

**Virginia Department of Education
Office of Program Administration and Accountability
P. O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218**

**Small Rural School Achievement (SRAS) and Rural and Low-income School (RLIS)
Program Changes under the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* (ESSA)**

The Small Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs are implemented to provide assistance to rural school divisions that frequently receive limited federal funds to effectively meet students' needs. Each program has eligibility criteria, and eligibility is reviewed annually. The SRSA funds flow directly from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to eligible divisions, which submit their applications directly to USED. The RLIS funds flow through the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to eligible divisions, which submit their applications to VDOE through the Online Management of Education Grant Awards (OMEGA) system.

Program Eligibility

The requirements for eligibility for the SRSA and RLIS programs have not changed under ESSA.

- SRSA Eligibility Criteria:
 - Fewer than 600 students for Average Daily Attendance (ADA) count at all schools in the school division, **or**
 - A total population density of fewer than 10 persons per square mile within the school division, **and**
 - All schools served by the school division are designated with an eligible locale code
- RLIS Eligibility Criteria:
 - Twenty percent or more children ages 5-17 served by school division are from families with income below the poverty line, **and**
 - All schools served by the school division are designated with an eligible locale code

Locale Codes

Updated local codes, developed by the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), will be used to determine SRSA and RLIS program eligibility. Eligibility for RLIS was previously based on locale codes 6, 7, and 8 – rural and small town designations). These codes will transition to 41, 42, and 43 – rural fringe, rural distant, and rural remote. Codes 32 and 33 – remote town and distant town – are new, and may result in changes to division eligibility.

Programs	<u>NCLB Locale Codes</u>	<u>ESSA Locale Codes</u>
SRSA	7 or 8	41, 42, and 43
RLIS	6, 7, or 8	41, 42, 43, 32, and 33

Waivers

Under ESSA, the U.S. Secretary of Education can, on a case-by-case basis, waive the locale code criteria based on a demonstration by the division, and concurrence by the state, that the division is located in an area defined as rural by a government agency of the state and has met the other criteria requirements.

Allocation and Distribution of Funds

If a division is eligible for both SRSA and RLIS funds, it must select one of the two programs, and must notify the U.S. Secretary of Education and the state of its choice. In previous years, divisions that were eligible for the SRSA program did not have the option to participate in the RLIS program instead of the SRSA program.

States may distribute RLIS funds based on a competitive application process; the number of students served by the division; or another formula approved by the U.S. Secretary of Education. Virginia will continue to distribute RLIS funds based on the number of students served by each eligible division.

Use of Funds

Funds can be used to support the programs below:

- Title I, Part A, Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs
- Title II, Part A, Supporting Effective Instruction
- Title III, English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
- Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment
- Title IV, Part B, 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Parental engagement activities