



Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) Allocations

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE), Academic Achievement Unit is working with Grants Management Enterprise (GME) to load preliminary amounts for the RLIS program. The RLIS program provides rural local education agencies (LEAs) with financial assistance for initiatives aimed at improving student achievement. The grant is non-competitive, and eligibility is determined by statute. ADE has finished preliminary calculations that award information from the United States Department of Education (USED).

LEAs should expect to see values populate their ESEA Consolidate application in the upcoming week. An LEA is eligible to participate in the RLIS program if it meets the statutory criteria of being both low-income and rural¹:

- To be considered low-income, 20 percent or more of the children ages five to 17 served by the LEA must be from families with incomes below the poverty line, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE)
 - Rural non-geographic LEAs for which SAIPE data are not available that are eligible based on the same State-derived equivalent of SAIPE data that the State uses to make allocations under Part A of Title I of the ESEA, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.72, are also eligible for RLIS funds.
 - This poverty data is equivalent to what must be used under Title I, Part A allocations, it is **not** equal to the LEA's internal count of children in poverty over October 1.
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- To be considered rural, all schools comprising the LEA must have a school locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43 (assigned by NCES), or be located in an area of the State defined as rural² by a governmental agency of the State. FY2025 Preliminary Initial Total Allocations – Aggregates the allocations after ADE held harmless LEAs.

¹ ESEA section 5221(b)(1)

² ARS § 15-249.13

ADE provides average daily attendance data to USED for allocation calculations if LEAs are eligible as above. LEAs who are dual-eligible for RLIS and Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and have opted to take SRSA will not have funding amounts loaded for RLIS. Dual-eligible LEAs may receive an award under either SRSA or RLIS in each fiscal year.

LEAs are encouraged to review the [RLIS website](#) for eligibility information, calculations, and resources on the program.

For any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Šárka White (Sarka.White@azed.gov) or Dr. Kaplow (Deb.Kaplow@azed.gov).