



February 12, 2020

Dear RSAI Superintendents:

Please see information below from the U.S. Department of Education regarding changes to the REAP program, including eligibility methods for local educational agencies. Please let us know if you have concerns about this issue and if you do, reach out to your congressional delegation.

From: Carr, Patrick <Patrick.Carr@ed.gov>

Sent: February 10, 2020

Subject: Changes to REAP distribution

Over the last year, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) undertook an extensive review of its processes for awarding Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) funds through the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs. As a result of that review, the Department modified and streamlined the SRSA application process. During the review, the Department also discovered that, in the past, some local educational agencies (LEAs) were erroneously determined to be eligible for RLIS funding on the basis of alternative poverty measures that did not meet the RLIS eligibility requirement in section 5221(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA). Specifically, that provision requires that, in order for an LEA to be eligible to receive RLIS funds, 20 percent or more of the children ages 5 through 17 served by the LEA must be from families with incomes below the poverty line. "Poverty line" is defined in ESEA section 8101(41). The Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) data, which are provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, are the only data that specifically measure, for each LEA, the percent of children ages 5 through 17 from families with incomes below the poverty line.

The ESEA and Title I, Part A regulations authorize a State educational agency (SEA) to combine the Title I, Part A allocations that the Department determined under each of the Title I, Part A formulas for LEAs with fewer than 20,000 total residents ("small" LEAs) and use an alternative method approved by the Department to redetermine each small LEA's eligibility and redistribute funds among those LEAs based on those alternative data. As you know, Maine has approval from the Department to use an alternative method for Title I, Part A allocations to small LEAs [*Iowa also has an alternative distribution system*]. In contrast, Title V, Part B does not include a provision permitting an alternative method; thus the Department and each SEA is required to rely on Census SAIPE data for

each LEA for which such data are available. (An SEA must derive the equivalent of the SAIPE data for LEAs for which Census SAIPE data are not available, such as a charter LEA.)

If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Patrick Carr, Director

Rural, Insular, and Native Achievement Programs

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