Funding Opportunity

Applications Due: Wednesday, September 7, 2016, by 11:59 pm
Application Information Webinar: Monday, August 8, 2016, 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm
Letter of Intent Due: Monday, August 22, 2016, by 11:59 pm

READY SCHOOLS GRANT PROGRAM

Pursuant to: RACE TO THE TOP – EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE FUND
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), Sections 14005, 14006, and 14013, Title XIV, (Public Law 112-10)

For program questions contact:
Emily Kielmeyer (kielmeyer_e@cde.state.co.us | 720-822-0640)

For fiscal/budget questions contact:
Marti Rodriguez (rodriguez_m@cde.state.co.us | 303-866-6769)

For RFP-specific questions contact:
Kim Burnham (burnham_k@cde.state.co.us | 303-866-6916)

Required
(To Obtain Benefit)
FORM # CGA-220
EDAC APPROVED
Approved 7/29/2016 for 2016-2017
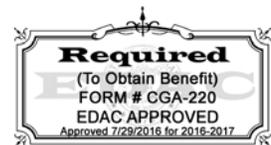
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Introduction

The Ready Schools Grant, funded through the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund (RTTT), is designed to support school districts and/or schools across the state who would like to serve as regional leaders for the school readiness work, beyond the funding support of RTTT (SY 2017-18). The focus of funding for this grant is to enhance and improve kindergarten programming, though other grade levels within the P-3 continuum may benefit from attending relevant, early childhood professional development activities.

The State Board of Education defines School Readiness as, "both the preparedness of a child to engage in and benefit from learning experiences, *and the ability of a school to meet the needs of all students enrolled in publicly funded preschool or kindergarten*. School readiness is enhanced when schools, families, and community service providers work collaboratively to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning in academic content."

Purpose

The purpose of this request for proposals (RFP) is to solicit applications for funding from districts, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), district charter schools, or Institute Charter schools to continue development of their approach to school readiness. Districts and/or individual schools can request funds to: (1) enhance and improve kindergarten teacher knowledge of child development and research in early brain development; (2) increase the use of best practices in early childhood pedagogy and observation-based formative assessment practices; (3) improve classroom environments designed to support the whole child and independent student choice during the instructional day; and (4) align and implement systems and practices from preschool through third grade by the inclusion of teachers from 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade in grant activities.

As part of this grant, selected districts and schools will have the opportunity to work with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and receive ongoing technical assistance and support.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include:
- School districts (on behalf of a school or schools);
- Boards of Cooperative Services (on behalf of a school or schools); and
- Charter Schools or Institute Charter Schools*.

*Please note: Individual charter school applicants must obtain signatures from their authorizing district or the Charter School Institute (CSI). If awarded a grant, the charter school's authorizer or CSI will be the fiscal agent.

Available Funds

Approximately $350,000 is available for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Awards are expected to range from $4,000 - $25,000 per grantee based on district needs and activities. CDE anticipates awarding 20-30 *Ready Schools* grants. Funds will be awarded by CDE no later than October 3, 2016. Grant awardees will be responsible for spending awarded funds in accordance with the approved budget and timeline within the grant application.

Note: The amount requested must be justified in the budget narrative.

Allowable Use of Funds

Funding from this opportunity **may be** used for:

- Professional development in instructional best practices and/or to enhance kindergarten programming as identified by the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) http://www.naeyc.org/ and/or the Colorado Department of Education's School Readiness website http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness.
- Assessment training for improved implementation of State Board approved school readiness assessments and /or training in observation-based, formative assessment practices.
- Stipends for substitute teacher time.
- Travel and other costs related to participation in CDE sponsored professional development.
- Curriculum enhancements that support the developmental areas outlined in legislation (e.g., physical/motor, cognitive, language, and social-emotional domains).
- Literacy and/or math focused training and materials that will enrich and enhance the instruction of evidence based practices in early literacy and math.
- Training and support to enhance collaboration with families.
- Materials for developing high quality kindergarten classroom environments specific to establishing child choice centers for independent exploration and play.
- Other relevant district requests that focus on improved kindergarten programming and/or P-3 alignment work within the district.

Some examples of district activities that align with the intent of grant funding are outlined below, though districts are encouraged to identify activities that best meet their specific needs:

Activity	Example
Professional development to support early childhood teacher knowledge of child development and brain research with a focus on implementing developmentally appropriate practices in kindergarten	Early childhood conferences; district hosted professional development to support developmentally appropriate practices in kindergarten
Teacher stipends to participate in professional development activities specific to this grant	Stipends to support attendance in professional development activities that occur beyond regular school day as outlined in teacher contract agreements
Travel to professional development activities, according to district travel reimbursement policy	Must be related to professional development activities identified within the *Ready Schools* grant proposal
Substitute teachers	Teacher release to attend professional development and CDE meetings
Teacher professional resources specific to early childhood (P-3) professionals	Book study, early childhood-related professional journals, membership in early childhood professional organizations
Classroom materials to support developmentally appropriate practice and instruction to address the developmental domain areas identified in legislation (cognitive, social-emotional, physical/motor, language) and support independent exploration and play	Enhancements to the classroom environment to support learning centers (e.g., art materials, classroom furniture, house area materials, block area, sensory table, etc., and literature/trade books to support these areas)
Development of district knowledge and capacity to lead ongoing teacher training in approved school readiness assessments and observation-based formative assessment practices	Teaching Strategies Accredited Program of Trainers training (i.e, Trainer of Trainer)
Collaboration with families	Training for teachers and families on the use of parent/family features in approved assessment systems, development of family friendly materials
Convene regional work with colleagues and school district partners	Regional principals meetings or professional development activities, regional workshops for teachers

The following activities **will not** be funded:

- Funding of staff;
- Technological equipment (e.g., computers, laptops, LCDs) unrelated to professional development or assessments for kindergarten readiness;
- Capital needs (including bookshelves or other furniture not directly related to kindergarten classrooms);
- Out-of-state travel that is not directly related to kindergarten school readiness; and

- Curriculum and materials that are not directly related to improvement of kindergarten programming.

Funds from this opportunity must be used to **supplement and not supplant** any federal, state and local monies currently in place. Funds must be expended by June 30, 2017. There will be no carryover of funds. Unobligated funds at the end of the fiscal year will be returned to CDE.

Application Timeline

August 8, 2016	Application Training Webinar
August 22, 2016	Applicants interested in applying must submit a letter of intent
September 7, 2016	Applications due to CDE
September 8, 2016 – September 20, 2016	Review of Applications
September 21, 2016	Applicants will be notified of final award status
September 21, 2016 – September 30, 2016	LEAs receiving grants will work with CDE to finalize grant activities, budget and an implementation timeline.

Duration of Grant

Funds are available for one fiscal year (October 3, 2016 - June 30, 2017). Distribution of funds is contingent upon meeting all timelines provided in the assurances, including data collection requirements.

Evaluation and Reporting

Each local education provider that receives a grant through the *Ready Schools Grant Program* are required to report, at a minimum, the following information to CDE on or before June 30, 2017:
- A data report (see Attachment A) including:
  - The number of schools and principals that participated in the program.
  - How the LEP evaluated the effectiveness of trainings staff participated in and how results of this evaluation was/will be provided.
  - Successes in implementing kindergarten readiness programming and how the LEA will continue to build on these successes.

- An evaluation report (see Attachment A) at the end of the grant that includes:
  - The number of schools, teachers, principals, students, and families (as appropriate) that participated in the funded activities.
  - A description of how the LEP evaluated the effectiveness of trainings staff participated in and how results of this evaluation was/will be provided.
  - Impact of selected strategies (i.e., changes in practice and/or policy, aggregate school readiness child outcome information, CLASS observation scores, documented feedback from families, P-3 plans).
  - A description of how the LEP will continue to build on these successes.

- Summary analysis of the quantitative and qualitative school readiness data for the SY 2016-17.

- An annual financial report.

Data Privacy

CDE takes seriously its obligation to protect the privacy of student personally identifiable information (PII) collected, used, shared, and stored. PII will not be collected through the Ready Schools Grant Program. All program evaluation data will be collected in the aggregate and will be used, shared, and stored in compliance with CDE's privacy and security policies and procedures. The policies and procedures can be found at: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/cdeinformationsecurityandprivacypolicy.

Review Process and Timeline

Applications will be reviewed by CDE staff to ensure they contain all required components. This funding opportunity is a competitive process – applicants must score at least **85 points** out of the 100 possible points to be approved for funding. Applications that score below 85 points *may* be asked to submit revisions that would bring the application up to a fundable level. There is no guarantee that submitting an application will result in funding or funding at the requested level. All award decisions are final. Applicants that do not meet the qualifications will be notified and may reapply for future funding opportunities.

Applicants will be notified of final award status no later than September 21, 2016.

Technical Assistance

An application training webinar will be held on **Monday, August 8, 2016, 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.** Register for this technical assistance via Eventbrite at **https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/applicationwebinar**.

If interested in applying for this funding opportunity, please submit the Letter of Intent by **Monday, August 22, 2016, by 11:59 pm,** via Survey Monkey at: **https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/readyschools2016**. See **Attachment B**.

Submission Process and Deadline

One electronic copy of the application and electronic budget must be submitted to: CompetitiveGrants@cde.state.co.us by **Wednesday, September 7, 2016 at 11:59 p.m.** The electronic version should include all required elements of the application as one document. Please attach the electronic budget workbook as a separate document to the email. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered. If you do not receive an email confirmation of receipt of your application within 24 hours of the deadline, please email CompetitiveGrants@cde.state.co.us**.**

Application materials and budget are available for download on the CDE website at: **http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolreadiness**.

> Submit the electronic copy of the application and electronic budget to:
> **CompetitiveGrants@cde.state.co.us**
> By: **Wednesday, September 7, 2016, by 11:59 pm**

Application Format

- **The total narrative (Sections A –D) of the application cannot <u>exceed</u> 10 pages**. Please see below for the required elements of the application. **Note:** Applications that exceed 10 pages will not be reviewed.
- All pages must be standard letter size, 8-1/2" x 11" using 12-point font and single-spaced with 1-inch margins and numbered pages.
- The signature page must include original signatures of the lead organization/fiscal agent.
- The submission of duplicate applications that are identical, except for names and descriptions of the eligible site, will not be accepted. Responses from applicants in the same district or working with the same collaborators may contain some common information, but the substantive elements of the application narrative must be unique to the eligible site(s).

Required Elements

The format outlined below <u>must be followed</u> in order to assure consistent application of the evaluation criteria. **See evaluation rubric for specific selection criteria needed in Part II (pages 12-15).**

> **Part I: Application Introduction (not scored, does not count toward page limit)**
> Cover Page
> Assurances Form
> Executive Summary
>
> **Part II: Narrative (cannot exceed 10 pages)**
> Section A: Needs Assessment
> Section B: Program Description
> Section C: Evaluation and Reporting
> Section D: Budget Narrative & Electronic Budget *(Electronic Budget does not count toward page limit)*

Ready Schools Grant Program
2016 – 2017

PART I: Cover Page (Complete and attach as the first page of proposal)		
Name of Applicant:		
Mailing Address:		
District Code:	DUNS #:	
Authorized Representative:		
Telephone:	E-mail:	
Program Contact Person:		
Telephone:	E-mail:	
Fiscal Manager:		
Mailing Address:		
Telephone:	E-mail:	
Type of Local Education Provider: *Check one box below that best describes your organization.*		
☐ School District ☐ BOCES ☐ Charter School Institute		
Region: *Indicate the region(s) this proposal will directly impact*		
☐ **Metro** ☐ **Pikes Peak** ☐ **North Central** ☐ **Northwest** ☐ **West Central** ☐ **Southwest** ☐ **Southeast** ☐ **Northeast**		
Recipient School(s): *Indicate the intended recipient schools (additional rows may be added).*		
Grant Information		
Amount Requested: *Indicate the total amount of funding you are requesting for this grant.*		
Year 1 (2016-2017): $		

Please note: If grant is approved, funding will not be awarded until all signatures are in place. Please attempt to obtain all signatures before submitting the application.

Part IA: Signature Page
(Complete and attach after cover page. If necessary, additional copies of this page may be attached.)

School Information and Signatures

School Name: _____

Principal Name: _____

Principal Signature: _____

Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____   Email: _____

Contact Signature: _____

Part IB: Assurances *(Complete and attach after signature page.)*

Ready Schools Grant
2016-2017

The School Board President and Board- Appointed Authorized Representative must sign below to indicate their approval of the contents of the application, and the receipt of program funds.

 On _____ (date) , _____ 2016,   the Board of _____ (district, BOCES, charter, or facility school) _____ hereby agrees to the following assurances:

1. The grantee will annually provide the Colorado Department of Education the evaluation information required on page 5 and in the Annual Performance Report (Attachment A) of the Request for Proposal.

2. The grantee will work with and provide requested data to CDE for the Ready Schools Grant Program within the time frames specified.

3. In addition to the local education provider's proposed plan for training and resources, the grantee will budget for a team to attend grant trainings during the term of the grant.

4. The grantee will not discriminate against anyone regarding race, gender, national origin, color, disability, or age.

5. Funds will be used to supplement and not supplant services currently in place.

6. Funds will be used to supplement and not supplant any moneys currently being used for student re-engagement services and grant dollars will be administered by the appropriate fiscal agent.

7. That funded projects will maintain appropriate fiscal and program records and that fiscal audits of this program will be conducted by the grantees as a part of their regular audits.

8. That if any findings of misuse of these funds are discovered, project funds will be returned to CDE.

9. Grantee will maintain sole responsibility for the project even though contractors may be used to perform certain services.

The Colorado Department of Education may terminate a grant award upon thirty (30) days' notice if it is deemed by CDE that the applicant is not fulfilling the requirements of the funded program as specified in the approved project application, or if the program is generating less than satisfactory results.

Project modifications and changes in the approved budget must be requested in writing and be approved in writing by the Colorado Department of Education before modifications are made to the expenditures. Please contact Marti Rodriguez (rodriguez_m@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6769) of CDE's Grants Fiscal Management for any modifications.

Name of School Board President/BOCES President/Charter School Board President *(If Applicable)*	Signature of School Board President/BOCES President/Charter School Board President *(If Applicable)*
Name of District Superintendent* *(If Applicable)*	Signature of District Superintendent *(If Applicable)*
Name of Charter School Institute Authorized Representative* *(If Applicable)*	Signature of Charter School Institute Authorized Representative *(If Applicable)*

*Please note: Individual charter school applicants must obtain signatures from their authorizing district or the Charter School Institute.

Selection Criteria and Evaluation Rubric

Application Scoring *(CDE Use Only)*

Part I:	**Application Introduction**		No Points
Part II:	**Narrative**		
	Section A:	Needs Assessment	/30
	Section B:	Program Description	/35
	Section C:	Evaluation & Reporting	/20
	Section D:	Budget Narrative and Electronic Budget Form	/15
		Total:	**/100**

GENERAL COMMENTS: Please indicate support for scoring by including overall strengths and weaknesses. These comments are used on feedback forms to applicants.

Strengths:
-
-

Weaknesses:
-
-

Required Changes:
-
-

RECOMMENDATION: Funded _____   Funded with Changes _____   Not Funded _____

Selection Criteria & Evaluation Rubric

Part I: Application Introduction (No Points)

Cover Pages and Assurances

Complete the attached cover page and assurances page and attach as the first pages of the application.

Executive Summary

Provide a brief description (no more than one page) of the proposed Ready Schools program. This summary does not count toward the 10-page narrative page limit.

Part II: Narrative (100 Points)

The following criteria will be used by reviewers to evaluate the application as a whole. In order for the application to be recommended for funding, it must receive at least 85 points out of the 100 possible points and all required elements must be addressed. An application that receives a score of 0 on any required elements will not be funded.

Section A: Needs Assessment	Inadequate (information not provided)	Minimal (requires additional clarification)	Adequate (mostly clear and complete)	Excellent (concise and thoroughly developed)
1) Describe your need for the proposed program, based on an analysis of school readiness and kindergarten data. Address: • Community and school demographics (e.g., SES, FRL, percentage of children on IEPs, ethnicity, graduation rates, rural/urban, etc.); • Access to early childhood services; and • P-3 school readiness and related data.	0	5	10	15
2) Briefly identify current services in kindergarten. Describe any gaps in services and reasons for those gaps in any of the areas that the proposal will address: • Skills and knowledge of early childhood and early elementary child growth, and development; • Staffing and class size of kindergarten programs; and • Evaluation of current classroom practices such as results of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) or other district classroom observation or walkthrough tool.	0	5	10	15
Reviewer Comments:				
TOTAL POINTS				**/30**

Section B: Program Description	Inadequate (information not provided)	Minimal (requires additional clarification)	Adequate (clear and complete)	Excellent (concise and thoroughly developed)
1) Provide a specific and well-conceived description of the plan for use of the grant moneys to implement quality kindergarten school readiness programming, including: • Professional development (and related expenses); • Assessment training and practices (State Board approved school readiness assessments); • Stipends for substitute teacher time; • Travel and other costs related to participation in CDE sponsored professional development; • Curriculum enhancements that support the developmental areas outlined in legislation (e.g. physical/motor, cognitive, language, social-emotional); • Materials for developing high quality kindergarten classroom environments; • Literacy and/or math focused training and materials to enrich and enhance the instruction of evidence based practices in early literacy and math; and • Training and support to enhance collaboration with families.	0	15	20	25
2) Provide a timeline for implementation based on the plan above. The timeline should: • Identify **major grant activities**, **interim benchmarks**, **timeline**, and the **person(s) responsible**. • Run from October 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. • Be aligned with the allowable activities listed on page 4.	0	3	5	10

For example:

Activity	Implementation Benchmarks	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible

Reviewer Comments:

	TOTAL POINTS	**/35**

Section C: Evaluation & Reporting	Inadequate (information not provided)	Minimal (requires additional clarification)	Adequate (clear and complete)	Excellent (concise and thoroughly developed)
1) Describe the process the LEP will use to track grant activities, which may include classroom observation results, change in applied teacher professional practices, quantitative and qualitative data about teacher use of school readiness assessments to inform practice, professional development opportunities. Identify who will be responsible for tracking information.	0	10	15	20
Reviewer Comments:				
			TOTAL POINTS	**/20**

Section D: Budget Narrative & Electronic Budget *(Electronic Budget Form does not count toward page limit)*	Inadequate (information not provided)	Minimal (requires additional clarification)	Adequate (clear and complete)	Excellent (concise and thoroughly developed)
1) Describe all expenditures contained in the electronic budget in the budget narrative and connected to project objectives and activities. The costs of the proposed project (as presented in the electronic budget and budget narrative) shall be reasonable and the budget sufficient in relation to the objectives, design, scope and sustainability of project activities.	0	1	3	5
2) Clearly address how the funds awarded under the program will be used to supplement the level of funds available for authorized programs and activities, and will **not supplant** any funding currently being used on kindergarten readiness.	0	1	3	5
3) Describe a clear and well-conceived plan for how the proposed project will be continued once the grant dollars have expired. For example, how will quality kindergarten readiness programming continue once the grant has expired?	0	1	3	5
Reviewer Comments:				
			TOTAL POINTS	**/15**

Attachment A: End-of-Year Program Report Questions

Each local education provider that receives a grant through the Ready Schools Grant Program must submit an End-of-Year Report to CDE **on or before June 30, 2017**. A formatted End-of-Year Report document will be provided to grant schools by February 1, 2017. Submit via email to Emily Kielmeyer at: kielmeyer_e@cde.state.co.us.

Please include the following information and any applicable data in your report:

1) The number of schools and principals that participated in the program.

2) Describe how the LEP evaluated the effectiveness of trainings staff participated in and how results of this evaluation was/will be provided.

3) Describe successes in implementing kindergarten readiness programming and how the LEA will continue to build on these successes.

4) The evaluation report to include:

   a. The number of schools, teachers, principals, students, and families (as appropriate) that participated in the funded activities.
   b. A description of how the LEP evaluated the effectiveness of trainings staff participated in and how results of this evaluation was/will be provided.
   c. Impact of selected strategy(s) i.e. changes in practice and/or policy, aggregate school readiness child outcome information, CLASS observation scores, documented feedback from families, P-3 plans.
   d. A description of how the LEP will continue to build on these successes.

5) Summary analysis of the quantitative and qualitative school readiness data for the SY 2016-17.

6) An annual financial report.

Attachment B: Required Letter of Intent

The Letter of Intent to apply for the Ready Schools Grant Program must be submitted by **Monday, August 22, 2016, by 11:59 pm**. Submit online via Survey Monkey at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/readyschools2016.

Below is a screenshot of the information requested in the Letter of Intent: