

School Counselor Corps Grant 2014

Pursuant to: 22-91-101 through 22-91-105 C.R.S.

Colorado Department of Education

WEDNESDAY, April 2, 2014

Purpose

- To solicit applications from eligible education providers for funding to increase the availability and implementation of effective school-based counseling within secondary schools.
- The goal of the School Counselor Corps Grant Program (SCCGP) is to increase the state graduation rate and increase the percentage of students who appropriately prepare for, apply to, and continue into postsecondary education.

Available Funds

Funding contingent upon enacting pending legislation (SB 14-150) and any funding appropriated to the School Counselor Corps program for 2014-15 school year.

Note: If the pending state legislation is not signed into law, new awards will not be made for the 2014-15 school year. Please complete the Letter of Intent (Attachment C) to be informed of updates on this program, including funding updates. Grant applications are due on Wednesday, May 7, 2014.

Available Funds (cont.)

- The anticipated level of funding available for the 2014-2015 school year is approximately \$750,000, for roughly 20 grant awards.
- Within the first year of the four-year grant cycle individual awards will range between \$25,000 and \$50,000. The first year of the grant will focus on program development, needs assessment and direct services.
- In the second, third, and fourth years of the grant, successful grantees will receive up to \$80,000 per funded school.
- Priority consideration will be given to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that have not been previously funded. Middle and high schools are encouraged to apply with their “feeder” school(s) (if applicable). **Please note:** those who have been previously funded with SCC funds may apply; however, no more than 25 percent of the grant will fund previously funded schools in this competition.

Eligible Applicants

- Education providers are eligible to apply for this opportunity to increase the number of school counselors for secondary students and the level of school counseling services provided.
- Previous grant recipients will be asked to demonstrate how previously funded school counseling positions and successful programs, initiated through prior grant dollars, have been sustained. In addition, efficient use of previously awarded funds will be verified including the return of any unused funds to CDE.

Eligible Applicants (cont.)

- An eligible Education Provider is defined as:
 - A School district (on behalf of one or more secondary schools);
 - A Board of Cooperative Services (BOCES);
 - A Charter school; or
 - An Institute Charter School
- Priority will be given to applicants that will serve:
 - Middle and high schools at which the dropout rate exceeds the statewide average (2012-13 annual dropout rate for the State of Colorado is 2.5%);
 - Middle and high schools with a high percentage of students who are eligible for
 - Free and Reduced Lunch exceeding the statewide rate (42%); and
 - Postsecondary remediation rates at secondary schools that exceed the statewide average of 39%.

Allowable Use of Funds

Funds may be used to **supplement and not supplant** any moneys currently being used to provide secondary school counseling activities. Allowable activities include:

- Licensed secondary school counselor salaries and benefits;
- Postsecondary preparatory services;
- Professional development; and
- Program development.

Please note: In addition to the education provider's proposed Professional Development Plan, **applicants must also budget for a team to attend three, one-day grant trainings during each year of the grant cycle.** Dates and locations for summer, fall and spring trainings will be announced at a later date, however, please plan budgets for travel to the Denver metro area.

Regional sessions may be scheduled.

Allowable Use of Funds (cont.)

- Required trainings will provide professional development consistent with grant expectations for postsecondary preparation counseling. Key staff most closely related to the success of the grant (e.g., secondary school counselors, teachers, administrators) must attend.
- It is an expectation during years one, two, three, and four that at least one school leadership member (principal or assistant principal and school counseling team, if applicable) must attend this training in addition to counselors funded with Counselor Corps grant dollars.

Duration of Grant

- Grants will be awarded for a four-year term beginning in the 2014-2015 school year. Please note: Grant funding in years one, two, three and four will be contingent upon annual appropriations by the State Legislature. Funded applicants will be eligible for continued funding in the second, third, and fourth years of the grant cycle after successfully demonstrating the following:
 - Submission of all required evaluation materials;
 - Adequate progress toward successfully meeting annual objectives;
 - Thorough needs analysis and environmental scan of district and school postsecondary workforce readiness;
 - Completed program development report after the first year to demonstrate fidelity to proceed with years two, three, and four; and
 - Completed budgets and funding amounts for years two, three, and four will be finalized following the first year.

Evaluation and Reporting

- Each education provider that receives a grant through the program will be required to report, at a minimum, the following information to the Department on or before July 1st of each year during the term of the grant.
- First year reports must outline the development year process, including the needs assessment, environmental scan, SMART goals, and appropriate interventions in alignment with school counseling.

Evaluation and Reporting (cont.)

- Subsequent year reports shall also include:
 - The number of school counselors hired using grant funds;
 - School counselor to student ratio;
 - Any professional development programs provided using grant funds;
 - Any concurrent enrollment and career and technical education opportunities provided to students;
 - Examples of services provided to students;
 - Evaluation of impact of Grant Program;
 - Adoption of American School Counseling Association (ASCA) standards;

Evaluation and Reporting (cont.)

- A comparison of the graduation rates, dropout rates, postsecondary and workforce readiness rates, and the college matriculation and remediation rates, if applicable, at the recipient secondary schools for the years prior to the receipt of the grant and the years for which the education provider receives a grant;
- Information indicating an increase in the level of postsecondary preparation services provided to secondary students at recipient schools, such as the use of individual career and academic plans (ICAP) or enrollment in pre-collegiate preparation programs, postsecondary or vocational preparation programs;
- Successful matriculation between middle and high school (if applicable);
- Information indicating an increase in the number of students on track to graduate in four, five or six years, such as credit accrual, credit recovery, remediation or failed enrollment; and
- An annual performance report by July 1 of each year of the grant (Attachment B).

Review Process

- Applications will be reviewed by CDE staff and the School Counselor Corps Advisory Board to ensure they contain all required components.
- Note: This is a competitive process – **applicants must score at least 79 points out of the 114 possible points to be approved for funding.**
- There is no guarantee that submitting a proposal 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 in future grant applications.

Submission Process and Deadline

- The **original plus three (3) copies** must be received at CDE by Wednesday, May 7, 2014 at 4:00 pm to:

Camila Zardo
Colorado Department of Education
Competitive Grants and Awards
1560 Broadway, Suite 1450
Denver, CO 80202

- Submit electronic copy and budget to:
CompetitiveGrants@cde.state.co.us.

Application Format

- **The total narrative (Sections A – E) of the application cannot exceed 7 pages.** If an applicant has been previously funded, one (1) additional page may be used to summarize and provide verification of sustained positions and quality programs that were initialized with School Counselor Corps grant dollars.
- 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. 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.
- Staple the pages of the original and each copy of the proposal. Please do not use paperclips, rubber bands, binders or report covers.

Required Elements

- Part I:** Proposal Introduction (not scored)
 Cover Page, Signature Page and Assurances Form
 Executive Summary
 Table of Contents
- Part II:** **Narrative – Sections A through E**
 Electronic Budget (*not included in page limit*)
 Attachments (e.g., letters of support)
 Not included in page limit but not to exceed five (5) additional pages

Section A: Quality of Program Development

- Include a clear description of how the education provider has adopted, or has demonstrated, a commitment to developing standards for school counselors that meet or exceed those recommended by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) in connection to the intent of the School Counselor Corps grant program (http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/ASCA_National_Standards_for_Students.pdf).
 - If middle schools are included in the program development, include a commitment to the Counselor Corps Middle School Standards and Indicators (http://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/scc_importantdates).
- Clearly describe the approach in providing professional development, including how the applicant, during the program development phase, will support ongoing, sustained professional development for the team of secondary school counselors and administrators that support the goals, objectives, and design focus of the proposed School Counselor Corps Grant Program.
- Include a clear and thorough description of the applicant's experience in using data over time, such as examples demonstrating outcomes and incorporation of data-driven decisions.

Section A: Quality of Program Development (cont.)

- Provide clear, measurable goals/objectives consistent with desired outcomes of the School Counselor Corps Grant Program, including improving graduation rates and preventing dropouts.
- Provide a clearly detailed timeline for implementation. Timeline identifies major implementation activities, interim benchmarks and the date by which they will be accomplished.

Strategies /Activities	Interim Benchmarks	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible

- Explain how district and school-level administrators and current school counselors have been engaged in the process to apply for this grant.
- Clearly outline achievement gaps, the associated data and needs analysis of subgroups and student populations within your school or district(s) as appropriate for your LEA. Outline how the School Counselor Corps Grant Program will assist in closing these gaps.
- Describe what positions and quality programs have been successfully sustained with prior School Counselor Corps grant dollars and the strategies employed to do so.

41 Points

Section B: Partnerships

- Include a specific and well-conceived description of the extent to which the education provider has developed or plans to develop external partnerships, with external education agencies and/or community and/or business/workforce partners, to serve the postsecondary needs for every secondary student enrolled in or receiving educational services from the education provider.
- Include a specific and well-conceived description of the extent to which the education provider has developed or plans to develop internal partnerships including middle school and high school partnerships across the district
- Provide clear detail regarding how the education provider will integrate this grant with any current work in dropout prevention, student engagement, and postsecondary readiness, including, but not limited to: service learning; expanded learning opportunities; Title X Homeless Education; 21st CCLC, Expelled and At-Risk Student Services; and Colorado Graduation Pathways.

15 Points

Section C: Postsecondary

- Include a specific and well-conceived description of how receipt of the grant will affect the culture of postsecondary preparation at the applicant school, district or BOCES, and describe a vision for how the grant will transform the postsecondary expectations and options of students served.
- Include a specific and well-conceived description of the education provider's plan for involving leaders at the recipient secondary schools and in the surrounding community and the faculty at recipient secondary schools in increasing the capacity and effectiveness of the school counseling and postsecondary preparation services provided to secondary school students enrolled in or receiving educational services from the education provider.
- Include a clear and thorough description of the extent to which the education provider has implemented Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP) for students.

Section C: Postsecondary (cont.)

- Include a thorough description of how the postsecondary and workforce readiness section of the school/district Unified Improvement Plan will be aligned with the School Counselor Corps Grant.
- Include a detailed description of the education provider's use of district-level (or school-level if the education provider is a charter school), needs assessments that use data to identify challenging issues in the district or school in terms of student learning and success and barriers to learning.
- Include a detailed description of the education provider's use of district-level (or school-level if the education provider is a charter school), needs assessments that use data to identify targeted and comprehensive programs, strategies, or services delivered by the education provider to secondary students that have helped to increase graduation rates and the level of postsecondary success among graduates.

Section C: Postsecondary (cont.)

- Include a detailed description of the education provider's use of district-level (or school-level if the education provider is a charter school), needs assessments that use data to identify the strategies that will be used and evidence of why they were chosen by the education provider to address the challenges identified in this self-assessment and strengthen, expand or improve existing programs to improve graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment and success rates.
- Include a clear and thorough description of the attendance, grade-retention and promotion, and grading policies implemented by the education provider, including an analysis of how the schools' and districts' current policies and practices in these areas contribute to success or act as obstacles to students graduating from high school, as well as a description of a plan for how these policies and practices will be improved or modified to increase the graduation rate, as well as college-going, and college-success rates of high school students.
- Include a clearly detailed description of current participation in accelerated coursework (such as Concurrent Enrollment courses, ASCENT, AP, IB,) as well as current and proposed remedial courses for students at-risk of remediation.

41 Points

Section D: Budget Narrative

- Describe all expenditures contained in the electronic budget in the budget narrative and connect to project goals 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.
- Demonstrate 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** federal, state, local, or non-federal funds.
- 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 capacity be built to continue quality postsecondary counseling services to secondary students once the grant has expired?

17 points

Section E: Bonus Points

- Provide a clear picture of applicant LEA's at-risk indicators (including, dropout rate, percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch and other at-risk indicators).
- Demonstrate the LEA's clear progression and commitment to sustain programming and counselor positions after completion of the grant cycle.

10 points

Contact Information

For program questions contact:

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For fiscal/budget questions contact:

Marti Rodriguez (rodriquez_m@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6769)

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For RFP specific questions contact:

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