



Tabletop Session Summary

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Innovative Uses of ARP ESSER Funding

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This tabletop discussion examined emerging ideas in state plans for American Rescue Plan funding and provided additional options for districts to consider for innovation and to accelerate learning recovery.

Session Highlights

- » While there are not American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds specifically designated for innovation, states and districts can decide whether to make it a priority. In other words, ARP funding could fuel innovation if states and districts choose to invest in it.
- » There are several ways to structure funding to spur innovation including having competitive grants, establishing the infrastructure to scale innovation (e.g., create incubators), allowing specific entities to try new approaches on a small scale, tying funding to outcomes, and looking to solutions from industries outside of education (e.g., pay incentives).
- » Once districts establish their priorities, innovation can also emerge in how they achieve them. If a goal, for example, is to make up for missed instructional time, districts could incubate a range of technological and non-technological solutions to help students succeed.
- » Pitfalls that may impede ingenuity include designing programs for the average student or rejecting an idea if it doesn't work for every student. Layering on to existing programs also has the tendency to keep old approaches intact and hinder innovation. Other pitfalls include too little attention to financial sustainability, lack of measurement of outcomes, and lack of per-unit costing.

Shared Resources

- » [Approaches to Supporting Afterschool and Summer in State Plans for Education Relief Spending](#)
- » [ARP ESSER State Plans](#)
- » [New Mexico's ARP ESSER State Plan](#)

Questions and Answers on Innovative Uses of ARP ESSER Funding

Can you share other examples of ways states can encourage districts to use innovation?

States can do a matching competitive grant or get together with other states and create a multi-state challenge. States can also identify significant challenges that districts are having and help them to understand some of the effective strategies to solve or address them.

