

Rural Low Income School Program Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Rural Low Income School Program (RLIS)?

A: The RLIS Program provides flexibility and resources to help rural schools and districts use federal grant resources more effectively. The RLIS program provides funds to rural Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that serve concentrations of children from low-income families. The United States Department of Education authorizes formula grant awards to states, which in turn make subgrants to eligible local education agencies (LEAs).

2. May an LEA use its RLIS funds to support schoolwide programs?

A: Yes, if the participating school has met the 40% low income requirement to qualify for implementing Title I, Part A schoolwide programs.

3. Why do some districts receive RLIS funding for a few years and then not for another year?

A: The eligibility of the LEA each year depends on the census count which is determined by information reported to the United States Census Bureau.

4. How does an LEA qualify for the RLIS grant?

A: An LEA is eligible for RLIS if 20% or more of children ages 5 to 17 years served by the LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line, and all schools served by the LEA have a school locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43 assigned as being rural by the Secretary of Education. These codes specify the number of people living in a particular area and the distance from a metropolitan area.

5. How is state funding for the RLIS grant determined?

A: The amount of funding a state receives is based on its proportionate share of children in average daily attendance (ADA) in all school districts eligible to participate.

6. What are locale codes?

A: A locale classification is a general geographic indicator that describes the type of area where a school is located. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) classifies all territory in the U.S. into four types – Rural, Town, Suburban, and City, and each type is divided into three subtypes based on population size or proximity to populated areas. The classifications rely on standard urban and rural designations defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Each classification has a corresponding two-digit locale code. All schools within districts receiving the RLIS grant must have locale codes of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43. Additional information on locale classifications is available on the NCES [Education Demographics and Geographic Estimates](#) webpage.