



ESSER FUNDING | TIPS

With Challenge Day

May 2021



About us

Serving over 44 U.S. states, Canada, Belgium, and the Netherlands, Challenge Day is on a mission to create a world where every person in our communities feels safe, loved and celebrated.



Challenge Day is a nonprofit organization committed to building empathy and compassion in our communities. We help youth and adults unlearn harmful habits, experience vulnerability as a pillar to restore strength, and enable them to experience the freedom of full expression through the lens of compassion, connection, and diversity. In the past 5 years we have supported 300,000 students and 60,000 adults directly.



Challenge Day



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**BUILDING
EMPATHY AND
COMPASSION
IN OUR
COMMUNITIES**

Watch on  YouTube

Why Use ESSER Funds for SEL?

Many fear that “learning loss” will be the biggest negative impact of the pandemic on students. Before we can effectively address academics, however, it’s essential to consider the mental health and social and emotional needs of students. When students feel unsafe and disconnected, learning is almost impossible. Further, for students of color, low-income and Special Education students COVID-19 has exacerbated the inequities and they are in a critical need for connection and support. As schools re-shift their focus towards reopening, it’s critical to create a safe, supportive environment that meets student needs so they are ready to cooperate, learn and achieve.

The National Education Association (NEA) says that **SEL should be a priority** as schools address the effects of COVID-19. Social and emotional learning encourages resiliency and provides tools to manage emotions, demonstrate empathy, establish positive relationships, resolve conflicts, achieve goals and make responsible decisions. These abilities are always essential in life and in the classroom. Yet they’ve become even more important—and more difficult to access—in the wake of the global pandemic.

Effective SEL programs create equitable environments and level the playing field by providing all students with the safety, connection and support they need to thrive academically and socially. Our programs help schools pivot from trauma by providing a safe space at schools where students and adults can embark on a heartfelt journey, led by caring facilitators, to emotional and mental healing and resiliency. Our programs help reduce behavioral problems, including youth violence, and increase student achievement by creating more compassionate interpersonal relationships among students, teachers, and faculty. It fosters inter-connectedness to build community, respect and acceptance.

Importance of Adult-First SEL

This past year, we have learned that educators are experiencing more stress than ever. Of equal importance, SEL significantly benefits the mental and emotional health of school faculty and staff. Educators learn to manage their own anxiety and trauma, and they build strong, supportive relationships with one another.

Challenge Day’s programs for educators provide a space focusing on self-care techniques, maintaining a growth mindset, responsibly managing emotions, practicing the tool of mindfulness, and building on a community of caring educators to strengthen connection and resiliency.

Investing in SEL is a wise use of ESSER funds because SEL:

- Creates safe, connected school environments that promote learning and problem solving
- Teaches students and adults to manage their emotions and resolve conflicts
- Helps both students and adults heal from trauma
- Increases equity and levels the playing field
- Addresses the mental, social and emotional health of students and adults
- Unites the school and community, making it easier to work toward common goals

Using ESSER funds for SEL doesn’t neglect to address learning losses; it makes it possible to accelerate learning and close gaps left from COVID-19. As schools look to return and rebuild following the pandemic, SEL programs like Challenge Day provide a solid foundation for safety, connection, resilience and achievement.

How Challenge Day can address social and emotional needs of students.

In the past year, there have been numerous and drastic changes to school structures and their communities. Young people are reporting increased anxiety, depression, separation and loneliness. Our programs are designed to provide a supportive environment for people to come together, remember they're not alone, and leave feeling empowered, remembering their strength and resilience.

Some of the tools you will walk away with are: **practicing mindfulness, taking action, active listening, the power of vulnerability, learning to responsibly manage emotions, developing self-confidence, offering compliments and sharing gratitude, speaking out and using their voice.**

Read our [COVID-19 Response and Re-Opening plan](#). For more questions email us at office@challengeday.org

*Programs are offered for middle school and high school communities



“What [Challenge Day] can do in 6 hours takes us all year to do.” - Adriana Toles, 1st year counselor at Cesar Chavez High School

Virtual



Hybrid



In person



If you have ESSER funding and want to prioritize the social-emotional well-being of parents, students, and teachers, partner with Challenge Day to build a more positive school climate. Visit our website for options best suited for you.

Our Programs



85% of students agreed that learning can be hard when they feel stressed, worried or scared.



71% of students said they would like to learn more about how to notice, manage, and safely express their feelings.



71% of students agreed that they will use what they learned in Challenge Day in their daily lives.

CHALLENGE DAY

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