



Fact Sheet: **IDEA and Federal Funding**

Overview

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), administered by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in the U.S. Department of Education, is a federal law that guarantees the right to a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for all infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. IDEA also provides federal financial assistance to States through formula and discretionary grants.

Fully Funding IDEA - A promise that must be fulfilled

When IDEA became law in 1975, Congress vowed to fund up to 40% of the average per-pupil expenditure for the number of children with disabilities receiving special education services. Yet, Congressional appropriations for funding under IDEA are currently at 10%—a quarter of the 40% target.

Formula Grants

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, OSEP administered over \$15.1 billion in formula grants to assist states with implementing IDEA. To receive funds, states must provide a FAPE to all children with disabilities, ages birth through 2 under Part C and ages 3 through 21 under Part B.

At the state level, IDEA funding supports initiatives such as:

- Ensuring compliance with the law and supporting resolutions through mediation
- Technical assistance, staff development, and professional training
- Easing the paperwork burden on educators
- Providing support for positive behavior and mental health
- Enhancing learning through technology
- Helping students with disabilities move from school to adult life (transition)
- Growing the supply of special educators to address major shortages
- Providing direct early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities

At the local Level, IDEA funding supports:

- Special education teachers and related services personnel salaries
- Providing early intervention, special education, and related services, and supplementary aids and services
- Technology for teachers and related service providers' case management activities
- Accessible instructional materials

Discretionary Grants

In FY 2023, OSEP administered \$263,560,000 in competitive discretionary grants to support:

- Improving states' staff preparation and professional development systems
- Preparing adequate numbers of fully qualified special education staff
- Research on effective special education practices
- Developing accessible technology and educational media and materials
- Training, information, and resource centers to support families in navigating the special education system

What IDEA Funding Supports