

Universal Screening and Qualified Personnel Grant Frequently Asked Questions

House Bill 14-1102 permits Administrative Units (AUs) in Colorado to apply for funds to offset costs incurred by employing a qualified person to administer the gifted program and/or off-set the costs of universal screening.

- Administrative units may submit a grant to fund up to a .5 FTE, **qualified** in gifted education, for the purpose of administering the gifted program, implementing the program plan and providing professional learning to increase capacity of educators to identify and program for gifted students and family partnerships. Grant funds may offset costs for a current employee or a new hire. A person who is qualified has a current gifted endorsement or higher degree in gifted education or can provide evidence of work towards the endorsement or a higher degree.
- Administrative units may submit an application to off-set the costs of conducting **universal screening** in a K-2 grade, and/or in conjunction with ICAP planning at the middle school level. The tool used may be a standardized normed cognitive assessment or an evidence-based classroom behavior observation. At the middle school for students who already have a gifted determination, a norm-referenced achievement or creativity test may be administered to gifted students while other students are administered a cognitive assessment. Universal screening means all students within a grade level are assessed.

Applications that are not complete, include ineligible costs or do not include the supporting documents will not be considered.

The Application Process

Do I need to submit an original copy of the grant to CDE?

No. You will only submit an electronic copy to CompetitiveGrants@cde.state.co.us. No faxes will be accepted.

Do I need to submit an additional budget?

No. You only need to complete the budget questions within the grant application.

May I submit my application before April 15?

No. Early applications will **not** be accepted. You may submit your application any time during the day of April 15. The time of day the grant is received will not matter as long as it is received on April 15 for Day 1 of funding.

Application Process

Timeline: Applications may be submitted any time on April 15. Applications will also be accepted two business days after April 15. The day the application is received may impact allocation of funds. This means that funds might be completely expended on April 15. Thus, it is highly encouraged that all AUs submit on day one of the application timeline.

Application: The application consists of a cover page, assurance page, an application matrix and any required supplemental attachments. Prior to submitting the application it is important to thoroughly read the instruction to ensure the application is complete. **If the grant application is not completed correctly, included ineligible costs or did not include the required documents, the application will not be considered.**

Reporting: AUs will provide a report to the Department in September documenting how moneys were used, what screening tool was used and the actual costs incurred.



If I do not submit my application on the April 15 date and submit it on day two or three, will I still receive funding?

Maybe. The day the application is received is impacted by availability of funds remaining on day two or three. This means that funds might be completely expended on day one, April 15. **Thus, it is highly encouraged that all AUs submit on day one of the application timeline.**

Do I need to submit a new application every year?

Yes. Grant funds are awarded on a one-year term. Grant funding will be contingent upon annual appropriations by the State legislature. The funding available for distribution to administrative units is contingent upon an approved appropriation for the grant program during the 2016 Colorado legislative session. If approved, allocations would begin on **July 1, 2016.**

For my application to be considered “complete,” what must I email?

You must complete pages 8 - 12 of the application packet including the signature(s) of your superintendent(s). If you are not a multi-district AU, it is not necessary to submit page 10 of the application. If applying for qualified personnel you must submit two additional documents. **First**, you must submit evidence of endorsement or higher degree in gifted education. If the person hired is not qualified, you must include a letter verifying work toward endorsement or a higher degree in gifted education. If a person has not yet been hired, submit with the grant a job description and position announcement. **Second**, you must submit the salary schedule for the intended title of the qualified gifted person (i.e., TOSA, instructional coach, coordinator, director) and the projected placement on the salary schedule of the intended hire or current employee. **Applications that are not complete, include ineligible costs or do not include the supporting documents will not be considered.**

In a multi-district AU are all superintendents’ signatures required on the grant application?

Yes. Signatures show that the entire AU is aware of the potential for additional funds, understand the use of funds, and support the grant application for all or a portion of its member districts. Signatures may be collected via fax and scanned into the application.

May a multiple-district submit an application if not all districts within the AU want to apply?

Yes. On page 10 of the application, indicate the districts that will participate and obtain the superintendents’ signatures. An electronic signature may be used.

Can a charter school apply for the grant?

No. The charter school must express its needs through its administrative unit lead (e.g., district or CSI)

If I apply for all 3 parts of the grant (K-2 screening, middle school screening, and qualified personnel) do I have to prioritize my choices?

No. It is not necessary to prioritize your choices. One grant may be submitted for all three choices.

Qualified Personnel Grant

Who are Qualified Personnel?

Qualified Personnel or Qualified Person means an educator who also has an endorsement or higher degree in gifted education.



Is it a requirement that an AU hire a Qualified Person to administer the program plan and provide professional development activities?

No. When an administrative unit chooses to apply for the grant program then provisions for employment of a Qualified Person are required.

Can the grant funds be used to help pay for the person to become Qualified?

No. The funds are to offset the cost of employing a qualified person up to .5 FTE.

May funds be used for salary and benefits?

Yes. Rules state that funds may be used to employ the qualified person up to .5 FTE.

May a gifted resource teacher's salary be funded by this grant if the educator has an endorsement or higher degree in gifted education?

The law specifies that the funds are for a qualified person to “**administer**” the gifted program and implement the program plans. In small single-district AUs, in particular, the person administering may also be the person providing services. It is trusted that AUs will use the moneys accordingly.

May I hire a contractor or consultant for qualified personnel?

No. The language of the law says an AU may apply to the department for a grant to off-set the cost incurred for “employing” a person on a half-time basis.

If an AU already funds a qualified person, may we still apply for the grant?

Yes. If awarded, the grant may fund up to .5 of the qualified person's salary. The district moneys used for the gifted educator's salary may not be moved back into the General Fund, but may be transferred to support the AU's gifted program plan.

For a multi-district AU, is the qualified person for a district or for the AU?

The qualified person is for the AU or the lead BOCES person who administers the AU's Program Plan.

If my .5 FTE will be supporting other departments or offices in the AU, may I request funds to pay for the .5 position?

No. If the position will include additional responsibilities beyond gifted education services, the amount of grant funding requested shall represent the percent of time the qualified person will be supporting gifted education. For example, if a .4 FTE spends one day supporting a different department in the AU and one day supporting gifted education, the request for funds should be 25% of the cost indicated on the submitted FTE salary schedule. The application would then specify a request to fund a .2 FTE.

Universal Screening Grant

What is Universal Screening?

Universal Screening means the systematic assessment of all students within a grade level of an administrative unit or district for identifying exceptional ability or potential, **especially in underrepresented populations**; and/or screening in conjunction with the creation of each student's individual career and academic plan (ICAP).



What are common or typical screening tools?

- Standardized observation tool
 - Gifted Evaluation Scale (GES)
 - Scales for Identifying Gifted Students (SIGS)
 - Gifted Rating Scales (GRS)
 - Kingore Observation Inventory (KOI)
 - Scales for Rating the Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (SRBCSS or Renzulli/Hartman)
 - DISCOVER (Maker)
- Cognitive abilities test
 - Cognitive Abilities Test Form 7 (CogAT) and CogAT Screener
 - Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test 2nd Edition (NNAT2)
- Secondary students already identified
 - Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT)
 - ACT Aspire
 - PSAT
 - Norm-referenced achievement tests
 - Specific visual and performing arts performance assessments

Is it an ECEA Rule requirement to conduct universal screening?

No. It is a type of screening in the identification process that a local AU may choose to use. When an administrative unit chooses to apply for the grant program then provisions for universal screening are required.

Do “all” students within a grade level need to participate in the universal screening?

Yes. For the purpose of the grant, all students participate. The exception would be students who have an IEP with the accommodation for alternative assessment. Consult your AU special education director to determine which students might be exempt from testing or the alternative assessment that could be provided to this population of students.

Does universal screening mean that all students take the same assessment?

No. Universal screening means that all students are screened for identification of strengths. Different tools might be selected for diverse populations or when considering students who already have a gifted determination.

Is parental permission required to do a universal screener?

Typically parental permission is not required to administer a universal screener. However, AUs should follow district policy. It is always preferable to inform parents the assessment will be administered.

Can I use grant funds to test other grades beyond K-2 or middle school?

No. Grant funds may be utilized to conduct a screening no later than second grade and/or conducting a second screening at middle school in conjunction with creation of the ICAP. A district may choose to conduct universal screening at other grade levels at a cost incurred by the district.

What is meant by the statement “in conjunction with creation of ICAP?”

In Colorado, all high school students must have an ICAP (Individual Career and Academic Plan). An ICAP is a multi-year process that intentionally guides students and families in the exploration of career, academic and postsecondary opportunities. Middle school is a time when students begin to work on the quality indicators and elements to obtain the necessary skills to be college and career ready. By providing a universal screener in middle school, data may be helpful



in supporting a student to develop appropriate and meaningful ICAP plans or identify students who may have previously been overlooked.

Why does the grant say that universal screening may be conducted at the middle school in conjunction with the ICAP when an ICAP is not required until high school?

Middle grades were incorporated in the rule because evidence-based practices in gifted education claim that academic and career planning discussions should begin earlier than high school.

Why do you need to screen for ICAP?

Screening at this level guides ICAP planning for students who may not be identified yet. For the student with a current gifted determination, an assessment that provides data in terms of the student's strength area(s) may be administered and funded by the grant (i.e., creativity test, leadership inventory, specific talent tests and/or achievement tests).

If a student is already identified gifted and we are conducting a universal screener at middle school, do the identified gifted students need to participate?

Yes. The grant rules state that previously identified gifted students MUST participate in some type of assessment that will provide additional programming information for development of ICAP. A district may choose to have the student take the cognitive universal screener or a district may choose to administer a different assessment to identified gifted students that provides more in-depth data for program planning (e.g., PSAT).

How is a universal screening tool used for ICAP?

The purpose of universal screening is to find strengths and exceptionalities that could better inform college and career planning.

Is sixth grade considered "middle school?"

Yes.

May grant funds be used for both the purchase and scoring of a universal screening?

Yes. However, grant funds may be requested to off-set the costs for a basic-level reporting package. If an AU chooses to order additional reports or files, the AU may not include this added expense in the application.

May grant funds be used to pay a stipend to teachers to attend training on administration of a universal screener or to administer the assessment?

No.

May grant funds be used to pay the cost the vendor is charging for training to administer the assessment?

No. Because this is a requirement that varies from vendor to vendor, is adjusted from year to year depending on the cycle of test administration and may include grade levels not included in the grant, the vendor training cost may not be included in the application. The grant is intended to off-set the per-pupil cost of screening and not meant to fund administrative or training costs.

What are considered eligible and ineligible Universal Screening costs?

ECEA Rules state grant funds are to be used to off-set the per-pupil cost of screening. Additional administrative or training costs are not considered in the calculation for per-pupil assessment.



Eligible universal screening expenditures are costs for:

- Tests (paper-pencil or online);
- Behavior Observation Scales;
- Answer documents;
- Publisher’s scoring or hand-scoring materials; and
- Basic-level assessment reporting package.

Ineligible universal screening expenditures that **will not** be funded:

- Miscellaneous supplies;
- Supplies related to test taking (i.e., pencils, computers, plastic tubs);
- Stipends for test trainings, test administration or test scoring;
- Vendor training costs;
- Additional reporting documents or files beyond the basic-level reporting package;
- Additional assessment instruments not intended for the purpose of Universal Screening; and
- Indirect costs for accounting or additional administration (i.e., classified staff, paraprofessionals, test proctors, communication flyers).

Grant Distribution

Grant moneys will be distributed based upon available funds appropriated during the Colorado legislative session. The statute is clear that every administrative unit who applies for the grant should receive funds for universal screenings and qualified person IF there are sufficient funds in a given fiscal year. When moneys are sufficient, every AU, whose grant application is approved, would receive full funding for their request.

In a budget year in which the General Assembly does not appropriate sufficient moneys, the proposed rules outline a procedure for distribution of funds. The rules reiterate the language of the statute, “the Department shall distribute moneys based on the order in which the Department received application”.

What is the “order” of distribution?

Order for distribution of funds is a three-day application period in which every administrative unit may apply for a grant that may include a request for one or more allowable uses. Grant requests will be considered separately on a day 1, day 2 and day 3 basis until all funds are expended. If there are sufficient moneys to fulfill total requests on day one, then every day-1 applicant will receive funds. (The language of rules reflects the guidance in the informal opinion of the Attorney General’s Office.) This method of proportional distribution is valued because every administrative unit receives some moneys toward the desired local use of screening or employing a qualified person up to .5 FTE.

How are moneys distributed when insufficient funds are available for total requests on day 1?

In this situation grants will be distributed proportionally on a pro-rata basis. This means that all applicants on day 1 will receive moneys based upon a portion of available funds.

**What happens when an AU receives less than what was requested?**

The guidelines for this grant program permit local districts and BOCES to either: 1) decide to supplement and/or backfill costs of the request; or 2) determine which allowable uses will be funded through the grant program. The AU may fund up to the proportion of funding provided. (Example: An AU submits for two universal screenings, but receives moneys for one grade level with a remainder left. The AU may choose to universal screen proportionally based on available funds; or may use the funds up to .5FTE for a qualified person administering the gifted program.

May I carry over funds from the grant?

No. You must expend grant funds by June 30. You may not encumber or carry over Gifted Education Grant Funds.

If I did not expend all my grant funds, may I use the funds to purchase assessments for next year?

No. If funds remain, an AU must return unused funds to the Department or use the funds to off-set the cost of qualified personnel or universal screening costs for students in grades K-2 or middle school for the grant year, not costs for purchasing assessments or hiring personnel for the following year.

If my grant application was incomplete, may I resubmit?

If the grant application is not completed correctly, includes ineligible costs or does not include the required documents, the application will not be considered and may not be resubmitted for this year. Applicants that do not receive awards may reapply in future grant opportunities.

What is the process for evaluation, when will I be notified if we received grant funds and how much we will be receiving?

Applications will be reviewed by CDE staff to ensure that applications contain all required components. There is no guarantee that submitting a proposal will result in funding. All application decisions are final. AUs will be notified in June of grant status and the amount of funds that will be allocated to the AU.

Where can I learn more?

- Gifted Educations Program Questions:
Tara Rolfe (GE_Grant@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6794)
- Fiscal/Budget Questions:
Evan Davis (davis_e@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6129)
- RFP Specific Questions
Kim Burnham (burnham_k@cde.state.co.us or 303-866-6916)
- To view ECEA Rules: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/qt/lawsregs>