

FY18 Federal Budget: Title III Language Acquisition and Latinos

English Language Acquisition State Grants are formula grants given to states to help them better serve English Learners (EL). These students benefit from additional educational supports to learn English and are better prepared to succeed in the American economy. However, proposed federal funding levels for FY18 undermine the ability of all ELs to receive quality English language instruction.

What are English Language Acquisition Grants?

English Language Acquisition Grants are authorized by Title III, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, the latest reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Under that law, 92% of the program funds are used to make formula grants to states based on each state's share of the nation's ELs and recent immigrant student populations. The funds must be used to provide effective language instruction education to improve the education of ELs and immigrant students, so they can acquire English language proficiency while meeting challenging college and career-ready standards. Funding for these grants flows directly from the federal government to states, through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Who Benefits?

In 2014-2015, there were 4.6 million EL students in public schools, an increase from the previous year, and 77.1% spoke Spanish at home.¹ Nationally, Latinos make up 77.8% of ELs.²

What About the Federal Budget?

Federal funding for English language acquisition instruction has not kept pace with growing populations of EL students. Over the past three decades the number of ELs has increased from less than one million in 1980 to more than 4.6 million in 2014. From 2009 to 2014, the population increased 4.5%.³ However, the amount of federal funding for English Language Acquisition grants has only increased 1% from 2009 to 2016.⁴

President Trump's FY18 budget request funds English Language Acquisition State Grants at \$736 million, a slight decrease from the \$737.4 million from FY17 and insufficient to adequately account for the growth of the EL population in the United States.⁵ The recent growth of EL and

immigrant populations underscore an ongoing need for robust federal investment to ensure that ELs have access to a high-quality education. The House Appropriations Committee proposed level funding for FY18.⁶ However, this remains inadequate. Congress should significantly increase Title III funds—to at least the \$800 million requested by the Department of Education for FY17—to provide states with the resources they need to help EL students graduate college- and career-ready.

¹ National Center for Education Statistics, “English Language Learners in Public Schools,” *U.S. Department of Education*, March 2017, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgf.asp (accessed June 2017).

² Ibid.

³ UnidosUS calculation using National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2016), Table 204.20, https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_204.20.asp (accessed June 2017).

⁴ UnidosUS calculation using U.S. Department of Education, *Department of Education, English Language Acquisition, Fiscal Year 2017 Budget Request*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2016), <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget17/justifications/g-ela.pdf> (accessed June 2017).

⁵ Government Publishing Office, *Department of Education*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 2017), <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BUDGET-2018-APP/pdf/BUDGET-2018-APP-1-9.pdf> (accessed June 2017).

⁶ House Committee on Appropriations, *Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2018*, 115th Cong., 1st sess., 2017, Committee Print, <https://appropriations.house.gov/uploadedfiles/23920.pdf>