

Outdoor Learning

& how the American Relief Plan (ARP) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund can support it in Maine

How can schools use ARP funds for outdoor learning?

- Outdoor learning infrastructure including permanent structures and temporary structures
- Partnering with organizations to implement outdoor learning programming or professional development
- Gear and transportation for outdoor learning
- On and offsite programming with partners

Outdoor Learning Resources

1

Learn about successful outdoor learning partnerships between schools and community organizations at:

<https://nbeconsortium.com/outdoor-learning-stories>

2

Find an outdoor learning partner near you with this searchable map:

<https://teachmeoutside.org>

3

Explore Green Schoolyards of America national resources:

<https://www.greenschoolyards.org/covid-learn-outside>

Examples:



Portland Public Schools used Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) to fund professional development related to outdoor learning and outdoor inclement weather gear for students



Captain Albert Stevens Elementary used CRF funds to partner with UMaine 4-H Camps and Learning Centers at Tanglewood to deliver offsite outdoor learning programming

FAQs

Q: What grades can the funds be used for?

A: Pre-K through 12

Q. The ARP requires that funds support "evidence-based activities." What does this mean?

A: You can use ARP funds to support best outdoor learning and education practices that are supported by research around their outcomes, as well as professional development for these techniques.

Q: Does my school have to apply to receiving funding?

A: Each district will receive funding and allocations are on the DOE website but an application will be needed from the district which the Office of Federal Relief Programs team will review.

Q: My district has already created its 21-22 budget. Is there still a way to use these funds for outdoor learning?

A: Yes, districts can file an amendment for ARP funds allocation at any time. The funding is intended to go through 2024 so you also build outdoor learning into future budgets.



**NATURE BASED
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American Rescue Plan

& how it can support outdoor learning in Maine

What is the American Rescue Plan?

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) is the third round of federal relief funding during the COVID-19 pandemic. The American Relief Plan (ARP) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund is centered around the goal of safely opening the majority of K-8 schools, and may be used to address many impacts of COVID-19 on pre-K through 12 education.

What can ARP funds be used for?

- Training & professional development on minimizing spread of infectious diseases
- Mental health services & supports
- Summer learning activities
- School facility upgrades to reduce virus transmission
- Implementing public health protocols for reopening and operation of school facilities (including outdoor classrooms)
- Other activities necessary to continue school services and continue to employ staff
- Technical and adult education
- Activities to meet specific needs of low-income children, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, foster care youth
- Activities authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006

What to know about ARP funds:

- All districts receive funding
- Maine is receiving \$411 million in ARP funding; Maine school districts will get \$370 million
- Funding can be implemented on a wide range of uses and activities
- 20% of funding must go to address student learning loss
- **Schools can use this funding to pay partners to implement programming**
- Funds can be spent from summer 2021 through 2024

Why does outdoor learning qualify for ARP funding?

Outdoor learning is a public health and safety strategy in response to COVID-19. It can reduce the risk of transmission and reduce density in indoor classroom space.



Outdoor learning at Portland Public Schools increases equity by making nature accessible for all students, while supporting impactful educational experiences.