Expelled and At-Risk Student Services Grant (EARSS Program)

Pursuant to: C.R.S. 22-33-205

January, 2014

COLORADO
DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION
cde

Introduction

- **The EARSS Grant is authorized by Colorado Revised Statute (C.R.S.) 22-33-205 to assist in providing educational and supportive services to:**
  - expelled students,
  - students at-risk for expulsion, and
  - habitual truants.

- **EARSS grants are to primarily provide <u>direct intervention</u> supports and services to students.**
  - Universal, primary prevention strategies are not eligible for funding.

Purpose

- **The program exists to help school districts meet their statutory obligations to:**
  - Identify students at risk of suspension or expulsion,
  - Provide these students with a plan for the necessary support services to help them avoid expulsion,
  - Work with parents or guardians in providing the services, and
  - Provide alternative educational services, when agreed to by parents, to expelled students.
    - Services may be provided directly or in cooperation with one or more other school districts, boards of cooperative services, charter schools, and non public, non-parochial schools.
  - School districts must also develop plans with the goal of assisting habitual truants to remain in school and to work with families regarding their child's attendance.

Continued

Purpose, cont.

- **The district may provide services through agreements with appropriate local and state governmental agencies, community-based organizations, and institutions of higher education.**
  - See attachment A of the RFP for parameters of agreements
  - EARSS grants may supplement work carried out by a district's agreement
- **See C.R.S. 22-33-202 and 203 regarding identification of at-risk students and educational alternatives for expelled students.**
- **See 22-33-107(3)(b) for further information regarding plans to assist truants.**
- **Only applicants that specifically address the purpose identified for funding will be considered.**

Eligible Applicants

- **Eligible applicants include:**
  - School districts
  - Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) serving students enrolled in member districts
  - Non-public/non-parochial schools
    - Per the EARSS authorizing legislation, programs proposed by non-public/non-parochial schools must be approved by the State Board of Education prior to being awarded.
  - Alternative schools within a school district
  - Charter schools
    - A charter school and its authorizing district should work cooperatively on a joint application if both intend to apply.
  - Facility schools approved pursuant to C.R.S. 22-2-407

Ineligible Applicants

The following are not eligible applicants for an FY15 award:

- **Consortiums of two or more districts or schools**
- **Non-profit organizations or vendors of educational services**
  - However, non-profits and vendors of services may be funded as a component of an eligible applicant's grant; not the majority focus

Due to the highly competitive nature of the EARSS grants:

- Fiscal agents that are currently funded with one or more EARSS grants this 2013-14 school-year
  - This includes grantees in the 4th year that expires June 30, 2014.
  - See attachment B for currently funded grantees

Priorities

- **Remember the proper focus ---- The EARSS program is intended to :**
  1. Served expelled students
  2. Keep students engaged in their learning by avoiding behaviors that would cause disciplinary action to be taken because those behaviors violate the Code of Conduct, and/or,
  3. Resume regular attendance of habitual truants.

IMPORTANT

Applicants focusing mostly on dropout prevention in general, or risk factors unrelated to expulsion or eventual expulsion and/or truancy will not be considered.

- **It is acceptable to focus only on:**
  - serving expelled students, or
  - truancy, or
  - preventing eventual expulsions, although…….
- **all grantees must have performance measures addressing academics, attendance, family engagement, and safety/discipline or social-emotional behaviors, regardless of which focus.**

Priorities, cont.

- **Facility Schools**
  - A primary focus for facility school applicants is to be the transitioning of students between their setting and school districts so that districts can support the student in ways that will reduce the likelihood of eventual expulsion and/or declaration as an habitually truant.
- **Applicants whose proposed program will serve students from more than one school district will be considered in accordance with C.R.S. 22-33-205 (3).**
  - This requires that at least 45% of the appropriation be awarded to applicants that provide educational services to students from more than one school district.
  - These applicants must still score at least the minimum possible.

BONUS POINTS

- **Disproportionate Disciplinary Actions**
  - The proposal must first identify disproportionality in the needs assessment section. Bonus points are possible if efforts to reduce the disproportionality are addressed in the:
    - Measureable Objectives and
    - Program Description sections.
- **Sustainability is articulated with a specific source of funds within the control of the applicant.**

Priorities, cont. – Sample Strategies

- **Samples of Strategies to Reduce Expulsion and Out-of-School Suspensions include:**
  - Restorative discipline practices
  - Individual Behavior Plans, character education, and case management by behavior interventionists
  - Multi-tiered interventions, such as:
    - Tiers 2 and 3 of Positive Behavior Support and Interventions (PBIS)
    - Response to Intervention (RtI) case management frameworks
  - Tutoring for core academics, individual learning plans, and credit recovery
  - Development and expansion of in-school suspension supports and services
  - Contracted services or inter-agency agreements for mental health and treatment services

- **Samples of Strategies to support Habitual Truants and reduce referrals to court include:**
  - Attendance Mediation Workshops for students and their families
  - Restorative discipline, including as an alternative to court
  - Case management by multi-disciplinary Student Attendance Review Boards, Attendance Advocates, Response to Intervention teams, and Wrap-Around service providers
  - Tutoring for core academics, individual learning plans, and credit recovery
  - Multi-tiered interventions

Available Funds & Award Range

- This RFP is being released; however, the approximate $1.7 million available for new grant awards is contingent upon an approved appropriation for the program during the 2013 Colorado legislative session.
  - The state budget may be adopted after the applications are due and reviewed.
- Proposed budget requests should provide the number of anticipated students to be served on the cover/signature page, not to exceed a total of $**2,500** per student.
- A suggested range is $1,000 - $2,500 per student. The $2,500 maximum is intended to support more intensive services
- **IMPORTANT:** When determining the total budget, applicants should remain mindful of the time available to spend funds, and the feasibility of sustained fiscal support after the expiration of the grant, as well as the built-in scale down of 25% and 50% in Years 3 and 4, respectively.
  - Unobligated funds each year must be returned to CDE

Available funds, cont.

Funding ranges may be influenced by the nature of services:

- Targeted services include strategies, programs and supportive services that may include, but not limited to, addressing bullying behavior, social skill development, social/emotional functioning, tutoring, conflict mediation, restorative discipline, etc.
- Intensive services include collaborative case management and wraparound services, highly individualized person-centered educational and service plans, treatment services, credit recovery, etc.

Allowable Use of Funds

- **The largest majority of funds must be used for educational and support services directly to *eligible* K-12 expelled (but served) students and/or students at-risk of being expelled and/or habitual truants. *(Habitual truants are of compulsory school attendance ages 6-16.)***
  - This may include suspended students and students at-risk of being suspended.

- **In-state professional development is allowable for:**
  - Grant-associated staff serving EARSS-eligible students,
  - Training connected to carrying out the grant's proposed strategies, and
  - That builds capacity to foster sustainability of the grant activity and outcomes.

- **Up to 15% of the grant award may be used for administrative support of the grant activity.**

Allowable Use of Funds, cont.

Continued.

- **Services may include:**
  - Instruction in math, reading, writing, science and social studies;
  - Tutoring;
  - Alternative educational programs;
  - Vocational education programs;
  - Support services; and
  - Strategies to address habitually disruptive and truancy-related behaviors.

- **Through inter-agency agreements pursuant to C.R.S. 22-33-204:**
  - Counseling services;
  - Drug or alcohol addiction treatment programs; and
  - Family preservation services.

Allowable Use of Funds (cont.)

- **Funds must supplement, not supplant and may *not* be used for:**
  - Indirect Cost
  - Capitol equipment
  - Building improvements, construction, or maintenance
  - Gift cards, gift certificates, cash awards, personal gifts, door prizes, etc.
  - Also: scholarships, tuition, "waivers" of registration fees that convert grant funds to financial aid for individual families
- **Applicants must also budget to attend a one-day grant coordinators' fall networking day during each year of the 4-year grant cycle <u>if travel costs would be incurred</u>.**
  - This day will provide professional development consistent with grant expectations.
  - One to two key leadership staff most closely related to the coordination and success of the grant should attend.
  - Include costs related to travel to the Denver metro area for lodging and per diem expenses. Can also include in-state flights.
  - There is no registration fee.

Sustainability

- **Beginning with the third year of funding, grant funding must be reduced by 25% from the amount received in year one.**
- **In the fourth year, grant funding must be reduced by 50% from the amount received in year one.**
- **Applicants are expected to maintain the same level of services by supplementing the grant funds with other financial and material resources.**
- **These may include the grantee's general fund by investing Per Pupil Revenue (PPR) retained from the re-enrollment of students served, as well as federal, state, local, or in-kind contributions.**

Duration of Grant

- Grants are provided for four sequential fiscal years, provided requirements and outcomes are being met and state funds are annually appropriated.
- Grantees must submit a performance report, continuation application and budget for each of the next three fiscal years.
- Funds must be expended by June 30th of each fiscal year for which the funds were appropriated and awarded.
- There will be no carryover of funds. Unobligated funds will be returned to CDE.

Evaluation and Reporting

- **Applicants receiving Expelled and At-Risk Student Services grant funding are required to submit to CDE:**
  - An annual performance report (e.g., including numbers of students served, student outcomes, progress on performance measures, etc.);
  - A continuation application and continuation budget; and
  - Interim financial reports and the annual financial report.
- **Applicants must have, or acquire, the capacity to complete the annual online performance report.**
- **A grantee may, but is not required to purchase the services of an external evaluator for grant-funded programs. External evaluator costs cannot exceed $6,000.**
- **The report questions are available in Attachment C, and can also be accessed at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/earss_rfp_fy15**

Review Process

- Applications will be reviewed by CDE staff to ensure they contain all required components.
- This is a competitive process –
  - Applicants must score at least 80 points out of the 115 points possible to be approved for funding.
  - Applications that score below 80 points *may* be asked to submit revisions that would bring the application up to a fundable level.
- Funding, or funds at the requested level are not guaranteed
- All application decisions are final.
- Applicants that do not meet the qualifications will be notified and may reapply in future grant applications.

Award Process & Start Date

- **Applicants will be notified of final award status no later than Friday, June 28, 2014.** **(Awards are approved by the State Board of Education.)**
- **Grant funds cannot be obligated or spent prior to July 1, 2014 nor before a final budget being approved by CDE.**
- **Grantees will be sent an Award Notification and Agreement to sign and submit with original signatures to CDE.**
- **A check will be issued to the grantee when all required signatures are in place.**

Letter of Intent

- **If interested in applying for this grant opportunity, please complete the Letter of Intent (Attachment D) and submit by Friday, February 14, 2014.**
  - Allows planning for the review process (i.e. recruiting sufficient number of reviewers)
  - Allows CDE to communicate with prospective applicants should a need arise.
  - It does not obligate anyone to follow through on applying.
  - Not submitting the letter of intent does not prevent an application submittal

Submission Process and Deadline

- The original application plus 1 additional copy must be received at CDE by **Tuesday, April 1, 2014 at 4 p.m.** These two hard copies must be in addition to the following 3 budget worksheets as part of the electronic application:
  - 1) *District and Non-District Funding Budget Detail,* (reflecting all four years)
  - 2) *Budget Detail* (reflecting all four years), and
  - 3) *Budget Detail Summary*.

- In addition to the 2 hard copies, an electronic copy of the application and the electronic budget Excel file must be submitted to: CompetitiveGrants@cde.state.co.us

- The electronic application should include all required components of the proposal as one document, i.e. Cover/Signature page, narrative, three letters of support, three budget worksheets, etc. ***Faxes will not be accepted. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.***

Submission process, cont.

- The application materials and budget are available for download on the CDE Web site at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/earss_rfp_fy15

- **Do read all materials available at the RFP webpage to assist with planning prior to drafting the narrative.**
  - Sample budgets
  - Annual Performance Report
  - Associated laws

- Applications will be due by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, April 1, 2014 to:

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

Location – Civic Center Plaza, Diagonally from the State Capitol, between Colfax on the south, 16th on the north, Broadway on the west, Lincoln on the east

Required Elements

Part I: **Proposal Introduction (not scored)**

- **A. Cover/Signature Page** (A cover letter on applicant's stationary is not necessary)
- **B. Executive Summary *(no more than 80 words)***
- **C. Certification and Assurance Form *(signed by Board president and applicant executive)***

Part II: **Needs Assessment**

Part III: **Measurable Objectives**

Part IV: **Program Description**

Part V: **Collaboration**

Part VI: **Evaluation**

Part VII: **Budget Narrative** (Paragraph(s) description of how funds support the Part IV description.)

An Electronic Budget *(Excel file submitted electronically)* must be submitted with the application to CompetitiveGrants@cde.state.co.us, along with the original and 1 additional hard copy of the budget.

Required Attachments

- **Letters of support from key collaborators. Key collaborations refer to:**
  - Partnerships with organizations or agencies that provide in-kind goods or services, funds or other resources for the proposed grant program.
  - Partners external to the applicant who are critical to the success of the grant in that the grant objectives would not be achieved without their cooperation.
  - Collaborations may or may not include written interagency agreements or Memorandums of Understanding.

- **Formal collaborations do not refer to contractors or vendors who would be providing services for this grant program and that appear in the budget's purchased services category.**
  - Anticipated vendors or contractors should not submit letters of support, but they can be referenced in the program description by name if known.

Continued

Required Attachments, cont.

- **Letter of sustainability commitment from the applicant's Chief Executive Officer, i.e. superintendent if a school district, executive director if a BOCES or facility school, or Head of the if a charter school.**
  - This letter should correspond to the:
    - plan described in Part IV (e) and Part VII(c) of the narrative, and
    - the District (or applicant) and Non-District budget worksheet.

- **Letters do not count toward the 10-page limit.**

Now that we have covered the planning around the program focus, funding considerations and content of the application packet, let's move on to:

- How to score the most points, and
- How not to lose points.

Scoring Rubric

The Scoring Rubric serves as the instructions and guidance for the required elements of the written narrative of the proposal/application.

Applications that deviate from the outlined sequence and format or that do not contain Parts ll-VII within the 10-page limit will not be scored.

Attachments or addendums cannot be utilized to address the required elements or be factored into the scoring.

Part II: Needs Assessment

- **Describe the need for the program, based on an analysis of data, including:**
  - expulsion, suspension, and truancy rates from past years to show specific behavioral trends
    - Specific behavioral trends can include increases and decreases of certain types of Code of Conduct violations, changes in habitual truancy counts, etc.
  - representation of subgroups of students and any disproportions related to gender, race/ethnicity or subgroups.
    - Disproportions must be based on the total population of the group to begin with in the district or, if more specifically targeted for grant-funded efforts, the school.
- **Identify current gaps in services, trends, and for what reasons in regards to the EARSS-eligible students that the proposal intends to address.**
- **Describe gaps in EARSS-eligible students' parent/family/guardian engagement strategies, and reasons for them, that the proposal intends to address.**

17 possible points.

Part III: Measurable Objectives

- **For each of the four categories state at least one quantified, measurable objective to be achieved by 2018 and a correlating benchmark measure by 2016:**
  - Specific and attainable, incorporates research-based strategies, and includes concrete criteria or the method for measuring progress, related to:
    1. Improving **parent capacity** to support their student.
    2. **Academic achievement** related to failing grades and course completion.
    3. **Student attendance**
    4. **School safety/discipline or social and emotional functioning.**
- **BONUS POINTS: Up to 4 additional points may be awarded for meeting the following criteria :**
  - At least one of the performance measures is aimed at reducing specific disproportionate populations receiving disciplinary actions identified in the Part II Needs Assessment section.
  - More than one of the performance measures is aimed at reducing specific disproportionate populations receiving disciplinary actions identified in the Part II Needs Assessment section.

20 possible points.

Part IV: Program Description

- **Identification of eligible students for services**
  - Process for determining eligibility as an EARSS-served student
    - Already expelled
    - At-risk for expulsion
    - At-risk for habitual truancy
  - Process for referring students to the programs and services
    - Facility schools need only to address the process for matching programs/services to the individual student(s)

- **Type of educational services to be provided, how parents or guardians of EARSS-served students will be engaged and served, and additional strategies to achieve each objective (parent, academic, attendance, safety/discipline or social/emotional.**
  - Program components and, if relevant, curriculum
  - Location, hours of operation, staffing, length of services, estimated number of participants, behaviors to be addressed, grade levels, and if relevant, transportation.

Program Description, cont.

Continued.

- Cultural relevance and responsiveness
  - How programs/services already are, or
  - How they will be (such as if the grant proposes professional development to the implementers to ensure it.)
- Proposed strategies' known outcomes and cost effectiveness.
  - Published research findings can be cited.

Program Description, cont.

Continued…

- How positive outcomes from the programs and/or services will be maintained following the expiration of the grant.

- How the programs or strategies may lead to systemic changes within the school district to serve expelled students or students at risk of being expelled. For BOCES and facility school applicants, address the above for your setting.

- **BONUS POINTS:** Up to 4 additional points may be awarded for meeting the following criteria : Programs, services, or strategies have been intentionally selected and described for populations identified in the Part II Needs Assessment section for reducing specific disproportionate disciplinary actions.

36 possible points.

Part V: Collaboration

- **Describe formal collaborations that are vital to program success.**
  - Review the definition of who are collaborators and who are not.
  - Ask yourself, "Whose cooperation or coordination do we depend upon in order to meet the overall objectives of our grant?" They should see a role for themselves in helping you have a successful, grant-funded program experience.
    - If a facility school or BOCES– do you need liaisons within school districts to help you with your students or parents? Who helps transition students?
    - Are you in a Collaborative Management Program county and does the oversight committee play a role in serving the families of the EARSS-eligible students?
    - Are you using information sharing agreements with others to help identify youth?
    - Will someone provide you with professional development not paid by the grant?

- **Letters of support must be attached but will not count in the 10-page limit.**

3 possible points.

Part VI: Evaluation

An applicant must have the capacity, or know how they would acquire the capacity, to complete the required annual performance online report.

The report questions are available in Attachment C, and can also be accessed at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/earss_rfp_fy15

A grantee may, but is not required to purchase the services of an external evaluator for grant-funded programs. External evaluator costs cannot exceed $6,000.

Continued.

Continued

Evaluation, cont.

Continued

- **Describe the applicants capacity, or how it will require the capacity for:**
  - collecting demographic data,
  - State Assigned Student Identifiers of the students served, and
  - tracking student outcomes for the students served in the grant funded program.
- **Describe the evaluation process to track progress on measurable objectives.**
  - Specify methods to collect information, frequency of collection and who will be designated to coordinate data tracking and analysis.
- **Describe how evaluation results will be used to inform program improvement and how results will be shared with key stakeholders**

19 possible points.

Part VII: Budget Narrative and Electronic Budget (Excel File)

Re: Narrative

(Paragraph explanation format - Do not copy and paste or reiterate line item by line item detail)

- Summarize proposed use of funds by budget category or proposed program/strategy
  - Ensure that the uses summarized in the narrative are aligned to what is found on the *Budget Detail* worksheet of the Excel file.

Re: Budget Detail Spreadsheet: (electronic worksheet, also printed for hard copies)

Be specific:

- i.e., Salaries, $XX,XXX ------ 1.0 FTE, behavior interventionist for xxx middle school
- i.e., Supplies, $XX,XXX ------ Curriculum materials for [name of program] @ $xxx/student for approximately XX number of students

- The budget is sufficient in relation to the measureable objectives, design, scope, sustainability, and duration of project activities.
- Costs are reasonable, and connected to project goals and activities for each of the four years of the grant.
- **Continued.**

Budget, cont.

Continued

Re: Narrative

- In relation to the *District (or Grantee) and Non-District Budget* worksheet:
  - Describe the specific plan and use of in-kind and Per Pupil Revenue (PPR) to sustain the program with no reduction in the level of services provided.
  - Address the plan for the 25% reduction of funding in Year 3 and 50% reduction of funding in Year 4.

Re: Attached Sustainability Commitment letter

- Relates to the *District (or Grantee) and Non-District Budget* worksheet
- Corroborates the application's sustainability plan described in Part IV(e).

Bonus Points

- To be eligible for bonus points, a specific source of funds within the control of the applicant must be identified and committed.

20 possible points.

This concludes the Scoring Rubric section.

Where can one find assistance with planning and preparing the application and budget?

Contact Information

For EARSS program and use of funds questions contact:

Janelle Krueger (krueger_j@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6750)

For fiscal/budget (spreadsheet) questions contact:

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

For RFP specific questions contact:

Kim Burnham (burnham_k@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6916)