Empowering Action for School Improvement Grant (EASI)

COLORADO
Department of Education

Introduction

With the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and with revisions to the state's Educational Accountability Act (HB 18-1355), Colorado is taking the opportunity to change the way school improvement (1003a through ESSA and the School Transformation grant through HB 18-1355) funds are awarded to LEAs. Rather than multiple applications on separate timelines, CDE is streamlining school improvement opportunities into a single application and using a "needs-based approach" to award services and funding. Ultimately, the intent is to develop a robust process of matching schools' needs with rigorous, evidence-based strategies and adequate resources. Additionally, awarded funds will enhance districts' and schools' ability to meet the ESSA and state requirements (e.g., stakeholder engagement, improvement plan, implementation of evidence-based interventions) in a way that directly benefits students.

Purposes of EASI

- ✓ Maximize impact on student learning
- ✓ Incentivize innovative ideas
- ✓ Create fair and transparent processes
- ✓ Increase efficacy and efficiency
- ✓ Provide great predictability to LEAS
- ✓ Prioritize LEAS with high numbers or high percentages of low-performing schools

Eligible Applicants

Colorado is committed to aligning federal and state accountability to the degree possible. These grant funds are aimed at districts with schools that are designated as (1) Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CS) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TS), Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (A-TS) under ESSA, and (2) Priority Improvement or Turnaround through the state accountability system. Specific eligibility and prioritization requirements for each support is detailed in the Menu of Supports and the application.

Available Funds

Approximately $9.5 million for LEAs with schools identified through ESSA. An additional $1.9 million is available for the state School Transformation Grant. The application is to be completed by the LEA on behalf of any of its eligible schools. District activities in support of identified schools are also allowable. The specific amount of funding an LEA may apply for is dependent on the chosen route.

EASI Application Routes

The application has been organized into four different routes: exploration supports, district designed and led, CDE offered supports, and continuation. The routes have different criteria and ways of awarding funds geared to a specific intent. A summary of the routes and the individual services or opportunities can be found below. Additional detail (e.g., eligibility criteria, prioritization guidelines, evaluation requirements, local commitments) for each program or opportunity are available at www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/easiapplication.

Exploration Supports LEA interested in funds and/or services to explore a solution for the identified school(s) or particular populations within an identified school. This is a planning phase with a small allocation for implementation activities. Opportunities include: Diagnostic Review, Community Engagement and Improvement Planning.

District Designed and Led Improvement Strategies LEA has a plan or is already implementing a plan that meets school(s) needs and is interested in pursuing grant funds to support activities.

Offered Services   LEA is interested in applying for an existing CDE sponsored program or support aimed at improving school systems. Opportunities include: Accountability Pathways Planning and Implementation, Colorado Multi-tiered System of Supports (CO-MTSS), Connect for Success, School Turnaround Leaders Development Program, School Turnaround Network and Fundamentals of Literacy Instruction Training.

Continuation of CDE Offered Services   Identified school(s) is already participating in a program (e.g., Connect for Success, Turnaround Network). CDE and the LEA agree that continuing participation will result in improved results for the school.

Timeline and Technical Assistance

EASI Application Available	Mid-September 2018
EASI Support Fair	September 17, 2018 – Arvada Center Registration: www.eventbrite.com/e/easi-support-fair-registration-48043772216 October 8, 2018 – Tesla Professional Development Center, Colorado Springs Registration: www.eventbrite.com/e/easi-support-fair-tickets-48179081931
Application Training Webinar	September/Early October 2018
Virtual Office Hours – Dedicated technical assistance time with CDE staff (via web-conference) for 15-30 minute time slots	September - November 2018
EASI Application Due	Early November 2018

Resources

Updated information including the 2018-2019 application and eligible LEAs will be placed on the EASI webpage at: www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/easiapplication) and sent out in CDE's Scoop. Feel free to also contact those listed below with any questions.

Contacts

General Application Questions	Laura Meushaw 303-866-6618 meushaw_l@cde.state.co.us
Online Application Technical Assistance	Anna Young 303-866-6250 young_a@cde.state.co.us
Budget Questions	Evan Davis 303-866-6129 davis_e@cde.state.co.us