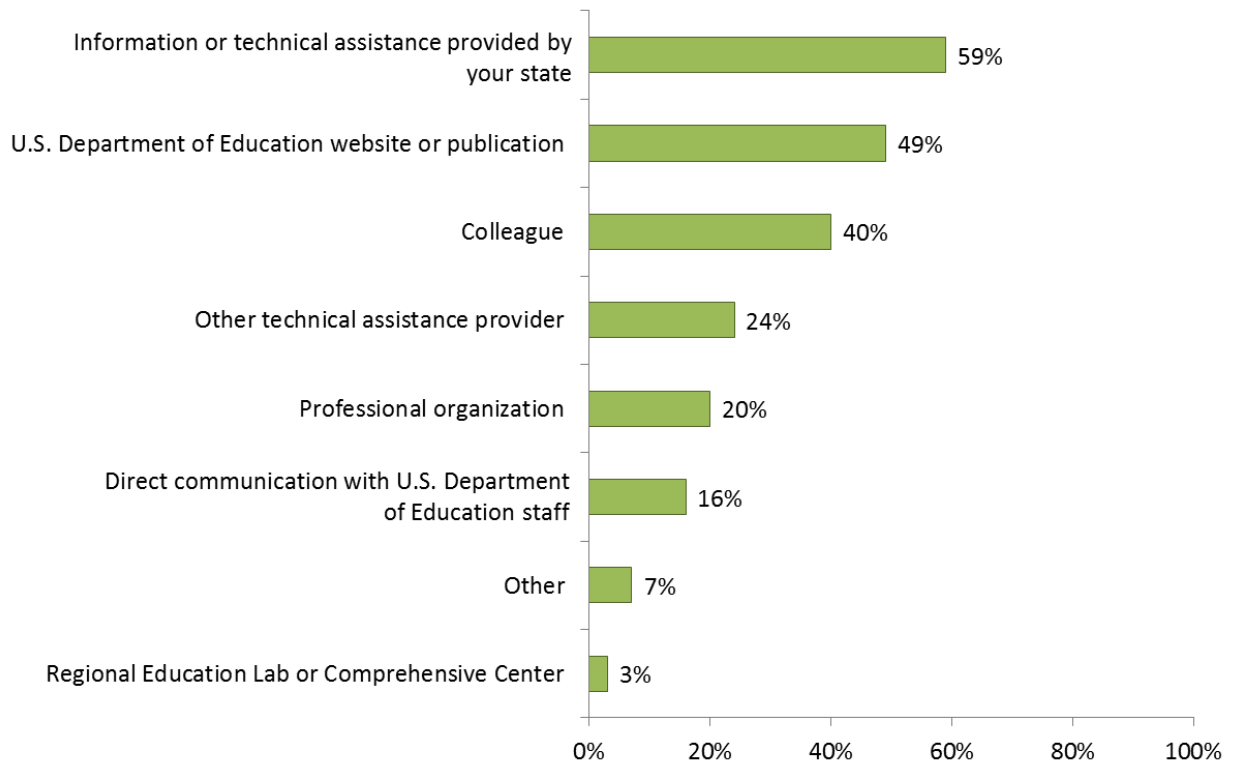


Exhibit reads: Fifty-nine percent of SRSA coordinators heard about REAP-Flex through information or technical assistance provided by their state.

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select all options that applied.

Source: District Survey, Question 21 (*n* = 369 to 447).

The survey asked district coordinators who reported receiving information on REAP-Flex about the extent to which they found the information useful. Nearly all district coordinators who received information from their state reported that it was somewhat useful (48 percent) or very useful (45 percent) to them in deciding whether to exercise the REAP-Flex option (Exhibit 17). Similarly, 84 percent of coordinators who received information via the Department’s website or publications found the information somewhat or very useful.

Exhibit 17. Usefulness of information sources to coordinators in deciding whether to use REAP-Flex, 2014–15

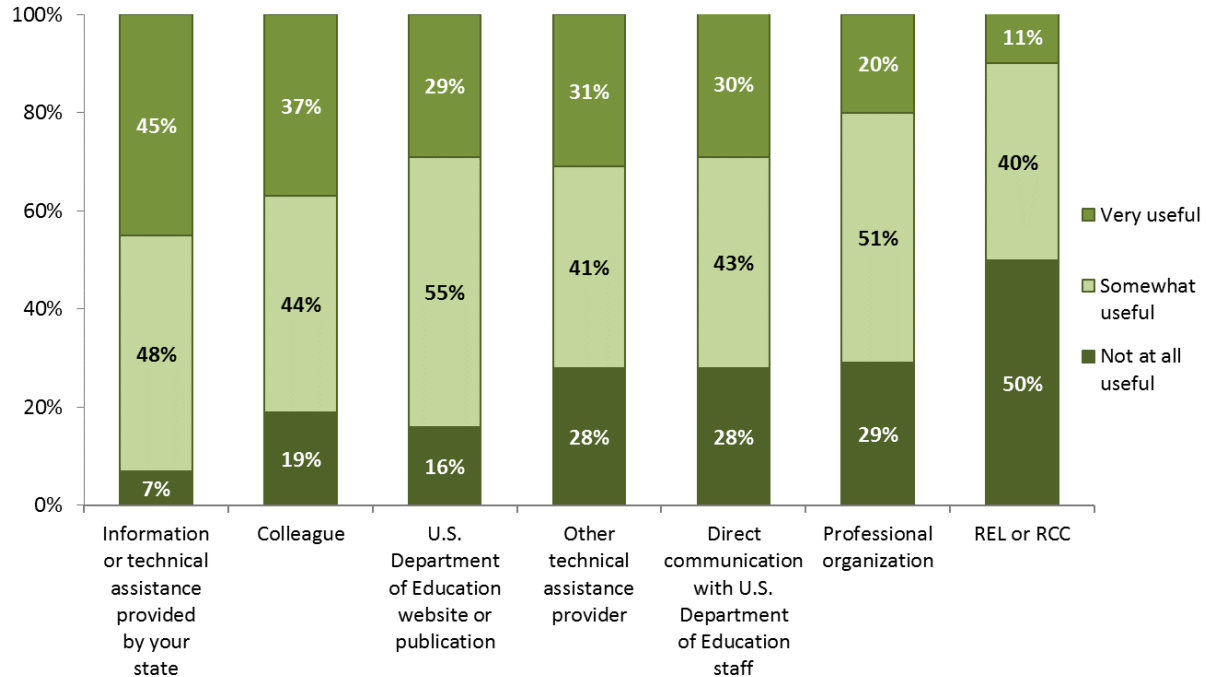


Exhibit reads: Forty-five percent of SRSA district coordinators who received information from their state found it very useful in their decision about whether to use REAP-Flex in 2014–15.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: District Survey, Question 24 ($n = 59$ to 325).

Under the *ESEA*, RLIS districts are not eligible for the REAP-Flex option. However, the study sought to gauge interest in a hypothetical option for REAP-Flex among RLIS district coordinators. Of those surveyed, 92 percent of RLIS district coordinators reported that they would, to a moderate extent (32 percent) or a great extent (60 percent), value an option like REAP-Flex, particularly the authority to use all or part of specific *ESEA* program funds to support other activities under an array of other *ESEA* programs.

The majority of REAP coordinators reported being aware of REAP-Flex, but in interviews several coordinators provided examples that were inconsistent with the provision.

State REAP coordinators in 33 of the 44 states with SRSA districts reported being at least somewhat familiar with the REAP-Flex option. Of the 11 state coordinators who were unfamiliar with REAP-Flex, 10 reported that few districts in their state used REAP-Flex. At the district level, 73 percent of SRSA coordinators reported that they had been aware of REAP-Flex before reading the description of the provision provided in the survey. Of those who were aware of REAP-Flex, 76 percent reported that they understood the provision to a moderate extent (50 percent) or to a great extent (26 percent).

However, six of 12 district coordinators interviewed who expressed familiarity with REAP-Flex in interviews provided comments that were inconsistent with the provision. For example, one described REAP-Flex as an option that allowed the districts to combine REAP funds with Title I and II and state and local funding. Another said his district did not use the REAP-Flex option because if the REAP funding

were combined with other *ESEA* funding, it would all have to go to salaries and the district needed technology more. Yet exercising REAP-Flex does not involve or affect districts' use of any other funds (SRSA, state, or local), only the ability to "flex" or use their Title II, Part A funds to support any activities under the allowable uses of SRSA funds.

Use of REAP-Flex

This section of the report references 2005–06 data from a previous study of REAP-Flex along with the 2014–15 data from the current survey to examine changes over time (U.S. Department of Education et al. 2007).

Nearly half (46 percent) of SRSA-eligible districts reported using REAP-Flex in the 2014–15 school year (Exhibit 18). In a survey of SRSA-eligible districts conducted in 2005–06, a similar proportion (51 percent) of respondents reported using REAP-Flex (U.S. Department of Education et al. 2007).

Exhibit 18. Percentage of SRSA district coordinators reporting their district used REAP-Flex in 2014–15

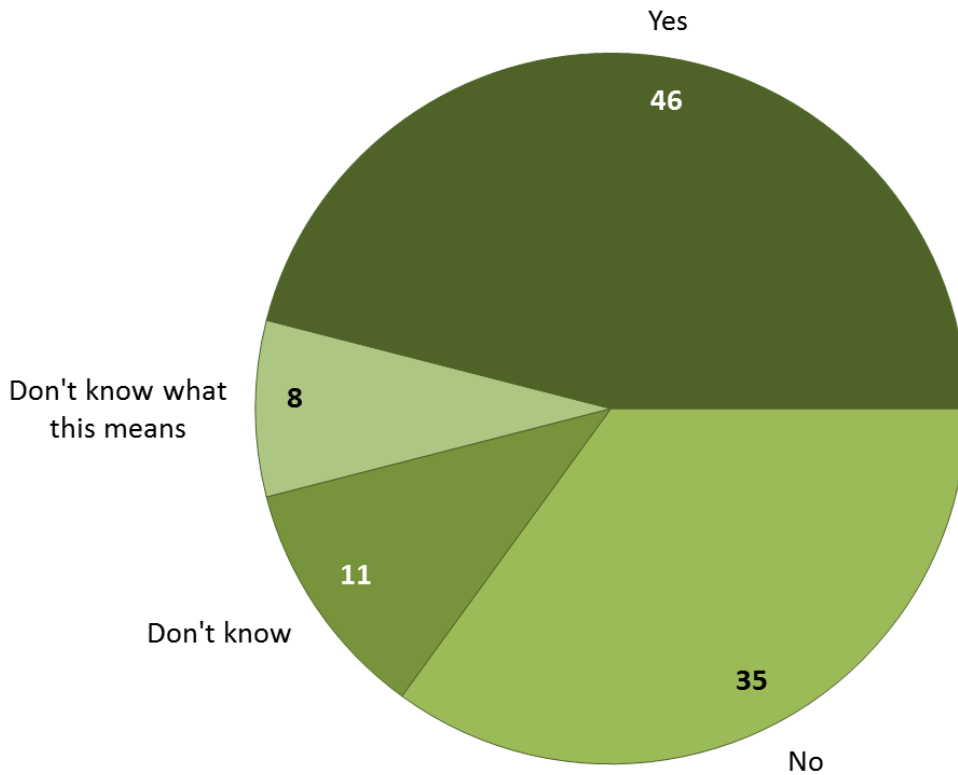


Exhibit reads: Forty-six percent of SRSA district coordinators reported using REAP-Flex in the 2014–15 school year.

Source: District Survey, Question 23 (*n* = 633).

SRSA districts most commonly used REAP-Flex to maintain a stable level of funding for ongoing activities.

Coordinators in districts that used REAP-Flex most frequently reported that they used the option to maintain a stable level of funding for ongoing activities (82 percent) (Exhibit 19). This finding is similar to the results from the 2005–06 survey, in which 79 percent of districts reported using REAP-Flex to maintain a stable level of funding for ongoing activities (U.S. Department of Education et al. 2007).

Compared with reports in 2005–06, SRSA districts that exercised REAP-Flex in 2014–15 were less likely to report using it to target funds to particular student groups or outcomes. In 2014–15, 52 percent of districts reported targeting particular subgroups or outcomes, compared with 81 percent in 2005–06, (U.S. Department of Education et al. 2007).

In 2014–15, SRSA districts that exercised REAP-Flex were also less likely than in 2005–06 to report using the provision to increase the amount of federal funds available for high-priority or new activities. Fifty-one percent of the SRSA district coordinators reported using funds for high-priority activities, and 43 percent reported they initiated new activities that would not have been possible without the option (Exhibit 19), compared with 78 percent for high-priority activities and 78 percent for new activities in 2005–06 (U.S. Department of Education et al. 2007).

Exhibit 19. SRSA district coordinators' reports of the functional uses of REAP-Flex, 2014–15

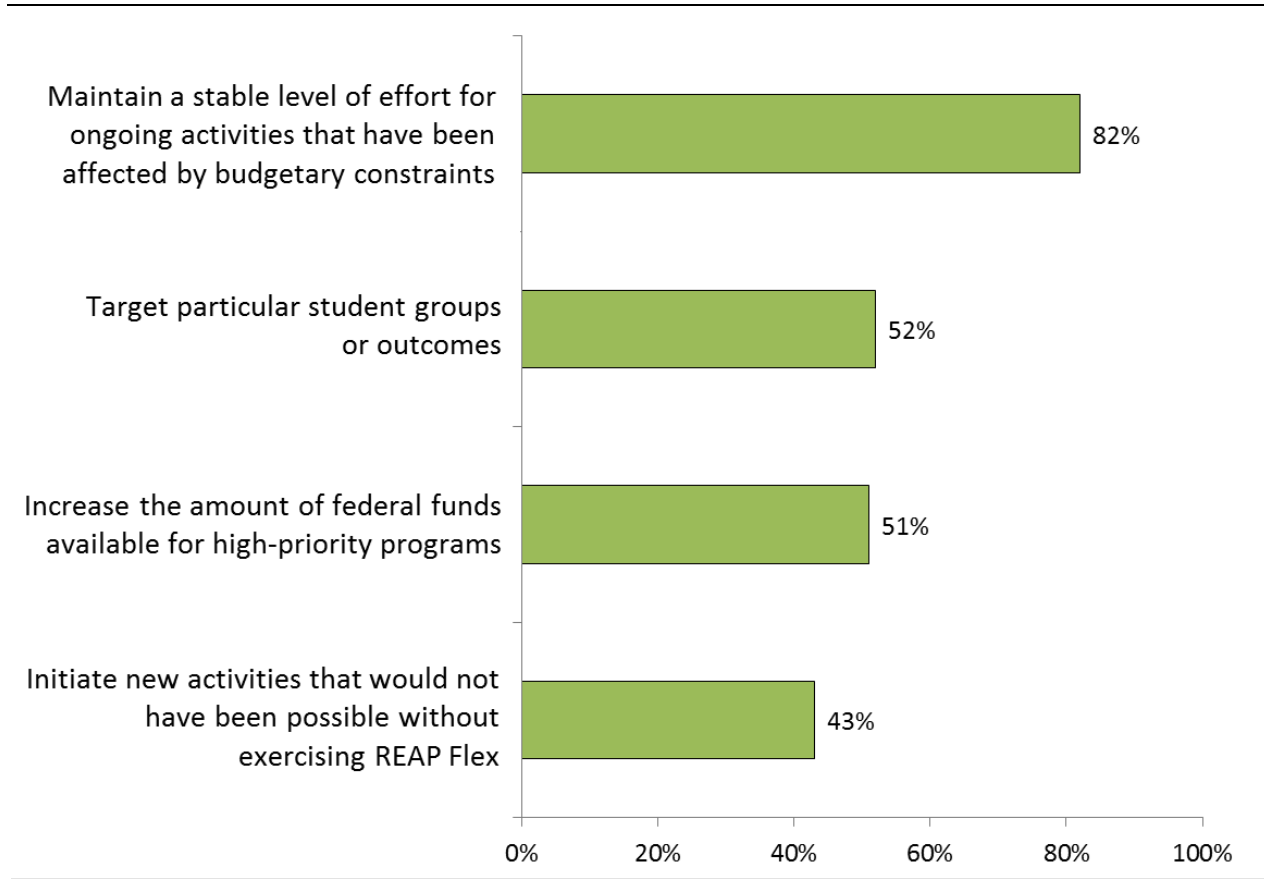


Exhibit reads: Of SRSA districts that exercised REAP-Flex, 82 percent used it to maintain a stable level of funding for ongoing activities in the 2014–15 school year.

Source: District Survey, Question 26 (*n* = 282 to 285).

SRSA coordinators in districts that exercised REAP-Flex commonly used their Improving Teacher Quality State Grant funds for authorized activities under Improving the Achievement of Disadvantaged Children (67 percent) and Educational Technology State Grants (38 percent) (Exhibit 20). In interviews, one coordinator described how the district exercises REAP-Flex to use Title II, Part A funds for paraprofessionals that deliver interventions to low-performing students under Title I, Part A.

Exhibit 20. The ESEA programs for which REAP-Flex districts used their Title II, Part A funds, 2014–15

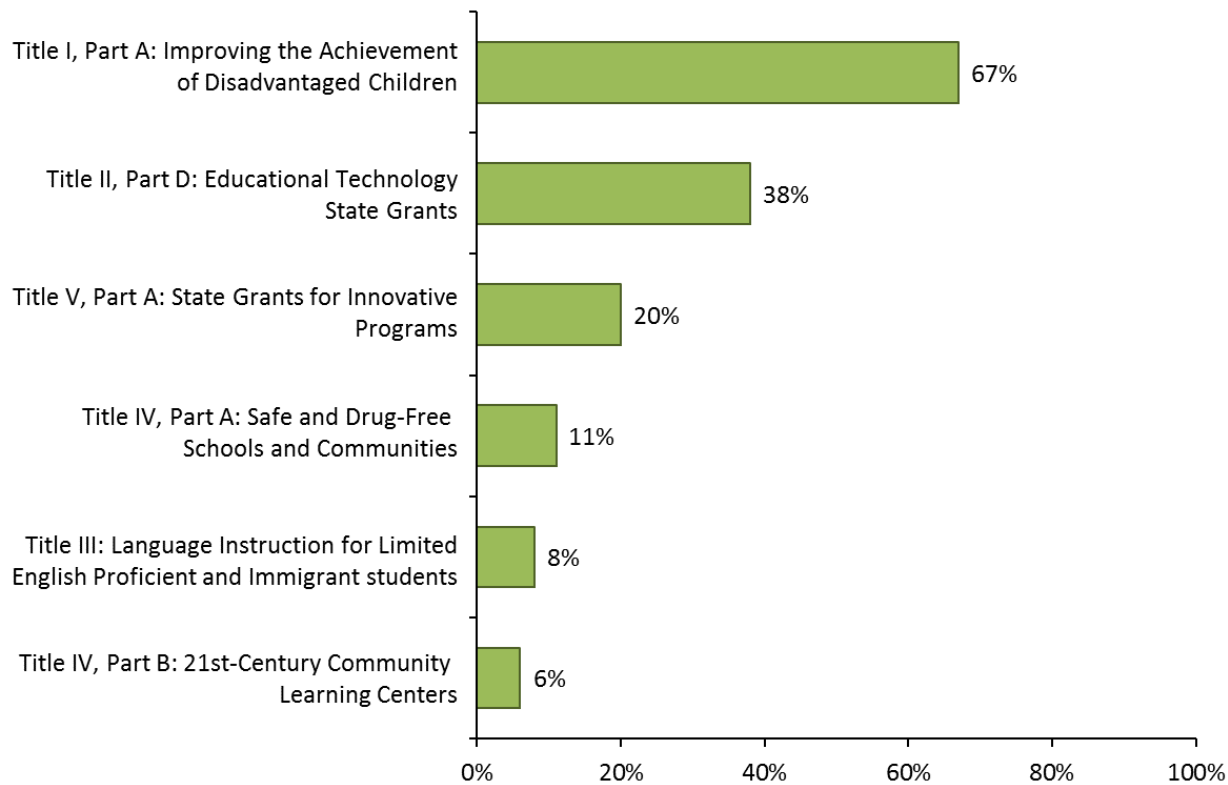


Exhibit reads: Of SRSA districts that used REAP-Flex, 67 percent used it to fund activities for Improving the Achievement of Disadvantaged Children (Title I, Part A) in the 2014–15 school year.

Source: District Survey, Question 27 ($n = 280$ to 286).

Challenges in Using REAP-Flex

District SRSA coordinators reported a variety of reasons for not using REAP-Flex and challenges in using the provision.

SRSA districts that did not use REAP-Flex reported lack of awareness and lack of information about the provision as reasons for not using the option.

Of the SRSA district coordinators (35 percent) who reported their district did not use REAP-Flex, approximately a third (34 percent of nonusers) reported that the amount of funds in applicable categories (i.e., Title II, Part A) was too small to make exercising REAP-Flex worthwhile. Lack of knowledge was another common reason for not using REAP-Flex, specifically lack of information about REAP-Flex (33 percent) and lack of awareness of the REAP-Flex option (32 percent).²³ A smaller

²³ These proportions are not mutually exclusive. A proportion of those who reported not having enough information also reported not knowing the option existed.

percentage (15 percent) of SRSA coordinators in districts that did not use REAP-Flex cited burdensome accounting requirements as a reason (Exhibit 21).

Interviewees discussed additional reasons for not using REAP-Flex. For example, a district coordinator believed that another *ESEA* provision for which her district was eligible (the name of which she did not remember) allowed Title II funds to be used for Title I activities, and thus the district did not need to use REAP-Flex. She had used REAP-Flex in prior years, however, and found it “a great help to have that flexibility.” Another coordinator, who had been with the district for four years, indicated that no one had ever discussed the possibility of using REAP-Flex; she thought it was likely that the district had never deliberately decided not to use it but simply did not exercise this option. Another coordinator believed that his district did not receive funds under any of the applicable programs and so could not exercise REAP-Flex.

Exhibit 21. Factors contributing to SRSA districts’ decisions not to use REAP-Flex, 2014–15

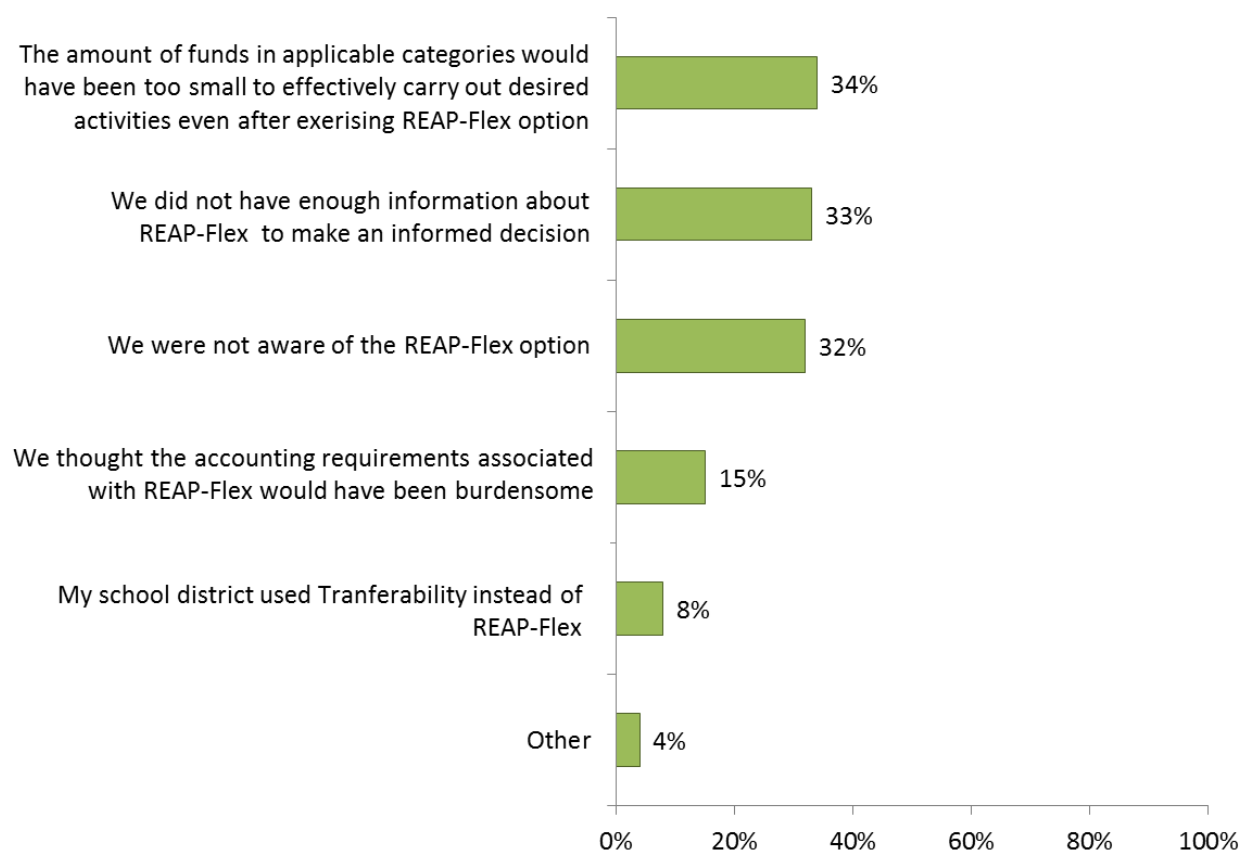


Exhibit reads: Thirty-four percent of SRSA district coordinators whose districts did not use REAP-Flex in the 2014–15 school year reported that they chose not to because the amount of funds in applicable categories would have been too small to effectively carry out desired activities even after exercising the REAP-Flex option.

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select all options that applied. “Transferability” is separate from REAP-Flex; it allows states and districts to transfer a portion of the funds they receive under certain federal programs to other programs. All transferred funds are subject to the requirements of the program to which they are transferred.

Source: District Survey, Question 25 (n = 219 to 221).

The majority (59 percent) of SRSA district coordinators whose districts did not use REAP-Flex reported that their interest would be somewhat or much higher with more information about how to use it. Approximately half (48 percent) reported that their interest would be somewhat or much higher if accounting requirements were relaxed or more assistance were offered to maintain necessary records (Exhibit 22).

Exhibit 22. SRSA district coordinators' reports of how changes to REAP-Flex would affect their interest in using the option, 2014–15

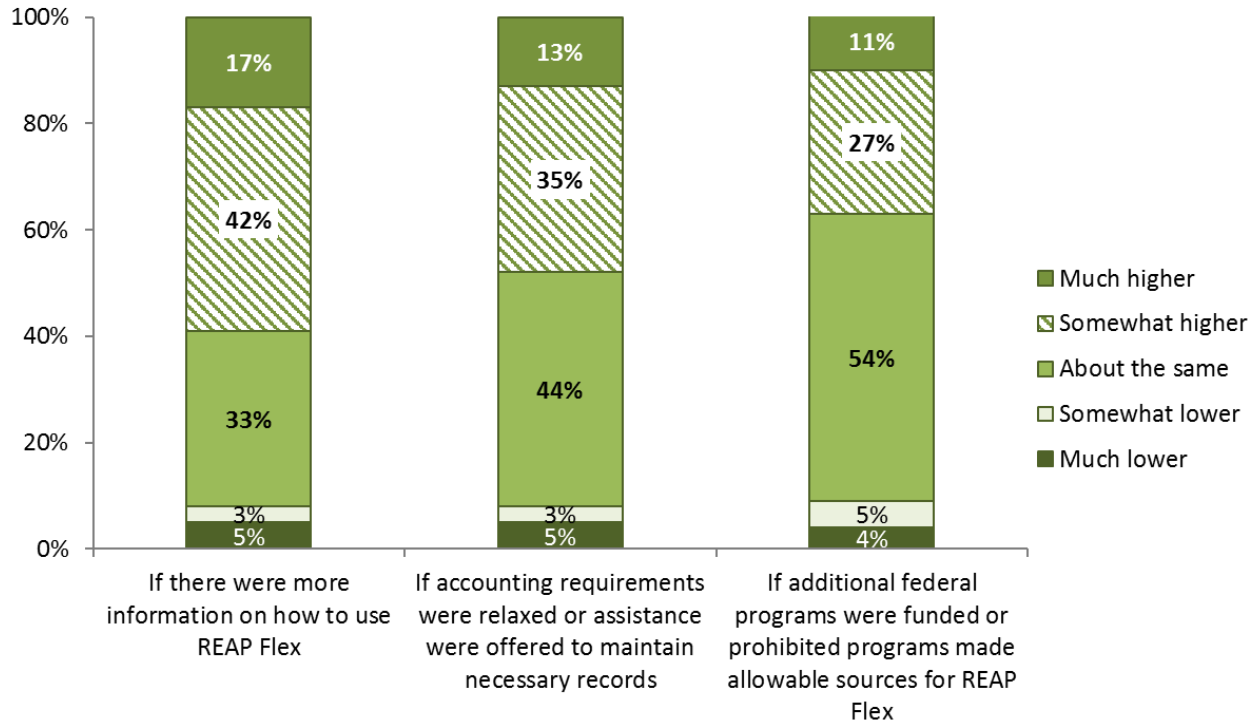


Exhibit reads: Among SRSA coordinators in districts that did not use REAP-Flex, 17 percent reported that their level of interest in using it next year would be much higher if they had more information on how to use the option.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: District Survey, Question 28 (n = 223).

Chapter 5. Grantee Recommendations for Improving REAP

The majority of SRSA and RLIS district coordinators reported few challenges in using or administering their funds and found the technical assistance they received both from their states and from the Department to be helpful. However, in interviews state and district coordinators identified some recommendations for improving REAP.

The majority of district and state REAP coordinators were highly satisfied with REAP as a whole.

Overall, 39 of 47 state REAP coordinators were somewhat or very satisfied with REAP, and 40 of 47 were somewhat or very satisfied with the Department's administration of it. Nearly all SRSA district coordinators (93 percent) and RLIS district coordinators (96 percent) were highly or moderately satisfied with REAP. One SRSA coordinator reported that the district appreciated that the SRSA funds gave the district the flexibility needed to help its highest need students and made administering the funds less challenging than other funding sources.

Although REAP coordinators were satisfied with the program overall, they provided recommendations in three categories: (1) improved timelines for eligibility and award determination, (2) more information on allowable uses of funds and REAP-Flex, and (3) changes to data used in determining eligibility.

REAP coordinators recommended revising the eligibility determination and award timeline so that it aligns more closely with other ESEA funding and their own budget cycles.

In interviews with state coordinators, eight recommended improvements to REAP that pertained to the timeline for eligibility determination. As discussed in Chapter 2, some district coordinators struggled with including REAP funds in their budget planning when they did not know whether they would be eligible for the coming year or what the amount of the grant would be if they did receive one. Three state coordinators recommended that the Department send out the eligibility spreadsheets earlier so districts would know whether they were eligible for an SRSA or RLIS grant. Another coordinator suggested that the timeline start earlier so districts could apply for all federal grants at the same time. Four state coordinators recommended that the Department make the REAP awards and allocation amounts available earlier so districts could plan their budgets. In particular, one state coordinator would like the REAP awards to be made at the same time as other grants are made.

REAP coordinators expressed a need for more information on REAP, particularly on allowable uses of funds and REAP-Flex.

A minority of REAP districts reported needing technical assistance in administering their REAP funds to a moderate or great extent (14 percent of SRSA districts and 6 percent of RLIS districts). As discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, some REAP coordinators struggled with understanding the eligibility process, allowable uses of REAP funds, and the REAP-Flex provision. Eight state coordinators recommended providing guidance on the best uses of the funds. For example, one state respondent suggested the Department provide examples of ways districts have used the funding that were innovative or had a positive effect on students. Four district coordinators echoed that sentiment. One SRSA district would

like to see examples of how to use SRSA funds to support professional development strategies in particular, and another would like examples of how to use SRSA funds for teacher recruitment and retention. Similar to an SRSA coordinator, one RLIS district coordinator believed that having examples of how other districts use RLIS funds would be helpful. Finally, one SRSA district coordinator suggested additional webinars from the Department or the state to address how the funding amounts are calculated.

Additionally, both SRSA grantees and RLIS subgrantees recommended broadening the allowable uses for REAP funds, which is beyond the scope of the Department's authority to change. However, they did not provide examples of the additional allowable uses they would like to see. Relatedly, REAP-Flex is specifically designed to allow SRSA-eligible districts more flexibility in how they use other funds. By statute, however, RLIS districts are not eligible to exercise REAP-Flex, and 92 percent of RLIS district coordinators reported that they would value the option to a moderate extent (32 percent) or to a great extent (60 percent).

State coordinators had a number of suggestions to improve information flow about REAP. To facilitate communication with districts, one state coordinator recommended that the Department establish an email list with district REAP grantees and subgrantees and send regular emails with information about the program. Another state coordinator suggested that the Department provide states with updates on REAP that they can pass along to districts. Another recommended that the Department offer states an online or paper pamphlet presenting all the topics related to REAP in a user-friendly manner to share with districts, and another recommended that the Department modify the presentation materials from its annual grant award kickoff webinar so states can share them with their districts. The same state coordinator also suggested that the Department establish an email list for the state REAP coordinators so that they could ask questions of more experienced peers in other states.²⁴ Two state coordinators mentioned the need for updated program guidance or clarification on whether or not the 2003 guidance was still current.

Districts and states recommended revising the rural locale codes and poverty criteria used in determining REAP eligibility.

Some districts and states made recommendations to requirements that are set by statute and therefore beyond the authority of the Department to alter. For example, to minimize the fluctuations in eligibility from year to year due to changes in districts' poverty rates, one state coordinator suggested using a three-year average for poverty rates, and another suggested a one-year grace period before dropping a district from eligibility. As discussed in Chapter 2, seven state coordinators expressed concern about either the poverty rate criteria (two states) or rural locale code criteria (five states) used to determine REAP eligibility. Another state coordinator recommended updating the eligibility requirements to use the NCES urban-centric locale codes released in 2006. Because Congress established the REAP eligibility criteria in 2001, these criteria rely on earlier locale codes.

²⁴ The REAP office does publish state coordinator information on its website: <http://www2.ed.gov/nclb/freedom/local/reapstatecontacts.html>.

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APPENDIX A: Full Text of the *ESEA*, as Amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, Title VI, Part B – Rural Education Initiative

SEC. 6201. SHORT TITLE.

This part may be cited as the 'Rural Education Achievement Program'.

SEC. 6202. PURPOSE.

It is the purpose of this part to address the unique needs of rural school districts that frequently –

- (1) lack the personnel and resources needed to compete effectively for Federal competitive grants; and
- (2) receive formula grant allocations in amounts too small to be effective in meeting their intended purposes.

Subpart 1 — Small, Rural School Achievement Program

SEC. 6211. USE OF APPLICABLE FUNDING.

(a) ALTERNATIVE USES-

(1) IN GENERAL- Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an eligible local educational agency may use the applicable funding that the agency is eligible to receive from the State educational agency for a fiscal year to carry out local activities authorized under any of the following provisions:

- (A) Part A of title I.
- (B) Part A or D of title II.
- (C) Title III.
- (D) Part A or B of title IV.
- (E) Part A of title V.

(2) NOTIFICATION- An eligible local educational agency shall notify the State educational agency of the local educational agency's intention to use the applicable funding in accordance with paragraph (1), by a date that is established by the State educational agency for the notification.

(b) ELIGIBILITY-

(1) IN GENERAL- A local educational agency shall be eligible to use the applicable funding in accordance with subsection (a) if —

- (A)(i)(I) the total number of students in average daily attendance at all of the schools served by the local educational agency is fewer than 600; or

(II) each county in which a school served by the local educational agency is located has a total population density of fewer than 10 persons per square mile; and

(ii) all of the schools served by the local educational agency are designated with a school locale code of 7 or 8, as determined by the Secretary; or

(B) the agency meets the criteria established in subparagraph (A)(i) and the Secretary, in accordance with paragraph (2), grants the local educational agency's request to waive the criteria described in subparagraph (A)(ii).

(2) CERTIFICATION- The Secretary shall determine whether to waive the criteria described in paragraph (1)(A)(ii) based on a demonstration by the local educational agency, and concurrence by the State educational agency, that the local educational agency is located in an area defined as rural by a governmental agency of the State.

(c) APPLICABLE FUNDING DEFINED- In this section, the term 'applicable funding' means funds provided under any of the following provisions:

(1) Subpart 2 and section 2412(a)(2)(A) of title II.

(2) Section 4114.

(3) Part A of title V.

(d) DISBURSEMENT- Each State educational agency that receives applicable funding for a fiscal year shall disburse the applicable funding to local educational agencies for alternative uses under this section for the fiscal year at the same time as the State educational agency disburses the applicable funding to local educational agencies that do not intend to use the applicable funding for such alternative uses for the fiscal year.

(e) APPLICABLE RULES- Applicable funding under this section shall be available to carry out local activities authorized under subsection (a).

SEC. 6212. GRANT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.

(a) IN GENERAL- The Secretary is authorized to award grants to eligible local educational agencies to enable the local educational agencies to carry out activities authorized under any of the following provisions:

(1) Part A of title I.

(2) Part A or D of title II.

(3) Title III.

(4) Part A or B of title IV.

(5) Part A of title V.

(b) ALLOCATION-

(1) IN GENERAL- Except as provided in paragraph (3), the Secretary shall award a grant under subsection (a) to a local educational agency eligible under section 6211(b) for a fiscal year in an amount equal to the initial amount determined under paragraph (2) for the fiscal year minus the total amount received by the agency under the provisions of law described in section 6211(c) for the preceding fiscal year.

(2) DETERMINATION OF INITIAL AMOUNT- The initial amount referred to in paragraph (1) is equal to \$100 multiplied by the total number of students in excess of 50 students, in average daily attendance at the schools served by the local educational agency, plus \$20,000, except that the initial amount may not exceed \$60,000.

(3) RATABLE ADJUSTMENT-

(A) IN GENERAL- If the amount made available to carry out this section for any fiscal year is not sufficient to pay in full the amounts that local educational agencies are eligible to receive under paragraph (1) for such year, the Secretary shall ratably reduce such amounts for such year.

(B) ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS- If additional funds become available for making payments under paragraph (1) for such fiscal year, payments that were reduced under subparagraph (A) shall be increased on the same basis as such payments were reduced.

(c) DISBURSEMENT- The Secretary shall disburse the funds awarded to a local educational agency under this section for a fiscal year not later than July 1 of that fiscal year.

(d) SPECIAL ELIGIBILITY RULE- A local educational agency that is eligible to receive a grant under this subpart for a fiscal year is not eligible to receive funds for such fiscal year under subpart 2.

SEC. 6213. ACCOUNTABILITY.

(a) ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ASSESSMENT- Each local educational agency that uses or receives funds under this subpart for a fiscal year shall administer an assessment that is consistent with section 1111(b)(3).

(b) DETERMINATION REGARDING CONTINUING PARTICIPATION- Each State educational agency that receives funding under the provisions of law described in section 6211(c) shall —

(1) after the third year that a local educational agency in the State participates in a program under this subpart and on the basis of the results of the assessments described in subsection (a), determine whether the local educational agency participating in the program made adequate yearly progress, as described in section 1111(b)(2);

(2) permit only those local educational agencies that participated and made adequate yearly progress, as described in section 1111(b)(2), to continue to participate; and

(3) permit those local educational agencies that participated and failed to make adequate yearly progress, as described in section 1111(b)(2), to continue to participate only if such local educational agencies use applicable funding under this subpart to carry out the requirements of section 1116.

Subpart 2 — Rural and Low-Income School Program

SEC. 6221. PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.

(a) GRANTS TO STATES-

(1) IN GENERAL- From amounts appropriated under section 6234 for this subpart for a fiscal year that are not reserved under subsection (c), the Secretary shall award grants

(from allotments made under paragraph (2)) for the fiscal year to State educational agencies that have applications submitted under section 6223 approved to enable the State educational agencies to award grants to eligible local educational agencies for local authorized activities described in section 6222(a).

(2) ALLOTMENT- From amounts described in paragraph (1) for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall allot to each State educational agency for that fiscal year an amount that bears the same ratio to those amounts as the number of students in average daily attendance served by eligible local educational agencies in the State for that fiscal year bears to the number of all such students served by eligible local educational agencies in all States for that fiscal year.

(3) SPECIALLY QUALIFIED AGENCIES-

(A) ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION- If a State educational agency elects not to participate in the program under this subpart or does not have an application submitted under section 6223 approved, a specially qualified agency in such State desiring a grant under this subpart may submit an application under such section directly to the Secretary to receive an award under this subpart.

(B) DIRECT AWARDS- The Secretary may award, on a competitive basis or by formula, the amount the State educational agency is eligible to receive under paragraph (2) directly to a specially qualified agency in the State that has submitted an application in accordance with subparagraph (A) and obtained approval of the application.

(C) SPECIALLY QUALIFIED AGENCY DEFINED- In this subpart, the term 'specially qualified agency' means an eligible local educational agency served by a State educational agency that does not participate in a program under this subpart in a fiscal year, that may apply directly to the Secretary for a grant in such year under this subsection.

(b) LOCAL AWARDS-

(1) ELIGIBILITY- A local educational agency shall be eligible to receive a grant under this subpart if —

(A) 20 percent or more of the children ages 5 through 17 years served by the local educational agency are from families with incomes below the poverty line; and

(B) all of the schools served by the agency are designated with a school locale code of 6, 7, or 8, as determined by the Secretary.

(2) AWARD BASIS- A State educational agency shall award grants to eligible local educational agencies —

(A) on a competitive basis;

(B) according to a formula based on the number of students in average daily attendance served by the eligible local educational agencies or schools in the State; or

(C) according to an alternative formula, if, prior to awarding the grants, the State educational agency demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the Secretary, that

the alternative formula enables the State educational agency to allot the grant funds in a manner that serves equal or greater concentrations of children from families with incomes below the poverty line, relative to the concentrations that would be served if the State educational agency used the formula described in subparagraph (B).

(c) RESERVATIONS- From amounts appropriated under section 6234 for this subpart for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall reserve--

- (1) one-half of 1 percent to make awards to elementary schools or secondary schools operated or supported by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, to carry out the activities authorized under this subpart; and
- (2) one-half of 1 percent to make awards to the outlying areas in accordance with their respective needs, to carry out the activities authorized under this subpart.

SEC. 6222. USES OF FUNDS.

(a) LOCAL AWARDS- Grant funds awarded to local educational agencies under this subpart shall be used for any of the following:

- (1) Teacher recruitment and retention, including the use of signing bonuses and other financial incentives.
- (2) Teacher professional development, including programs that train teachers to utilize technology to improve teaching and to train special needs teachers.
- (3) Educational technology, including software and hardware, as described in part D of title II.
- (4) Parental involvement activities.
- (5) Activities authorized under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program under part A of title IV.
- (6) Activities authorized under part A of title I.
- (7) Activities authorized under title III.

(b) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS- A State educational agency receiving a grant under this subpart may not use more than 5 percent of the amount of the grant for State administrative costs and to provide technical assistance to eligible local educational agencies.

SEC. 6223. APPLICATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL- Each State educational agency or specially qualified agency desiring to receive a grant under this subpart shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require.

(b) CONTENTS- At a minimum, each application submitted under subsection (a) shall include information on specific measurable goals and objectives to be achieved through the activities carried out through the grant, which may include specific educational goals and objectives relating to —

- (1) increased student academic achievement;

- (2) decreased student dropout rates; or
- (3) such other factors as the State educational agency or specially qualified agency may choose to measure.

SEC. 6224. ACCOUNTABILITY.

(a) STATE REPORT- Each State educational agency that receives a grant under this subpart shall prepare and submit an annual report to the Secretary. The report shall describe —

- (1) the method the State educational agency used to award grants to eligible local educational agencies, and to provide assistance to schools, under this subpart;
- (2) how local educational agencies and schools used funds provided under this subpart; and
- (3) the degree to which progress has been made toward meeting the goals and objectives described in the application submitted under section 6223.

(b) SPECIALLY QUALIFIED AGENCY REPORT- Each specially qualified agency that receives a grant under this subpart shall provide an annual report to the Secretary. Such report shall describe —

- (1) how such agency uses funds provided under this subpart; and
- (2) the degree to which progress has been made toward meeting the goals and objectives described in the application submitted under section 6223.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS- The Secretary shall prepare and submit to the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate a biennial report. The report shall describe —

- (1) the methods the State educational agencies used to award grants to eligible local educational agencies, and to provide assistance to schools, under this subpart;
- local educational agencies and schools used funds provided under this subpart; and
- (3) the degree to which progress has been made toward meeting the goals and objectives described in the applications submitted under section 6223.

(d) ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ASSESSMENT- Each local educational agency or specially qualified agency that receives a grant under this subpart for a fiscal year shall administer an assessment that is consistent with section 1111(b)(3).

(e) DETERMINATION REGARDING CONTINUING PARTICIPATION- Each State educational agency or specially qualified agency that receives a grant under this subpart shall —

- (1) after the third year that a local educational agency or specially qualified agency in the State receives funds under this subpart, and on the basis of the results of the assessments described in subsection (d) —
 - (A) in the case of a local educational agency, determine whether the local educational agency made adequate yearly progress, as described in section 1111(b)(2); and
 - (B) in the case of a specially qualified agency, submit to the Secretary information that would allow the Secretary to determine whether the specially

qualified agency has made adequate yearly progress, as described in section 1111(b)(2);

(2) permit only those local educational agencies or specially qualified agencies that made adequate yearly progress, as described in section 1111(b)(2), to continue to receive grants under this subpart; and

(3) permit those local educational agencies or specially qualified agencies that failed to make adequate yearly progress, as described in section 1111(b)(2), to continue to receive such grants only if the State educational agency disbursed such grants to the local educational agencies or specially qualified agencies to carry out the requirements of section 1116.

Subpart 3 — General Provisions

SEC. 6231. ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE DETERMINATION.

(a) CENSUS DETERMINATION- Each local educational agency desiring a grant under section 6212 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)).

(b) PENALTY- If the Secretary determines that a local educational agency or specially qualified agency has knowingly submitted false information under subsection (a) for the purpose of gaining additional funds under section 6212 or subpart 2, then the agency shall be fined an amount equal to twice the difference between the amount the agency received under this section and the correct amount the agency would have received under section 6212 or subpart 2 if the agency had submitted accurate information under subsection (a).

SEC. 6232. SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.

Funds made available under subpart 1 or subpart 2 shall be used to supplement, and not supplant, any other Federal, State, or local education funds.

SEC. 6233. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this part shall be construed to prohibit a local educational agency that enters into cooperative arrangements with other local educational agencies for the provision of special, compensatory, or other education services, pursuant to State law or a written agreement, from entering into similar arrangements for the use, or the coordination of the use, of the funds made available under this part.

SEC. 6234. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this part \$300,000,000 for fiscal year 2002 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 5 succeeding fiscal years, to be distributed equally between subparts 1 and 2.

APPENDIX B: Methodology

Survey Instrument Development

To develop the district survey instrument, the study team first compiled and reviewed background information on REAP (REAP guidance documents and websites), observed REAP informational webinars, and interviewed Department personnel responsible for REAP (the SSRP team leader, SSRP program officers, and SSRP data analyst). Many of the survey questions were adapted from relevant questions used in other studies. For example, questions about technical assistance have their roots in those developed and used in a study of RLIS districts (U.S. Department of Education et al. 2010). Creation of questions about the use of REAP-Flex started with items used in a study of districts eligible to exercise REAP-Flex (U.S. Department of Education et al. 2007). These items are footnoted in Appendix D. A panel of district administrators was also convened to give input on the study design and data collection instruments.

Internal pretesting of survey items was conducted to ensure clarity. In April 2014, the survey was piloted with seven randomly selected district administrators across the four census regions to approximate the average respondent. After the administrators took the survey, the researchers telephoned each of them to discuss clarity of wording and flow, how they interpreted the questions, and any issues that may have come up. The survey was revised on the basis of this feedback. Finally, personnel from the Department responsible for administering REAP provided feedback on a draft of the survey to ensure accuracy and clarity.

Survey Sampling

State interviews—The interview sample consisted of the person responsible for administering REAP in each of the 47 states with districts that drew down REAP funds in 2014–15. According to publicly-available eligibility and grantee spreadsheets, no districts in Hawaii or Washington, D.C. received REAP funds in 2014–15, so they were excluded from data collection. The state coordinators in Vermont and Maryland indicated that although districts were eligible for REAP funds, no districts had drawn down their REAP funds in FY2014. For consistency, Vermont and Maryland, along with their REAP-eligible districts, were excluded from all analyses.

District survey—The district survey sample comprised 1,005 districts randomly selected to be representative of the population of SRSA grantees and RLIS-eligible districts in 2014–15. The districts were stratified by the two grantee types (SRSA and RLIS) and the nine U.S. census divisions shown in Exhibit A-1, resulting in 18 strata, to arrive at districts representative of the population of SRSA grantees and RLIS-eligible districts in 2014–15. Information on RLIS district subgrants were not available. However, approximately 96 percent of RLIS-eligible districts had received RLIS funds in 2013–14, as indicated on RLIS subgrantee lists that state REAP coordinators submitted in spring 2014. Therefore, the sample was pulled from that population of districts, expecting that the rate of subgrants would be similar in 2014–15. During initial outreach to the states and districts in fall 2014, districts that did not receive funds and were replaced with others randomly sampled from the same census division that did receive funds. As stated, during data collection the Vermont state coordinator reported the two RLIS-eligible districts in Vermont did not receive any funds. For consistency, the entire state was excluded from the analysis.

A study of SRSA-eligible districts conducted in 2005–06 had found that half those districts exercised the REAP-Flex provision (U.S. Department of Education et al. 2007). To ensure adequate representation of districts exercising REAP-Flex in the survey sample, SRSA districts were oversampled. The final sample included approximately twice as many SRSA grantees as RLIS subgrantees (Exhibit B-1). Survey responses from districts using REAP-Flex and study findings about SRSA grantees’ experiences in choosing whether to exercise REAP-Flex and how they used the provision can be generalized reliably to the national population. The report relies on district survey responses to identify which districts used the REAP-Flex option.

Exhibit B-1: Study sampling frame

Census region	Census division	No. of SRSA-eligible districts	No. of RLIS-eligible districts
Northeast	Middle Atlantic	211	98
	New England	282	76
	<i>Northeast total</i>	<i>493</i>	<i>174</i>
South	East South Central	19	351
	South Atlantic	28	295
	West South Central	798	458
	<i>South total</i>	<i>845</i>	<i>1,104</i>
Midwest	East North Central	623	330
	West North Central	1,091	169
	<i>Midwest total</i>	<i>1,714</i>	<i>499</i>
West	Mountain	671	119
	Pacific	551	116
	<i>West total</i>	<i>1,222</i>	<i>235</i>
<i>Total</i>		<i>4,274</i>	<i>2,012</i>

Note: The sampling frame included two RLIS-eligible districts from Vermont that were later excluded from the study because the state REAP coordinator confirmed that they did not receive any funds.

Source: SRSA award spreadsheets and RLIS eligibility spreadsheets for 2014–15 posted on U.S. Department of Education website.

This sampling design enabled separate reporting on SRSA and RLIS districts and on use of REAP-Flex. In addition, the study’s Technical Working Group stressed that rural districts vary greatly depending on their locations. Therefore, to ensure adequate numbers of districts to derive statements about REAP districts by Census region (Midwest, Northeast, South, and West), the sample included equal numbers of districts in each region within each program type.²⁵ The resulting sample represented the population of SRSA grantees and RLIS-eligible districts in 2014–15.

District interviews—The study design called for follow-up interviews with REAP coordinators from 30 school districts that had responded to the survey. The district interview sample comprised 10 RLIS districts, 10 SRSA districts exercising REAP-Flex, and 10 SRSA districts not exercising REAP-Flex.

²⁵ To ensure that the sample reflected the geographic distribution of REAP districts, sampled districts were allocated to each Census *division* (subcategory within Census *region*) proportionally based on the number of districts in the sampling universe within each division and program type.

Survey Administration and Interview Completion

State interviews—REAP coordinators in all 47 states with REAP districts participated in the interviews.

District survey—Overall, the survey response rate was 95 percent (Exhibit B-2). Of the 950 district respondents, 316 were RLIS subgrantees and 634 were SRSA grantees. In contacting the states and districts for the survey administration, eight districts reported that they were not receiving funds in the 2014–15 school year. Each of these districts was replaced with another randomly sampled district of the same grantee type and from the same census division.

Exhibit B-2: Response rate and number of respondents by strata

Census region	Census division	SRSA districts		RLIS districts	
		Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Midwest	East North Central	97	59	95	53
	West North Central	96	102	96	27
	<i>Midwest total</i>	96	161	95	80
Northeast	Middle Atlantic	94	67	98	46
	New England	94	90	89	33
	<i>Northeast total</i>	94	157	94	79
South	East South Central	75	3	96	26
	South Atlantic	100	6	100	22
	West South Central	95	150	77	27
	<i>South total</i>	95	159	89	79
West	Mountain	95	87	95	41
	Pacific	93	70	100	41
	<i>West total</i>	94	157	98	82
Total		95	634	94	316

Source: District survey.

District interviews—The overall response rate to the interviews was 80 percent—from six RLIS districts, 10 SRSA districts exercising REAP-Flex, and eight SRSA districts not exercising REAP-Flex—for a total of 24 interviews with district REAP coordinators.

Data Analysis and Reporting

The district survey was administered to a nationally representative sample of all REAP districts. In the analysis, the total number of weighted responses equaled the total number of districts in each stratum in the sampling frame. The weighted percentages reported based on the district survey represent the estimated percentages of all REAP districts nationally in 2014–15, both overall and by program type. The standard errors reported in each exhibit in Appendix F provide a metric for interpreting how precisely each percentage estimates the percentage in the national population; a smaller standard error indicates a more precise estimate. Standard errors grow large when the number of observations is small. Therefore, estimates on items with an unweighted n below 10 are not reported.

The interview protocols, particularly the state protocols, included some questions designed to be coded and counted quantitatively. These questions provided additional information that was not obtained on the survey. For these questions, the study team categorized responses and summed the number of respondents in each category.

The majority of interview questions, particularly on the district protocol, were designed to elicit descriptive detail to support or explain the survey findings. These questions covered topics from the survey, and interviewers examined the districts' responses to the survey before conducting the interviews with the goal of guiding the interviews toward the most detailed examples possible. After each interview, the interviewer prepared a written debrief, summarizing the participant's responses to the questions. Researchers drew from these debrief guides, as well as transcripts and audio recordings of the interviews themselves, for illustrative examples and quotations from the participants throughout the report.

APPENDIX C: State REAP Coordinator Interview Guide

Note: Instructions to interviewer are in italics. Throughout the protocol, interviewers used the actual state name in lieu of “your state” as appropriate.

Role with REAP

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself. How long have you been at _____ [*use specific name of state education agency*]? How long have you been in your current position? What are your roles and responsibilities regarding REAP? [*Note to interviewer: The protocol includes additional questions about state technical assistance activities in a later section.*]
 - a. Do you have other job responsibilities in addition to the REAP program? [*If yes*] What do they include?
2. Are other staff at _____ [*use specific name of state education agency*] involved in the REAP program? [*If yes*] What are their job titles and what are their responsibilities related to REAP? [*The research team will code and quantify responses.*]
3. How do you work with RLIS school districts? How do you work with SRSA school districts?
 - a. [*Probe if not already addressed*] How frequently do you communicate with RLIS school districts? What does this communication consist of?
 - b. [*Probe if not already addressed*] How frequently do you communicate with SRSA school districts? What does this communication consist of?

State Goals and Priorities

4. Does your state have any special goals or priorities with respect to rural education in particular? [*If yes*] What are they? Does your state have any goals or priorities that apply to all school districts, but that your state allows rural school districts to meet in different ways? [*If yes*] What are they?
5. Does your state encourage school districts to use their REAP funds to support particular state goals or priority areas? [*If yes ask 6a and 6b in addition to 6c. If no skip to 6c.*]
 - a. Which goals and priority areas does your state encourage school districts to use their REAP funds to support, and why these? Does this differ for school districts depending on whether they receive RLIS or SRSA funds? [*If yes*] How does this differ for school districts depending on whether they receive RLIS or SRSA funds?
 - b. How does your state communicate these goals and priorities to school districts?
 - c. How does the REAP program fit into your state’s education system as a whole?

Planning Process for Use of Federal Funds

6. For the 2014–15 school year, did your state require school districts to submit any of the following as part of the planning process for the use of federal funds, **including REAP funds**? *[For any items the state requires]* When did your state require school districts to submit this?

Did your state require... <i>{Read list and check appropriate box for each row. For any items the state requires, mark date due in final column.}</i>	Required	Not required	Don't know	Date due
A needs assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
A consolidated application or plan for the use of federal Title program funds including REAP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Anything else? <i>[Please specify in box. The research team will code and quantify responses as appropriate.]</i>				

Eligibility for REAP

7. To determine eligibility for REAP funds, the U.S. Department of Education prepares spreadsheets listing the districts in each state, as well as their locale codes and percent of children from families below the poverty line. The states are asked to add the average daily attendance (ADA), state rural designations, Title IIa allocation, and population density for each of their districts before resubmitting the populated spreadsheets to the Department so that the REAP Program Office can use these data to determine eligibility for REAP and SRSa award amounts. What is your state’s process for completing this spreadsheet?

- a. Does your state review the accuracy of the data provided by the U.S. Department of Education?
 Yes / No *[Circle one]*
[If yes]How?

[Note to interviewer: The state must provide the required information so that the U.S. Department of Education can determine districts' eligibility for SRSA (average daily attendance, state rural designation, population density) and their allocation amounts (a district's Title IIA allocation is used to determine the amount of its SRSA allocation). After determining that a district does not meet SRSA eligibility, the U.S. Dept. of Education REAP Office can then determine RLIS eligibility.]

b. Where do the data on *average daily attendance* and *state rural designation* typically come from (e.g., state databases, directly from the districts, etc.)? *[For data that come directly from school districts] When did your state require school districts to submit this?*

<i>[Mark all that apply]</i>	Average daily attendance	State rural designation	Don't know
State databases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directly from districts	<input type="checkbox"/> Date due: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Date due: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Specify _____)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

- a. *[If ADA and/or state rural designation come from state database, ask] Do you encourage or require school districts to verify these data (to avoid any problems with grant eligibility and awards)? [Circle one] Yes / No [If yes] How?*
- b. *[If state obtain ADA and/or state rural designation from the districts, ask] Does your state review the accuracy of the eligibility data provided by school districts in your state before returning these spreadsheets to the U.S. Department of Education? [Circle one] Yes / No [If yes] How?*
- c. *What is the timeline for this process?*
- d. *What challenges does your state encounter in the process of verifying or submitting eligibility data to the U.S. Department of Education?*

Next I would like to ask you a series of questions about RLIS subgrantees followed by some questions about SRSA grantees.

Management and Distribution of RLIS Funds

8. Does your state notify RLIS-eligible school districts about their eligibility to receive funds? *[Note to interviewer: RLIS funds are allocated to states which in turn make subgrant awards to school districts.]*

[Mark one]

-
- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <i>[Ask 8a]</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <i>[Skip to 9]</i> |
-

- a. *[If yes]* How do you notify school districts?

9. Does your state require RLIS-eligible school districts to submit a request or go through a formal planning process to receive RLIS funds? *[If no skip to 10b.]*

[Mark one]

-
- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes, submit a request | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes, formal review process | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No (neither) | <i>[Skip to 9b]</i> |
-

- a. Please describe the process that must be followed by school districts. *Probe to understand the process, for example:*
- How often does your state require school districts to submit a request? What information, if any, does your state require school districts to provide to obtain RLIS funds (e.g., as part of their consolidated application, needs assessment data)? What information and assistance, if any, does the state provide to school districts about the application process?
- b. How does your state determine the amount of school districts' RLIS awards—competition or formula—and why?

[Mark one]

-
- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Formula | <i>[Ask 9c]</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Competition | <i>[Ask 9d]</i> |
-

- c. *[If formula]* What does your state consider in determining the amount of the awards for districts?

[Mark one]

-
- Average Daily Attendance
- Other (Specify)
-

- d. *[If competition]* What criteria are used for the competition to award RLIS funds?
10. What is the timeline of your state's receipt of RLIS funds from the U.S. Department of Education and then the subgranting to school districts (e.g., how long is this process from planning to school district receipt of funds, when does the state receive RLIS funds, when does the state determine allocations to school districts, when in the school year do school districts actually receive the funds)?
- a. Are there any challenges that arise due to the timing of the receipt of RLIS funds? *[If yes]* Please describe these challenges.
11. Has your state's process for the allocation and award of RLIS funds changed over time? *[If yes]* How has this process changed over time?
12. Does your state place any restrictions on what amount or share of the RLIS grant districts may draw down at any one time (e.g., 10 percent limit)? Does your state place any other restrictions on the use of RLIS funds? *[If yes]* Why does your state place these restrictions?
13. Does your state conduct any monitoring or evaluation activities of RLIS-subgrantee expenditures and uses of funds? *[If yes]* What do these activities consist of?
- a. How does your state use this information?
- b. *[Ask if the respondent has not already discussed the Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR)]* Does your state use what's been learned from monitoring and evaluation to inform what is reported on the Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR) submitted annually to the Department?

Management of SRSA Funds and Eligibility Notification

14. The U.S. Department of Education awards SRSA funds directly to school districts. What role, if any, does your state play in the management of SRSA? *[Probe for description of the state role related to SRSA. Information will be coded and quantified based on interview responses.]*

a. Does your state notify SRSA districts about their eligibility for SRSA funds?

[Mark one]

-
- Yes
- No *[Skip to 14c]*
-

b. *[If yes]* How does your state notify SRSA-eligible districts?

c. In what other ways is the _____ *[use specific name of state education agency]* involved in the management of SRSA funds?

Use of REAP-Flex

Now I would like to ask a few questions about a special provision of SRSA, REAP-Flex, sometimes referred to as SRSA Flexibility, REAP-Flex, SRSA Flex, REAPing, or Flexing.

15. How familiar are you with the REAP-Flex option for SRSA grantees?

a. *[If respondent indicates some familiarity]* Could you describe your understanding of this option?

[Note to interviewer: If respondent is not familiar with REAP-Flex or expresses confusion about the provision, provide the following description of REAP-Flex.]

Description of REAP-Flex: The REAP Flexibility provision (REAP-Flex) provides SRSA-eligible districts the flexibility to use “applicable funding” (i.e., specific federal Title program funds) to support local activities under an array of federal Title programs in order to assist them in addressing local academic needs more effectively. “Applicable funding” includes all funds allocated by formula to an eligible district under four programs.²⁶ Of these four programs, currently only **Title II Part A** is funded (Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund). The REAP Flexibility provision does not provide any additional funding. Rather, it allows school districts to use all or part of its Title IIA funds for local activities authorized under one or more of the following federal Title programs:

- Title I Part A: Improving the Achievement of Disadvantaged Children
- Title II Part D: Educational Technology State Grants
- Title III: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students

²⁶ (1) Subpart 2 of Part A of Title II (Improving Teacher Quality State Grants); (2) Part D of Title II (Educational Technology State Grants); (3) Part A of Title IV (Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities); and (4) Part A of Title V (State Grants for Innovative Programs).

- Title IV Part A: Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities
 - Title IV Part B: 21st-Century Community Learning Centers
 - Title V Part A: State Grants for Innovative Programs
-
- b. Do you think that the SRSA grantees in your state that are using REAP-Flex benefit from using this option? Why or why not?
 - c. Do you think that the SRSA grantees in your state that are *not using* REAP-Flex would benefit? Why or why not?
 - d. What about RLIS school districts? If a provision like REAP-Flex were available as part of RLIS, do you think RLIS subgrantees in your state would benefit from using this option? Why or why not?
16. What information and assistance, if any, does your state provide to school districts about REAP-Flex? *Probe for:*
- a. Notifying school districts of the existence of REAP-Flex
 - b. Restrictions/limitations on applicable funds—amounts or types of funds that could be used under REAP-Flex
 - c. Restrictions/limitations on allowable uses—how to coordinate REAP funds with allowed federal total program funds

Technical Assistance Needs and Challenges

17. Does your state provide any types of technical assistance to REAP school districts? *[Note to interviewer: For Question 9a the respondent may have already mentioned technical assistance provided concerning the RLIS application process.]*
- [If yes]* What types of assistance does your state offer? Does that assistance differ based on whether school districts receive RLIS or SRSA grants?
 - Is technical assistance provided by another organization (e.g., Regional Educational Laboratory, Regional Comprehensive Center, Content Center)? *[If yes]* Which one(s)? *[Mark all that apply below]* What types of assistance do they offer?

[Mark all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/>	Regional Educational Laboratory <i>[Ask only about lab that serves state]</i> Appalachia, Central, Midwest, Northwest, Pacific, Southeast, Southwest, Pacific
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regional Comprehensive Center <i>[Ask only about center that serves state]</i> Appalachia, California, Central, Florida and Islands, Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, North Central, Northeast, Northwest, Pacific, South Central, Southeast, Texas, West
	<i>Content Centers</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Building State Capacity and Productivity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on College and Career Readiness and Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Great Teachers and Leaders
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Innovations in Learning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on School Turnaround
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Standards and Assessments Implementation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other <i>[Specify]</i>

18. What are the major technical assistance needs that your state has and the challenges that it faces in supporting the needs of REAP districts?

19. Has your state received any technical assistance to help the state administer the RLIS program (e.g., from the U.S. Department of Education REAP Program Office, fellow state coordinators, Regional Educational Laboratories, Regional Comprehensive Centers, Content Centers)?

[Mark all that apply]

<input type="checkbox"/>	U.S. Department of Education REAP Program Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fellow state REAP coordinators
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regional Educational Laboratory <i>[Ask only about lab that serves state]</i> Appalachia, Central, Midwest, Northwest, Pacific, Southeast, Southwest, Pacific
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regional Comprehensive Center <i>[Ask only about center that serves state]</i> Appalachia, California, Central, Florida and Islands, Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, North Central, Northeast, Northwest, Pacific, South Central, Southeast, Texas, West
	<i>Content Centers</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Building State Capacity and Productivity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on College and Career Readiness and Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Great Teachers and Leaders
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Innovations in Learning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on School Turnaround
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Standards and Assessments Implementation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other <i>[Specify]</i>

- a. *[If received technical assistance]* How useful have you found this assistance to be? Do you have any suggestions to improve the technical assistance provided? Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for your state?

20. Does the state collect information from districts on technical assistance needs? *[Note to interviewer: refer to any information learned earlier in the interview about program evaluation and reporting activities]*

[If yes] What information does the state collect? Does this differ for RLIS and SRSA districts? What do you do with these data?

Recommendations for Change

21. What recommendations do you have to improve the REAP program? *[Probe for eligibility, allocations, authorized uses for funds.]*
- What recommendations do you have to improve the administration of the RLIS program? *[Probe for timing of eligibility notification, timing of allocations and awards.]*
 - What recommendations do you have to improve the administration of the SRSA program?
 - What recommendations do you have to improve the administration of REAP-Flex?
22. Would you describe your overall satisfaction with the REAP program as *[Read options below]*? Why?

	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
<i>[Mark one]</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23. Would you describe your overall level of satisfaction with the administration of the REAP program by the U.S. Department of Education REAP Program Office as *[Read options below]*? Why?

	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
<i>[Mark one]</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX D: District REAP Coordinator Survey

Notes to the reader:

- 1) *All items are asked of both RLIS and SRSA grantees, unless otherwise specified. When a question or subitem was asked of only one grantee type, it is denoted with a note in red text and brackets (e.g., {SRSA only}).*
- 2) *There are additional directions to the programmer of the online survey, also denoted in red text and brackets (e.g., {Only ask if they said "NO" to Q23}).*
- 3) *Throughout the survey, the word "{REAP}" was replaced with "RLIS" for RLIS subgrantees and "SRSA" for SRSA grantees.*

Email Text with Survey Link

Dear {District REAP Coordinator name}:

Your school district has been selected to participate in the U.S. Department of Education (the Department)'s Study of Experiences and Needs of REAP Grantees survey. The survey takes approximately 30–40 minutes to complete.

The results of this study will help inform the Department's technical assistance efforts and the next reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (*ESEA*) Act. REAP grantees and subgrantees are required to cooperate with federal studies of their programs under Section 9306(a)(4) of *ESEA*.

We ask that you complete this survey no later than {January 21, 2015}.

LINK INFO

If you are not the best person to respond to questions about the REAP program, please send a message to reap@sri.com with the name, email address, and phone number of a more appropriate respondent in your district. If your district did not receive REAP funds for school year 2014–15, please call 800-366-7744.

Linked Log-in Page Text

Welcome to the {REAP} survey. This survey includes questions about the eligibility determination process for {REAP}, how your school district uses {REAP} funds, and your school district's {REAP}-related technical assistance needs. **Please consult with other staff members in your district as needed to answer these questions.** If you would like to print out a copy of this survey to get feedback from other staff members, please [click here to access a PDF](#). This is intended for your reference only. Please note that you still must fill out the survey online.

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 1875-0274. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 30–40 minutes, including the time to review instructions and complete and review the information collection.

Please complete this survey **by {DateDue}, 2015.**

Reporting

Responses to this data collection will be used only for statistical purposes. As part of the study, the research team will share its findings with the U.S. Department of Education and other federal agencies. However, your individual district name will not be used in any published report, and your responses will be combined with information collected from approximately 800 other school districts for reporting.

Confidentiality

Your individual responses to this survey will be confidential. We will not provide information that identifies you or your district to anyone outside the study team, except as required by law. Unique identification numbers will be assigned to individuals and to sites for the data collected. There are no known risks for participating in this study. A publicly available report will be made available in 2016. Your cooperation in completing this survey will help to make the results of this evaluation comprehensive, reliable, and timely.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk with someone other than the researchers, you may contact Judy Sheehan, Human Subjects Committee, SRI International, 333 Ravenswood Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025, 650-859-2686 and reference case number 1480.

For More Information

If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, please call SRI at 800-366-7744, or email at reap@sri.com.

By clicking "Next," you certify that you are willing to participate in this survey.

Thank you very much for your participation!

NEXT

Survey

Getting Started

If you begin the survey and need to stop and come back to it, you may do so. You can re-use the link embedded in the email invitation to return to the survey and pick up where you left off. Your survey responses will be saved for each page when you click on the "Next" or "Back" arrows.

You may move back and forth within the survey to review or edit your answers by using the "Back" and "Next" buttons at the bottom of the page. Do not use the "Back" button on your web browser or your answers may be lost.

Please remember to click "Submit" on the final page of the survey to submit your answers. Once you hit "Submit," you will not be able to return to the survey.

We appreciate your time, expertise, and thoughtfulness. Thank you.

Background

**1. For the 2014–15 school year, what is your role in your school district?
(Please select all that apply.)**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Superintendent
<input type="checkbox"/>	School principal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial officer
<input type="checkbox"/>	General administrator for all federal programs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Administrator for individual federal programs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Administrator assigned specifically to manage REAP
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher
<input type="checkbox"/>	Instructional program coordinator
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Please specify)

2. Including the 2014–15 school year, how many years has your position in this district involved some responsibility or experience with the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP), either RLIS or SRSA? (If this is your first year select “1,” if it is your second year select “2,” etc.)

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 19 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 28 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 37 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 11 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 29 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 38 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 21 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 39 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 13 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 22 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 31 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 40 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 14 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 23 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 32 years	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 40 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 24 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 33 years	
<input type="checkbox"/> 7 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 16 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 25 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 34 years	
<input type="checkbox"/> 8 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 17 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 26 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 35 years	
<input type="checkbox"/> 9 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 18 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 27 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 36 years	

Eligibility

The following questions are about your experience in determining eligibility for and planning for {REAP} funds.

-
3. For the 2014–15 school year, did the state allow or require your school district to verify the average daily attendance (ADA) for your school district before SRSA eligibility data was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education?

(Select one.)

{SRSA districts Only}

-
- Required to verify
- Encouraged to verify
- Allowed to verify
- No opportunity to verify
- Don't know
-

-
4. Did your school district find out about your eligibility for {REAP} for the 2014–15 school year in any of the following ways?

(Select one response per row.)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Checked the eligibility spreadsheet for my state posted on the U.S. Department of Education website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was notified by the U.S. Department of Education {SRSA only}	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Checked my state's website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was notified by my state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Did your school district find out about the amount of your {REAP} allocation for the 2014–15 school year in any of the following ways?

(Select one response per row.)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Checked the SRSA grant award spreadsheet for my state on the U.S. Department of Education website <i>{SRSA only}</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Checked the U.S. Department of Education's G5 grants management system <i>{SRSA only}</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was notified by the U.S. Department of Education <i>{SRSA only}</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Checked my state's website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was notified by my state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calculated the amount using the funding formula	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Please answer the following questions about the timing of your school district’s financial planning and {REAP} allocation for the 2014–15 school year.

(Select one response row.)

	Before June June 2014	July 2014	August 2014	September 2014	October 2014	After October 2014	<i>Don't know</i>
When did your 2014–15 school year begin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Before January 2014	January 2014	February 2014	March 2014	April 2014	May 2014	June 2014	July 2014	August 2014	September 2014	After September 2014	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
When did your school district <u>begin</u> planning for your spending in the 2014–15 school year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When did your school district <u>finish</u> planning for your spending in the 2014–15 school year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When was your school district’s consolidated plan including the budget for 2014–15 due to the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When did your school district find out about your {REAP} eligibility for the 2014–15 school year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When did your school district find out the amount of your {REAP} award for the 2014–15 school year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When were your school district’s {REAP} funds for the 2014–15 school year first available to your district?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Use of Funds

The following questions will ask about how your school district chose to spend your {REAP} funds: the process for determining how to spend them, your district’s needs, and how {REAP} funds fit into your goals and other funding sources.

7. For the 2014–15 school year, did your school district conduct a formal needs assessment to help decide how to spend your {REAP} funds?

(Select one.)

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know

8. For the 2014–15 school year, were any of the following people in your school district involved in deciding how to spend your {REAP} funds?²⁷

(Select one response per row.)

	Yes	No	Don’t know
School board	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Superintendent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School principal(s)			
Financial officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General administrator for all federal programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administrator for individual federal programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administrator assigned specifically to manage REAP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instructional personnel (for example, teachers or program coordinators)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

²⁷ Adapted from item 18 in the survey used for the Evaluation of flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2007)

9. For the 2014–15 school year, were you involved in deciding how your school district would spend its {REAP} funds?

- Yes
 No

10. For the 2014–15 school year, is your school district using {REAP} funds to pay for activities in any of the following areas? ²⁸
 (Select one response per row.)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Improving teacher retention and/or recruitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing professional development for teachers or administrators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving or expanding access to technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addressing drug abuse and/or violence in your community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addressing English language acquisition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing parental involvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving academic achievement through activities other than those listed above (Please specify.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. In the 2014–15 school year, in which one area is your school district using the greatest portion of its REAP funds?

(Select one.)

{Ask only of those who select “Yes” to more than one item in Q10. Only show items selected in Q10}

Improving teacher retention and/or recruitment
Providing professional development
Improving or expanding access to technology
Addressing drug abuse and/or violence in your community
Addressing English language acquisition
Increasing parental involvement
Improving academic achievement through {Text supplied by user in Q10}
No primary focus
Don't know

²⁸ Adapted from item 4 in the survey used for the Evaluation of the implementation of the RLIS program (U.S. Department of Education, 2010)

13. For the 2014–15 school year, does your school district target {REAP} funds to improve educational outcomes for any groups of students? (Select one.)²⁹

- Yes
 - No
-

14. For the 2014–15 school year, which of the following groups of students does your school district target with {REAP} funds? (Select all that apply.)

- Low-income students
 - English language learners
 - Students with disabilities
 - Low-performing students
 - Male students
 - Female students
 - Hispanic students
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native students
 - Asian students
 - Black or African-American students
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students
 - White students
 - Students of two or more races
 - None of these
-

15. In the 2014–15 school year, to what extent do you think {REAP} funds are enabling your school district to better meet its goals, alone or in combination with other funds? (Select one.)

- Not at all
 - To a minimal extent
 - To a moderate extent
 - To a great extent
-

²⁹ Adapted from item 20 in the survey used for the Evaluation of flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2007)

16. In the 2014–15 school year, is your school district using {REAP} funds in coordination with any of these other funding sources?

(Select one response per row.)

	Yes	No	Don't know
U.S. Department of Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E-Rate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
U.S. Department of Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other federal funding sources (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. To what extent would you prefer to have a greater number of activities for which {REAP} funds could be used?

(Select one.)

- Not at all
- To a minimal extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a great extent
- Don't know

The following question is about allowing greater flexibility in the use of federal Title program funds other than {REAP} funds. {RLIS only}

18. To what extent would you value the authority to use all or part of specific federal Title program funds to support an array of other federal Title programs?

(More specifically, this hypothetical provision would increase the number of allowable uses of your Title II-A funds, for example, so these funds could be spent on activities previously only allowable under other Title programs. For example, these funds could now be spent on technology programs.)

(Select one.)

{RLIS only}

- Not at all
- To a minimal extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a great extent
- Don't know

19. To what extent has each of the following been a challenge to your school district in using {REAP} funds?

(Select one response per row.)

	Not at all	To a minimal extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Don't know
The amount of {REAP} funds relative to district needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State restriction on how much of my school district's RLIS funds can be drawn down at one time <i>{RLIS only}</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Timeliness of notification about eligibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Turnover in school district leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Timeliness of notification of award amount	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Timeliness of receipt of funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The time and effort it took my district to prepare eligibility information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REAP-Flex

{Ask this entire section ONLY of SRSA grantees}

The next set of questions is about your use of REAP Flexibility.

The Rural Education Achievement Program Flexibility provision (REAP-Flex) provides SRSA-eligible districts the flexibility to use “applicable funding” (i.e., specific federal Title program funds) to support local activities under an array of federal Title programs in order to assist them in addressing local academic needs more effectively. “Applicable funding” includes all funds allocated by formula to an eligible district under four programs.³⁰ Of these four programs, currently only **Title II Part A** is funded.

A school district, or LEA, with REAP-Flex authority may use all or part of its “applicable funding” for local activities authorized under one or more of the following federal Title programs:

- Title I Part A: Improving the Achievement of Disadvantaged Children
- Title II Part D: Educational Technology State Grants
- Title III: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students
- Title IV Part A: Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities
- Title IV Part B: 21st-Century Community Learning Centers
- Title V Part A: State Grants for Innovative Programs

The REAP Flexibility provision does not provide any additional funding. Rather, it allows districts to use Title II-A funds for local activities authorized under the above federal Title programs.

REAP-Flex provides SRSA-eligible districts the flexibility to use applicable funding to support local activities under an array of federal Title programs.³¹

20. Were you aware of the REAP Flexibility provision under SRSA prior to reading the description above? It may also be known as SRSA Flexibility, REAP-Flex, SRSA Flex, REAPing, Flexing, or another name.

Yes

No

³⁰ The four programs are: (1) Subpart 2 of Part A of Title II (Improving Teacher Quality State Grants); (2) Part D of Title II (Educational Technology State Grants); (3) Part A of Title IV (Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities); and (4) Part A of Title V (State Grants for Innovative Programs).

³¹ {This message was repeated at the top of each page in the survey section on REAP-Flex}

21. Did you hear about REAP Flexibility in any of the following ways?

(Select one response per row.)³²

{Ask only if they checked "YES" in Q20}

	Yes	No
U.S. Department of Education website or publication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Direct communication with U.S. Department of Education staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information or technical assistance provided by your state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Educational Laboratory or Comprehensive Center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other technical assistance provider (e.g., educational service district or other regional service center)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Colleague		
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22. To what extent do you feel you understood REAP-Flex prior to reading the description in this survey?

(Select one.)

{Ask only if they checked "YES" in Q20}

- Not at all
- To a minimal extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a great extent

23. Is your school district exercising REAP-Flex authority in the 2014–15 school year?³³

(Select one.)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- I don't know what this means

³² Adapted from item 2 in the survey used for the Evaluation of flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2007)

³³ Adapted from item 10 in the survey used for the Evaluation of flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2007)

24. How useful did you find the following sources for informing your decision about whether or not to use REAP-Flex in the 2014–15 school year? If you did not receive any information from a particular source, please check “No Information” in the final column.³⁴

(Select one response per row.)

	Not at all useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful	No information provided
U.S. Department of Education website or publications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Direct communication with U.S. Department of Education staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information or technical assistance provided by your state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Educational Laboratory or Comprehensive Center				
Other technical assistance provider (e.g., educational service district or other regional service center)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Colleague				
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

³⁴ Adapted from item 4 in the survey used for the Evaluation of flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2007)

25. Did the following considerations factor into your school district’s decision not to use REAP-Flex in the 2014–15 school year? ³⁵

(Select one response per row.)

{Only ask if they said “NO” to Q23}

	Yes	No	Don’t know
We were not aware of the REAP-Flex option.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We did not have enough information about REAP-Flex to make an informed decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My school district used Transferability* instead of REAP-Flex.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The amount of funds in applicable categories would have been too small to effectively carry out desired activities even after exercising the REAP-Flex option.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We thought the accounting requirements associated with REAP-Flex would have been burdensome.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Transferability is separate from REAP-Flex; it allows states and school districts to transfer a portion of the funds that they receive under certain federal programs to other programs. All transferred funds are subject to the requirements of the program to which they are transferred.

26. Has your school district used REAP-Flex authority in the 2014–15 school year in any of the following ways? ³⁶

(Select one response per row.)

{Ask only if they checked “YES” in Q23}

	Yes	No	Don’t know
Increase the amount of federal funds available for high-priority programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiate new activities that would not have been possible without exercising REAP-Flex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain a stable level of effort for ongoing activities that have been affected by budgetary constraints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Target particular student groups or outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

³⁵ Adapted from item 11 in the survey used for the Evaluation of flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2007)

³⁶ Adapted from item 20 in the survey used for the Evaluation of flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2007)

27. In which of these program categories is your school district using its REAP-Flex authority to fund activities in the 2014–15 school year?³⁷

(Select one response per row.)

{Ask only if they checked "YES" in Q23}

	Yes	No	Don't know
Title I Part A: Improving the Achievement of Disadvantaged Children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Title II Part D: Educational Technology State Grants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Title III: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Title IV Part A: Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Title IV Part B: 21st-Century Community Learning Centers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Title V Part A: State Grants for Innovative Programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

³⁷ Adapted from item 14 and 21 in the survey used for the Evaluation of flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2007)

28. Please consider the following changes that might be made to the terms of the REAP-Flex provision. How would each of these possible changes affect your level of interest in [continuing to use][using] this provision next year? ³⁸
 (Select one response per row.)

{load "continuing to use" if they selected "yes" in Q23}

{load "using" if they selected "no" in Q23}

	Much lower level of interest	Somewhat lower level of interest	About the same level of interest	Somewhat higher level of interest	Much higher level of interest
If additional federal programs were funded or prohibited programs made allowable sources for REAP-Flex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If accounting requirements were relaxed or assistance were offered to maintain necessary records	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If there were more information on how to use REAP-Flex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

³⁸ Adapted from item 16 and 26 in the survey used for the Evaluation of flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2007)

Technical Assistance

These questions will ask you about the major challenges your school district faces in administering your {REAP} funds and the types of assistance you have received.

29. For the 2014–15 school year, to what extent have any of the following been a challenge for your school district in administering the REAP funds?
(Select one response per row.)

	Not at all	To a minimal extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent
Finding out if we are eligible for {REAP} funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing eligibility data to the state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out the amount of our award	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out when we would receive our award	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding allowable uses of funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the funds for activities aligned with our goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding how to effectively coordinate {REAP} funds with other funding sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the <u>accounting</u> requirements for the funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the <u>reporting</u> requirements for the funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the REAP-Flex provision <i>{SRSA only}</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

30. To what extent do you feel you need assistance on administering your {REAP} funds?
(Select one.)

- Not at all
- To a minimal extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a great extent

31. For the 2014–15 school year, did you receive any assistance on any of the following?
(Select all that apply in each row.)

{If user selects "I received no assistance on this" in a row, do not allow selection of any other options; otherwise they may select any number per row}

	I received assistance...				I received no assistance on this
	from my state	from the U.S. Department of Education	from a Regional Educational Laboratory or Comprehensive Center	from another technical assistance provider	
Finding out if we are eligible for {REAP} funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing eligibility data to the state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out the amount of our award	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out when we would receive our award	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding allowable uses of funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the funds for activities aligned with our goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding how to effectively coordinate {REAP} funds with other funding sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the <u>accounting</u> requirements for the funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	I received assistance...				I received no assistance on this
	from my state	from the U.S. Department of Education	from a Regional Educational Laboratory or Comprehensive Center	from another technical assistance provider	
Understanding the <u>reporting</u> requirements for the funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the REAP-Flex provision <i>{SRSA only}</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

32. What technical assistance provider has your district relied on for assistance related to planning for or using {REAP} funds for the 2014–15 school year?

(Please type in the name of the provider.)

{Ask only if they indicated on Q31 that they received assistance from another technical assistance provider on any topic}

33. Which Regional Educational Laboratory or Comprehensive Center provided your district with assistance related to planning for or using {REAP} funds for the 2014–15 school year?

(Select all that apply.)

{Ask only if they indicated on Q31 that they received assistance from a REL or Comprehensive Center on any topic}

Content Centers	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Building State Capacity and Productivity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on College and Career Readiness and Success
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Great Teachers and Leaders
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Innovations in Learning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on School Turnaround
<input type="checkbox"/>	Center on Standards and Assessments Implementation
Regional Comprehensive Centers <i>{Only list center that serves state in which district is located}</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appalachia
<input type="checkbox"/>	California
<input type="checkbox"/>	Central
<input type="checkbox"/>	Florida and Islands
<input type="checkbox"/>	Great Lakes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mid-Atlantic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Midwest
<input type="checkbox"/>	North Central

Question 33. (concluded)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Regional Comprehensive Centers <i>{Only list center that serves state in which district is located}</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Northeast
<input type="checkbox"/>	Northwest
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pacific
<input type="checkbox"/>	South Central
<input type="checkbox"/>	Southeast
<input type="checkbox"/>	Texas
<input type="checkbox"/>	West
	Regional Educational Laboratories <i>{Only list REL that serves state in which district is located}</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appalachia
<input type="checkbox"/>	Central
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mid-Atlantic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Midwest
<input type="checkbox"/>	Northeast & islands
<input type="checkbox"/>	Northwest
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pacific
<input type="checkbox"/>	Southeast
<input type="checkbox"/>	Southwest
<input type="checkbox"/>	West

34. For the 2014–15 school year, how helpful did you find the assistance from your state on each of these topics?³⁹

(Select one response per row.)

{Carry forward the topics they checked under "... from my state" on Q31}

	Not at all helpful	Minimally helpful	Moderately helpful	Very helpful
Finding out if we are eligible for {REAP} funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing eligibility data to the state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out the amount of our award	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out when we would receive our award	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding allowable uses of funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the funds for activities aligned with our goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding how to effectively coordinate {REAP} funds with other funding sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the <u>accounting</u> requirements for the funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the <u>reporting</u> requirements for the funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the REAP-Flex provision <i>{SRSA only}</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

³⁹ Adapted from item 15 in the survey used for the Evaluation of the implementation of the RLIS program (U.S. Department of Education, 2010)

35. For the 2014–15 school year, how helpful did you find the assistance from the U.S. Department of Education on each of these topics?

(Select one response per row.)

{Carry forward the topics they checked under "... from the U.S. Department of Education" on Q31}

	Not at all helpful	Minimally helpful	Moderately helpful	Very helpful
Finding out if we are eligible for {REAP} funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing eligibility data to the state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out the amount of our award	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out when we would receive our award	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding allowable uses of funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the funds for activities aligned with our goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding how to effectively coordinate {REAP} funds with other funding sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the <u>accounting</u> requirements for the funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the <u>reporting</u> requirements for the funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the REAP-Flex provision <i>{SRSA only}</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

36. For the 2014–15 school year, how helpful did you find the assistance from any Regional Educational Laboratory or Comprehensive Center you interacted with on each of these topics?

(Select one response per row.)

{Carry forward the topics they checked under "... from a Regional Educational Laboratory or Comprehensive Center" on Q31}

	Not at all helpful	Minimally helpful	Moderately helpful	Very helpful
Finding out if we are eligible for {REAP} funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing eligibility data to the state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out the amount of our award	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out when we would receive our award	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding allowable uses of funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the funds for activities aligned with our goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding how to effectively coordinate {REAP} funds with other funding sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the <u>accounting</u> requirements for the funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the <u>reporting</u> requirements for the funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the REAP-Flex provision <i>{SRSA only}</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

37. For the 2014–15 school year, how helpful did you find the assistance from any other technical assistance provider (such as an educational service district) you interacted with on each of these topics?

(Select one response per row.)

{Carry forward the topics they checked under "... technical service provider" on Q31}

	Not at all helpful	Minimally helpful	Moderately helpful	Very helpful
Finding out if we are eligible for {REAP} funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing eligibility data to the state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out the amount of our award	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding out when we would receive our award	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding allowable uses of funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using the funds for activities aligned with our goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding how to effectively coordinate {REAP} funds with other funding sources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the <u>accounting</u> requirements for the funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the <u>reporting</u> requirements for the funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understanding the REAP-Flex provision <i>{SRSA only}</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

38. Overall, how satisfied are you with the {REAP} program?
(Select one.)

- Not satisfied
 - Minimally satisfied
 - Moderately satisfied
 - Highly satisfied
-

APPENDIX E: District REAP Coordinator Interview Guide

Note: Instructions to interviewer are in italics. These instructions include any questions that need to be tailored to the type of grantee, RLIS or SRSA, and how they should be tailored. Throughout the protocol, interviewers used the actual school district name in lieu of “your school district” as appropriate.

Role with REAP

1. *[Check role in the school district from Survey Q1]* Tell me a little bit about yourself. How long have you been in _____ school district? What are your roles and responsibilities regarding the REAP program?
 - a. How frequently do you work with the school(s) in your school district regarding REAP? What does this work consist of? Are there other school district staff involved in the program? *[If yes:]* What position are they in and what are their responsibilities?
 - b. (If not answered above) How frequently do you communicate with the school(s) in your school district regarding REAP? What does this communication consist of?
 - c. Do you have other job responsibilities beyond the REAP program? *[If yes]* What do they include?
2. How long have you been the coordinator for the REAP program in your school district? Have your roles or responsibilities changed over time? *[If so]* Please describe.

[If respondent has had responsibilities related to REAP for six months or less and ends up not being able to answer many questions then go back and ask if the person who was previously responsible for the REAP program in the school district is available to talk.] Could you please go ahead and answer our questions to the best of your ability? We understand if your knowledge of past decisions or activities is incomplete.

Goals and Priorities

3. Does your school district have particular local goals or priority areas which you are using REAP funds to help support? *[If so]* Please describe them.
4. Do you use any of your REAP funds to support particular state goals or priority areas?

[If yes] Which ones and why these?

- a. How does your state communicate these goals and priorities to you?
- b. Do these goals and priorities align with your own goals in a consistent way? Do you have any priorities that are either differently aligned or, in your opinion, misaligned with those of the state?

REAP Eligibility and Planning

5. Next, we'd like to talk about the eligibility determination process for REAP funds. Do you feel your school district understands how eligibility for REAP is determined? Do you feel your school district understands how the amount of REAP funds it receives is determined?
 - a. The U.S. Department of Education prepares spreadsheets to collect data (e.g., poverty rate) in order to determine eligibility for REAP funds. Does your state provide your school district the opportunity to review the accuracy of data used to determine your annual eligibility for REAP funds?
 - i. *[If yes]* Which of the following data elements does your school district review: *contact information, locale codes of the schools in your district, information used to determine state designation as a rural district, average daily attendance, county population density, percent of children in poverty.*
 - ii. What challenges, if any, have been associated with determining if your school district is eligible for REAP funds?
 - iii. Does your state have a process in place that your school districts finds helpful in determining eligibility? What suggestions do you have for improving this process?
 - b. What challenges, if any, have been associated with determining if your school district is eligible and how much REAP funding you will receive? *[If respondent lists challenges]* What suggestions do you have for improving this process?
6. Now we'd like to talk about how your school district plans for the use of REAP funds. Can you please describe your school district's planning process for the use of these funds?
 - a. *If multiple actors are indicated in Survey Q12, ask:* How do the different people in your school district work together to determine how the funds will be used? How many people are involved? Who makes the final decision about how funds will be used? Do you see these decisions as being driven by consensus?
 - b. *If respondent indicated in Survey Q4 that the school district submitted a needs assessment or consolidated application or plan related to the use of federal funds, ask:* How useful did your school district find the process of preparing any information or documents you submitted to the state or federal REAP office related to the use of federal funds, including REAP funds? Why?

- i. *If respondent had indicated in Survey Q3 such a needs assessment or consolidated application or plan had not been required by the state or federal REAP office, probe as to why the school district chose to go through this process.]*

- c. Did your school district face any challenges in preparing the information or documents you submitted to the state or the federal REAP office related to applying or planning for the use of REAP funds? If so, please describe. *[Probe on any subitems the respondent indicated took “A Great deal” of time and effort in Survey Q6]*
 - i. What, if any, other challenges are associated with planning for the use of REAP Funds? *[Probe on any planning-related challenges noted in Survey Q23 or Q33, particularly around timing of notification of award amount, and award receipt]*

- d. Has your school district received any assistance to help plan how to use REAP funds? *[If yes] From whom? [Probe for each of the technical assistance providers respondent indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers (Regional or Content Centers), and other technical assistance providers.]*
 - i. How useful has your school district found this assistance to be? How did the assistance change the way your school district uses REAP funds?

- e. During the application and planning phases, how many hours would you estimate you (and as applicable, your team) spent in total this year (2014–15) on preparing for REAP funds (this includes such activities as conducting a needs assessment, planning for the use of REAP funds, submitting an application or eligibility-related data)?
 - i. Do you think the REAP funding is worth the effort required? Why or why not?

Use of REAP Funds

[Note to interviewer: Ask Questions 7a – 7g as appropriate based on interviewee’s responses to Survey Q14 regarding the school district’s use(s) of REAP funds.]

- 7a. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on improving academic achievement?
- a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting strategies to improve academic achievement in your school district?

 - b. What other funds are you using to address academic achievement and how are they used in combination with REAP funds?
*[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with **enough detail to know what***

kind of strategy is being described, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]

- c. Have you received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for strategies to improve academic achievement in your school district? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
 - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?
 - ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds for strategies to improve academic achievement? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
 - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
 - iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support strategies to improve academic achievement in your school district?

7b. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on improving teacher retention and recruitment? Is the emphasis more on teacher recruitment or retention? (*“Both” is an acceptable answer.*)

- a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting teacher retention and recruitment strategies in your school district?
- b. What other funds are you using to address teacher retention and recruitment and how are they used in combination with REAP funds?
[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with enough detail to know what kind of strategy is being described, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]
- c. Has your school district received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for teacher retention and recruitment strategies in your school district? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
 - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?
 - ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds for teacher retention and recruitment? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
 - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
 - iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support teacher retention and recruitment strategies in your school district?

7c. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on providing professional development for teachers or administrators?

- a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting professional development strategies for teachers or administrators in your school district?
- b. What other funds are you using to address professional development for teachers or administrators and how are they used in combination with REAP funds?
*[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with **enough detail to know what kind of strategy is being described**, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]*
- c. Has your school district received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for professional development strategies for teachers or administrators in your school district? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
 - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?
 - ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds for professional development for teachers or administrators? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
 - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
 - iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support professional development strategies for teachers or administrators in your school district?

7d. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on improving or expanding access to technology?

- a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting strategies to improve or expand access to technology in your school district?
- b. What other funds are you using to address access to technology and how are they used in combination with REAP funds? *[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with **enough detail to know what kind of strategy is being described**, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]*
- c. Has your school district received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for strategies to improve or expand access to technology in your school district? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
 - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?

- ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds for strategies to improve or expand access to technology? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
- iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
- iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support strategies to improve or expand access to technology in your school district?

7e. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on addressing drug abuse and/or violence in your community? Is the emphasis more on drug abuse or violence? (*“Both” is an acceptable answer.*)

- a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting your school district in its strategies to address drug abuse and/or violence in your community?
- b. What other funds are you using to address drug abuse and/or violence in your community and how are they used in combination with REAP funds? *[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with **enough detail to know what kind of strategy is being described**, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]*
- c. Has your school district received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for strategies to address drug abuse and/or violence in your community? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
 - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?
 - ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds to address drug abuse and/or violence in your community? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
 - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
 - iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support your school district in its strategies to address drug abuse and/or violence in your community?

7f. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on addressing English language acquisition?

- a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting strategies to address English language acquisition in your school district?
- b. What other funds are you using to address English language acquisition and how are they used in combination with REAP funds? *[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with **enough detail to know what kind of strategy is being described**, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]*

- c. Has your school district received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for strategies to address English language acquisition in your school district? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
 - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?
 - ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds to address English language acquisition? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
 - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
 - iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support strategies to address English language acquisition in your school district?

7g. Why did your school district choose to focus REAP funds on increasing parental involvement?

- a. What has been the role of REAP funds in supporting strategies to increase parental involvement in your school district?
- b. What other funds are you using to address parental involvement and how are they used in combination with REAP funds? *[The answer to this question should be limited to the actual use of REAP funds, not a general description of programs and strategies; therefore, probes should not suggest specific strategies, but rather prompt respondents to name their own strategies with **enough detail to know what kind of strategy is being described**, but not elaborate description of how each program/strategy works.]*
- c. Has your school district received technical assistance in support of using REAP funds for strategies to increase parental involvement in your school district? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
 - i. What kind of technical assistance have you received? How helpful has it been?
 - ii. Did the assistance change the way you used REAP funds for strategies to increase parental involvement? *[If so, probe for concrete examples.]*
 - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved?
 - iv. Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in your use of REAP funds to support strategies to increase parental involvement in your school district?

- 8. Has your school district received any assistance to help you meet accounting or reporting requirements concerning your school district's use of REAP funds, or on other aspects of administration? *[If yes]* From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance providers indicated in Survey Q35 through Survey Q38: the U.S. Department of Education, the state, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Centers, and other technical assistance providers.]*
 - a. How useful have you found this assistance to be? *[Probe for concrete examples.]*
 - b. Did the assistance change the way you reported or addressed accounting requirements concerning your school district's use of REAP funds? *[If so, probe for concrete examples]*

REAP-Flex [SRSA districts only]

9. Now we want to talk with you about a provision under SRSA called REAP Flexibility. You may also know it as SRSA Flexibility, REAP-Flex, SRSA Flex, REAPing, or Flexing.
 - a. How familiar are you with the REAP-Flex provision? *[If respondent is not familiar with REAP-Flex, offer a brief description.]* What is REAP-Flex called in your school district? *[Use respondent's preferred terminology going forward.]*
 - b. *If respondent's school district is currently using REAP-Flex ("Yes" to Survey Q27), ask:* How are you using REAP-Flex in your school district? *[Probe for details, including reasons for choice of particular federal Title programs they plan to supplement with Title IIA funds.]*
 - i. Has your school district received technical assistance regarding your use of REAP-Flex in the current school year? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance on whether to exercise REAP-Flex authority and how to use it.]*
 - ii. What kind of technical assistance has your school district received? How helpful has it been? How did it change your school district's use of REAP-Flex? *[Probe for concrete examples.]*
 - iii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved? Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for you in deciding whether to use REAP-Flex or how to use it?
 - c. *If respondent's school district is not currently using REAP-Flex ("No" to Survey Q27), ask:* Did your school district receive technical assistance regarding whether it could use REAP-Flex or how to use it in the current school year? From whom? *[Probe for technical assistance on whether to exercise REAP-Flex authority and how to use it.]*
 - i. What considerations factored into your school district's decision not to use REAP-Flex? *[Probe for any reasons indicated in Survey Q29]*
 - ii. Do you have any suggestions for how the technical assistance could be improved? Do you have any suggestions for other types of technical assistance that would be useful for your school district in deciding whether to use REAP-Flex or how to use it?
 - d. Do you have any suggestions for changes in REAP-Flex that would make it easier to use? That would make your school district more likely to use it?

Recommendations for Change

10. How would you describe your school district's overall satisfaction with the REAP program? How would you describe your school district's overall satisfaction with the administration of the program *[for SRSA grantees: "by the U.S. Dept. of Education REAP office"; for RLIS subgrantees: "by your state"]*?

11. What recommendations do you have to improve the REAP program? *Probe for*
- *eligibility process?*
 - *formula used to allocate funds? [assuming respondent knows at least something about the allocation formulas]*
 - *allowable (for RLIS and SRSA) or authorized (for SRSA using Flex) uses of funds?*
12. What recommendations do you have to improve the administration of the program [*for SRSA, ask about national level administration; for RLIS, ask about state-level administration*]? *Probe for timing of eligibility notification, timing of fund distribution.*

APPENDIX F: Standard Error Tables and Other Supporting Data

This appendix includes full estimates and standard errors for all data based on the district survey quoted in the body of the report. Data based on state coordinator interviews are not included here, because they represent the universe of respondents and therefore do not have standard errors.

Exhibit F-1. Item-level response rates for district REAP coordinator surveys

Item-level response rate	Number of questions on the SRSA coordinator survey	Number of questions on the RLIS coordinator survey
95% or higher	117	56
90–95%	22	16
80–89%	16	7

Note: This table incorporates adjusted response rates due to skip patterns.

Exhibit F-2. Supporting data for district REAP coordinator experience, quoted in Chapter 1. Introduction

	Years of Experience ^a
Mean	6.6
(Standard error)	(0.27)

^a 950 potential district survey respondents.
Source: District Survey, Question 2 ($n = 893$).

Exhibit F-3. Supporting data for Respondent roles, quoted in Chapter 1. Introduction

	SRSA ^a		RLIS ^b	
	Percentage of districts	SE	Percentage of districts	SE
Superintendent	64	2.0	27	2.8
General administrator for all federal programs	14	1.5	40	3.5
Financial officer	27	1.9	10	1.8
School principal	17	1.6	6	1.6
Administrator for individual federal programs	8	1.2	19	2.8
Instructional program coordinator	4	0.8	7	1.8
Teacher	3	0.8	0	0.2
Assistant superintendent	1	0.3	4	1.2
Administrative assistant, clerk, or secretary	1	0.3	0	0.01
Technology director	0	0.2	1	0.7
Other	3	0.7	6	1.7

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents; ^b 316 potential RLIS district survey respondents.

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 in each column because respondents could select all options that applied.
Source: District Survey, Question 1 ($n = 946$).

Exhibit F-4. Supporting data for number of roles, quoted in Chapter 1. Introduction

	Mean	SE
SRSA	1.5	0.05
RLIS	1.2	0.04

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents; ^b 316 potential RLIS district survey respondents.
 Source: District Survey, Question 1 (n = 630 SRSA; 316 RLIS districts).

Exhibit F-5. Supporting data for Exhibit 7. Percentage of SRSA districts that reported their state encouraged, required, or allowed them to verify average daily attendance data before the state submitted data to the Department

	Percentage of SRSA School Districts ^a	SE
Required to verify	32	2.0
Encouraged to verify	3	0.8
Allowed to verify	6	1.1
No opportunity to verify	12	1.4
Don't know	46	2.1

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents.
 Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
 Source: District Survey, Question 3 (n = 633)

Exhibit F-6. Supporting data for notification of eligibility, quoted in Chapter 2. State Role in Eligibility and Award Process for REAP

	SRSA			RLIS		
	Percentage of districts ^a	SE	n	Percentage of districts ^b	SE	n
Was notified by the U.S. Department of Education	72	2.0	594	NA		
Checked the eligibility spreadsheet posted on the Department website	38	2.2	560	21	2.2	268
Was notified by my state	38	2.2	561	87	2.2	301
Checked my state's website	28	2.1	547	52	3.9	269
Other	9	1.5	411	7	2.1	217

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents; ^b 316 potential RLIS respondents
 Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select all options that applied.
 Source: District Survey, Question 4

Exhibit F-7. Supporting data for notification of award amounts, quoted in Chapter 2. State Role in Eligibility and Award Process for REAP

	SRSA			RLIS		
	Percentage of districts ^a	SE	n	Percentage of districts ^b	SE	n
Was notified by the U.S. Department of Education	72	2.0	593	NA		
Checked the U.S. Department of Education's G5 grants management system	49	2.3	563	NA		
Checked the SRSA grant award spreadsheet for my state on the U.S. Department of Education website	36	2.2	565	NA		
Was notified by my state	35	2.2	567	87	2.2	300
Checked my state's website	24	1.9	561	52	3.8	276
Calculated the amount using a funding formula	5	1.0	542	6	1.8	255
Other	4	1.0	630	3	1.3	219

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents; ^b 316 potential RLIS respondents
 Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select all options that applied.
 Source: District Survey, Question 5

Exhibit F-8. Supporting data for assistance on eligibility and awards, quoted in Chapter 2. State Role in Eligibility and Award Process for REAP

	SRSA ^a			RLIS ^b		
	Percentage of districts	SE	n	Percentage of districts	SE	n
Assistance from any source on...						
Finding out eligibility	58	2.1	624	71	3.3	314
Finding out award amounts	61	2.1	624	74	3.1	314

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents that knew the timeline for eligibility and awards in their district; ^b 316 potential RLIS district survey respondents
 Source: District Survey, Question 31.

Exhibit F-9. Supporting data for technical assistance on eligibility and awards for SRSA districts, quoted in Chapter 2. State Role in Eligibility and Award Process for REAP

	Percentage of SRSA Districts ^a (Standard errors are in parentheses)				n
	From my state	From the U.S. Department of Education	From a REL or RCC	From another technical assistance provider	
Finding out if we are eligible for SRSA funds	29 (1.9)	31 (2.0)	2 (0.5)	5 (0.9)	627
Finding out the amount of our award	28 (1.9)	37 (2.1)	2 (0.5)	4 (0.8)	626

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents.
 Note: Percentages sum to more or less than 100 in each row because respondents could select all options that applied.
 Source: District Survey, Question 31.

Exhibit F-10. Supporting data for technical assistance on eligibility and awards for RLIS districts, quoted in Chapter 2. State Role in Eligibility and Award Process for REAP

	Percentage of RLIS Districts ^a (Standard errors are in parentheses)				<i>n</i>
	From my state	From the U.S. Department of Education	From a REL or RCC	From another technical assistance provider	
Finding out if we are eligible for RLIS funds	66 (3.3)	2 (1.1)	1 (0.9)	4 (1.6)	315
Finding out the amount of our award	70 (3.2)	3 (1.4)	1 (0.9)	3 (1.5)	314

^a 316 potential RLIS district survey respondents.

Note: Percentages sum to more or less than 100 in each row because respondents could select all options that applied.

Source: District Survey, Question 31.

Exhibit F-11. Supporting data for challenge in finding out about eligibility and award amounts for SRSA districts, quoted in Chapter 2. State Role in Eligibility and Award Process for REAP

	Percentage of SRSA Districts ^a (Standard errors are in parentheses)				<i>n</i>
	Not at all	To a minimal extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	
Finding out if we are eligible for RLIS funds	59 (2.1)	27 (1.9)	10 (1.3)	4 (0.8)	628
Finding out the amount of our award	53 (2.2)	29 (2.0)	13 (1.4)	5 (1.0)	629

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: District Survey, Question 19.

Exhibit F-12. Supporting data for challenge in finding out about eligibility and award amounts for RLIS districts, quoted in Chapter 2. State Role in Eligibility and Award Process for REAP

	Percentage of RLIS Districts ^a (Standard errors are in parentheses)				<i>n</i>
	Not at all	To a minimal extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	
Finding out if we are eligible for RLIS funds	54 (3.6)	29 (3.3)	10 (1.9)	7 (1.8)	311
Finding out the amount of our award	45 (3.6)	33 (3.4)	14 (2.4)	8 (2.0)	312

^a 316 potential RLIS district survey respondents.
 Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
 Source: District Survey, Question 19.

Exhibit F-13. Supporting data for Exhibit 10. Percentage of SRSA and RLIS districts reporting that they had finished budget planning before they knew their eligibility or award amount for REAP

	SRSA ^a			RLIS ^b		
	Percentage of districts	<i>SE</i>	<i>n</i>	Percentage of districts	<i>SE</i>	<i>n</i>
Finished budget planning before eligibility or award notification	36	2.3	470	27	3.6	249
Finished budget planning after eligibility but before award notification	8	1.3	458	8	2.2	247
Finished budget planning after both eligibility and award notification	3956	2.4	458	65	3.8	247

^a 479 and 540 potential SRSA district survey respondents that knew the timeline for eligibility and awards in their district; ^b 260 and 272 potential RLIS district survey respondents that knew the timeline for eligibility and awards in their district
 Source: District Survey, Question 6.

Exhibit F-14. Supporting data for months between notification and completion of budget planning, quoted in Chapter 2. State Role in Eligibility and Award Process for REAP

Months between completion of budget planning and...	SRSA ^a			RLIS ^b		
	Percentage of districts	<i>SE</i>	<i>n</i>	Percentage of districts	<i>SE</i>	<i>n</i>
Knew eligibility	2.0	0.13	254	1.7	0.18	128
Knew amount of grant	2.1	0.12	287	1.8	0.18	149

^a 479 and 540 potential SRSA district survey respondents that knew the timeline for eligibility and awards in their district; ^b 260 and 272 potential RLIS district survey respondents that knew the timeline for eligibility and awards in their district
 Source: District Survey, Question 6.

Exhibit F-15. Supporting data for proportion of districts conducting a formal needs assessment, quoted in Chapter 3. District Use of REAP Funds

	Percentage of SRSA Districts ^a	SE	Percentage of RLIS Districts ^b	SE
Yes	44	2.1	66	3.0
No	50	2.1	27	2.8
Don't know	7	1.0	7	1.6

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents; ^b 316 potential RLIS survey respondents
 Source: District Survey, Question 7 (n = 634 SRSA; 315 RLIS districts)

Exhibit F-16. Supporting data for Exhibit 11. Percentage of various types of district personnel involved in deciding how to spend SRSA and RLIS funds

	SRSA ^a			RLIS ^b		
	Percentage of Districts	SE	n	Percentage of Districts	SE	n
School board	56	2.1	606	40	3.7	285
Superintendent	93	1.0	628	92	2.0	310
School principal(s)	82	1.7	614	90	2.0	306
Financial officer	77	1.8	611	77	3.1	300
General administrator for all federal programs	57	2.2	589	77	2.8	296
Administrator for individual federal programs	45	2.2	582	57	3.8	281
Administrator assigned specifically to manage REAP	47	2.2	580	49	3.7	279
Leadership team	50	2.2	596	67	3.4	293
Other instructional personnel (for example, teachers or program coordinators)	55	2.2	599	66	3.5	289
Other	11	1.6	462	18	3.2	242

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents; ^b 316 potential RLIS district survey respondents.
 Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select all options that applied.
 Source: District Survey, Question 8.

Exhibit F-17. Supporting data for Exhibit 12. Percentage of SRSA and RLIS districts that reported various uses for their REAP funds, 2014–15

	SRSA ^a			RLIS ^b		
	Percentage of Districts	SE	n	Percentage of Districts	SE	n
Improving or expanding access to technology	71	1.9	617	71	3.2	304
Providing professional development for teachers or administrators	45	2.1	612	58	3.5	298
Improving teacher retention and/or recruitment	25	1.9	612	23	3.1	294
Increasing parental involvement	22	1.8	602	30	3.5	293
Addressing English language acquisition	11	1.4	601	18	3.0	290
Addressing drug abuse and/or violence in your community	8	1.2	600	9	1.9	291
Improving academic achievement through activities other than those listed above.	39	2.1	603	42	3.7	295

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents; ^b XXX potential RLIS district survey respondents

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: District Survey, Question 11.

Exhibit F-18. Supporting data for Percentage of Districts that Combine SRSA or RLIS funds with other funds, quoted in Chapter 3. District Use of REAP Funds

	SRSA			RLIS		
	Percentage of Districts ^a	SE	n	Percentage of Districts ^b	SE	n
Any source	65	2.1	631	66	3.4	314
U.S. Department of Education	51	2.2	622	58	3.5	310
E-Rate	33	2.1	611	23	3.0	395
U.S. Department of Agriculture	6	1.0	590	5	1.5	287
State	3	0.7	631	2	0.9	316
Local	1	0.3	631	1	0.4	314
Nonprofit	0.1	0.1	631	1	0.8	314

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents; 316 potential RLIS district survey respondents.

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select all options that applied. State, Local, and Nonprofit were write-in responses.

Source: District Survey, Question 16.

Exhibit F-19. Supporting data for proportion of districts targeting SRSA or RLIS funds to particular subgroups, quoted in Chapter 3. District Use of REAP Funds

	Percentage of SRSA Districts ^a		Percentage of RLIS Districts ^b	
		SE		SE
Yes	54	2.1	66	3.4
No	46	2.1	34	3.4

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents; 316 potential RLIS survey respondents

Source: District Survey, Question 7 (n = 634 SRSA; 315 RLIS districts)

Exhibit F-20. Supporting data for Exhibit 13. Percentage of SRSA and RLIS districts that reported targeting REAP funds to particular student groups

	SRSA ^a		RLIS ^b	
	Percentage of School Districts	SE	Percentage of School Districts	SE
Low-performing students	87	2.0	86	3.1
Low-income students	70	2.7	78	3.6
Students with disabilities	40	2.8	28	4.1
Male students	34	2.8	26	4.1
Female students	33	2.7	26	4.1
English language learners	29	2.6	33	4.3
Hispanic students	25	2.5	21	3.8
White students	27	2.6	19	3.7
Students of two or more races	24	2.5	18	3.6
Black or African American students	18	2.2	19	3.8
American Indian/Alaska Native students	19	2.3	14	3.2
Asian students	10	1.8	10	2.9
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students	9	1.7	10	2.9

^a 342 potential SRSA district survey respondents; ^b 204 potential RLIS district survey respondents.
 Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select all options that applied.
 Source: District Survey, Question 14 (*n* = 342 SRSA districts; 204 RLIS districts).

Exhibit F-21. Supporting data for proportion reporting that REAP funds enable their school district to better meet its goals, quoted in Chapter 3. District Use of REAP Funds

	SRSA ^a		RLIS ^b	
	Percentage of School Districts	SE	Percentage of School Districts	SE
To a great extent	56	2.1	52	3.6
To a moderate extent	33	2.0	40	3.5
To a minimal extent	10	1.3	8	1.7
Not at all	0	0.0	0	0.0

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents; ^b 316 potential RLIS district survey respondents.
 Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select all options that applied.
 Source: District Survey, Question 15 (*n* = 630 SRSA districts; 315 RLIS districts).

Exhibit F-22. Supporting data for proportion receiving assistance on using funds from any source, quoted in Chapter 3. District Use of REAP Funds

	Percentage of school districts	SE
SRSA	59	2.1
RLIS	77	2.9

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents; ^b 316 potential RLIS district survey respondents.
 Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 in each column because respondents could select all options that applied.
 Source: District Survey, Question 1 (*n* = 625 SRSA; 315 RLIS districts).

Exhibit F-23. Supporting data for Exhibit 14. The source of the assistance for SRSA and RLIS districts receiving technical assistance

	Percentage of SRSA Districts ^a (Standard errors are in parentheses)				<i>n</i>
	From my state	From the U.S. Department of Education	From a REL or RCC ^b	From another technical assistance provider	
Understanding allowable uses of funds	29 (1.9)	25 (1.9)	2 (0.6)	7 (1.0)	629
Using the funds for activities aligned with our goals	23 (1.8)	15 (1.6)	1 (0.5)	6 (0.9)	624
Understanding how to effectively coordinate REAP funds with other funding sources	20 (1.8)	12 (1.4)	2 (0.5)	6 (0.9)	625
Understanding the accounting requirements for the funds	23 (1.8)	17 (1.7)	2 (0.5)	6 (1.0)	626
Understanding the reporting requirements for the funds	22 (1.8)	17 (1.7)	2 (0.5)	6 (1.0)	627

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents.

^b REL = Regional Educational Laboratory; RCC = Regional Comprehensive Center

Note: Percentages sum to more or less than 100 in each row because respondents could select all options that applied.

Source: District Survey, Question 31.

Exhibit F-24. Supporting data for percentage of SRSA grantees who found the assistance they received from their state varying degrees of helpful, quoted in Chapter 3. District Use of REAP Funds

	Percentage of SRSA Districts ^a (Standard errors are in parentheses)				<i>n</i>	Potential Respondents
	To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To a minimal extent	Not at all		
Understanding allowable uses of funds	33 (3.8)	46 (4.2)	20 (3.3)	2 (1.1)	165	167
Using the funds for activities aligned with our goals	26 (4.1)	49 (4.7)	22 (4.0)	3 (1.7)	129	131
Understanding how to effectively coordinate SRSA funds with other funding sources	25 (4.4)	53 (5.0)	19 (4.0)	3 (1.8)	118	118
Understanding the accounting requirements for the funds	33 (4.5)	43 (4.5)	21 (3.9)	3 (1.6)	130	132
Understanding the reporting requirements for the funds	27 (4.2)	50 (4.7)	20 (3.6)	3 (1.6)	132	134

^a Potential respondents were the SRSA grantee districts reporting receiving technical assistance from the Department on each topic, the number shown in the far right column.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: District Survey, Question 35.

Exhibit F-25. Supporting data for percentage of RLIS subgrantees who found the assistance they received from their state varying degrees of helpful, quoted in Chapter 5. Grantee Recommendations for Improving REAP

	Percentage of SRSA Districts ^a (Standard errors are in parentheses)				<i>n</i>	Potential Respondents
	To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To a minimal extent	Not at all		
Understanding allowable uses of funds	48 (4.3)	33 (4.1)	17 (3.2)	2 (1.2)	209	209
Using the funds for activities aligned with our goals	49 (4.7)	36 (4.7)	14 (3.4)	1 (0.8)	162	162
Understanding how to effectively coordinate SRSA funds with other funding sources	50 (5.3)	31 (4.8)	17 (4.1)	1 (1.0)	136	137
Understanding the accounting requirements for the funds	51 (4.8)	34 (4.5)	14 (3.2)	2 (1.3)	168	169
Understanding the reporting requirements for the funds	48 (4.8)	34 (4.6)	16 (3.3)	2 (1.3)	170	170

^a Potential respondents were the SRSA grantee districts reporting receiving technical assistance from the Department on each topic, the number shown in the far right column.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: District Survey, Question 35.

Exhibit F-26. Supporting data for proportion reporting minimal to no challenge in using REAP funds, quoted in Chapter 3. District Use of REAP Funds

	Mean	SE
SRSA	64	2.1
RLIS	70	3.4

^a 624 potential SRSA district survey respondents; ^b 305 potential RLIS district survey respondents.

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 in each column because respondents could select all options that applied.

Source: District Survey, Question 1 (*n* = 625 SRSA; 315 RLIS districts).

Exhibit F-27. Supporting data for Exhibit 15. Percentage of SRSA districts that reported various levels of challenge in using SRSA funds

	Percentage of SRSA Districts ^a (Standard errors are in parentheses)				<i>n</i>
	Not at all	To a minimal extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	
Understanding allowable uses of funds	40 (2.1)	37 (2.1)	18 (1.7)	6 (1.0)	628
Using the funds for activities aligned with our goals	56 (2.2)	30 (2.0)	10 (1.3)	4 (0.8)	625
Understanding how to effectively coordinate SRSA funds with other funding sources	46 (2.2)	33 (2.1)	16 (1.6)	4 (0.9)	629
Understanding the accounting requirements for the funds	45 (2.1)	34 (2.1)	16 (1.6)	5 (0.9)	629
Understanding the reporting requirements for the funds	43 (2.1)	33 (2.0)	18 (1.7)	5 (0.9)	629
Turnover in school district leadership	62 (2.1)	20 (1.7)	10 (1.4)	5 (0.9)	629

^a 634 potential SRSA survey respondents.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because rounding.

Source: District Survey, Question 29 and 19.

Exhibit F-28. Supporting data for Exhibit 16. Percentage of SRSA district coordinators who reported hearing about REAP-Flex from various sources

	Percentage of SRSA districts ^a	<i>SE</i>	<i>n</i>
Information or technical assistance provided by your state	59	2.5	447
U.S. Department of Education website or publication	49	2.7	450
Colleague	40	2.6	449
Other technical assistance provider	24	2.3	446
Professional organization	20	2.2	440
Direct communication with U.S. Department of Education staff	16	2.1	438
Regional Educational Laboratory or Comprehensive Center	3	0.9	437
Other	7	1.5	369

^a Potential respondents were 470 SRSA grantees who reported prior awareness of REAP-Flex in Question 20.

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select all options that applied.

Source: District Survey, Question 21.

Exhibit F-29. Supporting data for Exhibit 17. Usefulness of information sources to coordinators in deciding whether to use REAP-Flex

	Percentage of SRSA districts ^a (Standard errors are in parentheses)				<i>n</i>
	Not at all useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful	No info provided	
U.S. Department of Education website or publication	9 (1.3)	32 (2.1)	16 (1.7)	43 (2.2)	573
Direct communication with U.S. Department of Education staff	10 (1.3)	15 (1.7)	10 (1.4)	65 (2.2)	570
Information or technical assistance provided by your state	4 (0.9)	27 (2.0)	26 (1.9)	43 (2.1)	570
Regional Educational Laboratory or Comprehensive Center	12 (1.5)	9 (1.4)	2 (0.7)	77 (2.0)	567
Other technical assistance provider	10 (1.3)	14 (1.6)	10 (1.3)	66 (2.1)	569
Professional organization	9 (1.3)	16 (1.7)	7 (1.1)	68 (2.1)	569
Colleague	8 (1.2)	18 (1.8)	15 (1.6)	58 (2.2)	570
Other	9 (1.5)	2 (0.7)	2 (0.7)	86 (1.7)	474

^a 587 potential SRSA district survey respondents who *did not* reply "I do not know what this means" to Q23.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: District Survey, Question 24.

Exhibit F-30. Supporting data for percentage of RLIS districts interested in a provision like REAP-Flex, reported in the REAP-Flex section

	Percentage of RLIS districts ^a	<i>SE</i>
To a great extent	60	3.4
To a moderate extent	32	3.4
To a minimal extent	5	1.3
Not at all	1	0.8
Don't know	2	0.8

^a 316 potential RLIS survey respondents.

Source: District Survey, Question 18 (*n* = 316)

Exhibit F-31. Supporting data for Exhibit 18. SRSA district coordinators reporting their district used REAP-Flex in 2014–15

	Percentage of SRSA districts ^a	SE
Yes	46	2.1
No	35	2.0
Don't know	11	1.3
Don't know what this means	8	1.1

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents.
Source: District Survey, Question 23 (n = 633)

Exhibit F-32. Supporting data for Exhibit 19. SRSA district coordinators

	Percentage of SRSA districts exercising REAP-Flex ^a (Standard errors are in parentheses)			n
	Yes	No	Don't Know	
Maintain a stable level of effort for ongoing activities that have been affected by budgetary constraints	82 (2.6)	14 (2.4)	4 (1.3)	285
Target particular student groups or outcomes	52 (3.3)	42 (3.3)	5 (1.6)	284
Increase the amount of federal funds available for high-priority programs	51 (3.4)	46 (3.4)	3 (1.2)	285
Initiate new activities that would not have been possible without exercising REAP-Flex	43 (3.3)	53 (3.4)	5 (1.5)	282

^a Potential respondents were the 290 district survey respondents that reported exercising REAP-Flex.
Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
Source: District Survey, Question 26.

Exhibit F-33. Supporting data for Exhibit 20. ESEA programs for which REAP-Flex districts used their Title II, Part A funds

	Percentage of SRSA districts exercising REAP-Flex ^a (Standard errors are in parentheses)			n
	Yes	No	Don't Know	
Title I, Part A: Improving the Achievement of Disadvantaged Children	67 (3.2)	29 (3.1)	4 (1.3)	285
Title II, Part D: Educational Technology State Grants	38 (3.2)	57 (3.3)	5 (1.5)	286
Title III: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students	8 (1.7)	88 (2.2)	5 (1.5)	280
Title IV, Part A: Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities	11 (2.0)	84 (2.4)	6 (1.6)	282
Title IV, Part B: 21st-Century Community Learning Centers	6 (1.5)	88 (2.1)	5 (1.6)	280
Title V, Part A: State Grants for Innovative Programs	20 (2.6)	75 (2.9)	5 (1.5)	282

^a Potential respondents were the 290 district survey respondents that reported exercising REAP-Flex.
Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.
Source: District Survey, Question 27.

Exhibit F-34. Supporting data for Exhibit 21. Factors contributing to SRSA districts' decisions not to use REAP-Flex

	Percentage of SRSA districts ^a		<i>n</i>
		<i>SE</i>	
We were not aware of the REAP-Flex option.	32	3.9	220
We did not have enough information about REAP-Flex to make an informed decision.	33	3.9	219
My school district used Transferability ^b instead of REAP-Flex.	8	2.4	219
The amount of funds in applicable categories would have been too small to effectively carry out desired activities even after exercising the REAP-Flex option.	34	3.6	221
We thought the accounting requirements associated with REAP-Flex would have been burdensome.	15	2.9	219
Other	4	1.4	166

^a Potential respondents were the 223 SRSA district survey respondents that reported not using REAP-Flex.

^b Transferability is separate from REAP-Flex; it allows states and school districts to transfer a portion of the funds that they receive under certain federal programs to other programs. All transferred funds are subject to the requirements of the program to which they are transferred.

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because respondents could select all options that applied.

Source: District Survey, Question 25.

Exhibit F-35. Supporting data for Exhibit 22. SRSA district coordinators' reports of how changes to REAP-Flex would affect their interest in using the option

	Percentage of SRSA districts NOT using REAP-Flex ^a (Standard errors are in parentheses)					<i>n</i>
	Much lower	Somewhat lower	About the same	Somewhat higher	Much higher	
If additional federal programs were funded or prohibited programs made allowable sources for REAP-Flex	4 (1.6)	5 (1.7)	54 (3.8)	27 (3.4)	11 (2.4)	223
If accounting requirements were relaxed or assistance were offered to maintain necessary records	5 (1.8)	3 (1.3)	44 (3.9)	35 (3.7)	13 (2.6)	223
If there were more information on how to use REAP-Flex	5 (1.6)	3 (1.3)	33 (3.6)	42 (3.8)	17 (2.9)	223
Other	35 (4.8)	4 (2.1)	47 (4.9)	5 (2.3)	8 (2.9)	143

^a Potential respondents were the 223 SRSA district survey respondents that reported not using REAP-Flex.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: District Survey, Question 28.

Exhibit F-36. Supporting data for REAP program satisfaction, quoted in Chapter 5. Grantee Recommendations for Improving REAP

	SRSA ^a		RLIS ^b	
	Percentage	SE	Percentage	SE
Not satisfied	1	0.5	0	0.3
Minimally satisfied	6	1.0	3	1.3
Moderately satisfied	41	2.1	49	3.6
Highly satisfied	52	2.2	47	3.6

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents; ^b 316 potential RLIS district survey respondents.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: District Survey, Question 38 (*n* = 944)

Exhibit F-37. Supporting data for percentage of REAP districts that need assistance to administer their funds, quoted in Chapter 5. Grantee Recommendations for Improving REAP

	Percentage of SRSA districts ^a	SE	Percentage of RLIS districts ^b	SE
Not at all	41	2.1	44	3.6
To a minimal extent	45	2.1	50	3.6
To a moderate extent	11	1.4	5	1.5
To a great extent	3	0.7	2	1.2

^a 634 potential SRSA district survey respondents; ^b 316 potential RLIS district survey respondents

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Source: District Survey, Question 30 (*n* = 633 SRSA; 316 RLIS districts)



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