



COLORADO
Department of Education

Gifted and Talented Universal Screening and Qualified Personnel Grant Application Guidance

Pursuant to C.R.S. 22-20-205

Funding Opportunity

Gifted and Talented Universal Screening and Qualified Personnel Grant

*Pursuant to C.R.S. 22-20-205

Application Submission Deadline

First Submission Window: April 1- April 15, 2026, at 11:59 pm

** Applications submitted by April 15 and approved will be guaranteed a share of the available funds.*

Second Submission Window: April 16-April 17, 2026, at 11:59 pm

** Funding for applications submitted April 16–17 is contingent upon the availability of remaining funds after April 15.*

Grant Application Support

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Introduction and Purpose

The Colorado General Assembly passed legislation in 2014 that established an appropriation for an Administrative Unit gifted education grant program. The program supports the foundational programming elements of universal screening and qualified personnel. The intent of the General Assembly was to ensure:

1. Evidence-based practices support instruction and the social-emotional development of gifted children; and
2. Each gifted child is educated in a rigorous learning environment that nurtures their exceptional abilities and coordinates programs and services across available support systems.

Universal screening ensures all students have access to gifted identification and programming. In addition, dedicated oversight by a qualified professional is essential to maintain compliance with state requirements and to provide equitable, effective identification and programming for gifted learners. The Universal Screening and Qualified Personnel (USQP) Grant supports AUs in fulfilling the obligations set forth by the General Assembly by offering financial support to Administrative Units (AUs) for these critical components of gifted education programming.

Through this opportunity, Administrative Units may apply for funds to offset the cost incurred when:

1. Conducting universal screening no later than second grade;
2. Conducting a second universal screening in conjunction with the creation of each child's ICAP by end of eighth grade year;
3. Using an achievement measure or behavior observation scale for already identified students at the middle school level in conjunction with creation of each child's individual career and academic plan (ICAP); and
4. Employing a qualified person to administer the gifted program, implement the program plan, and provide professional learning to increase the capacity of educators to identify and program for gifted students and develop family engagement and communication.

Eligibility and Priority Criteria

Administrative Units must be current with submission of their comprehensive program plan, budget, and Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) gifted requirements for all districts within the AU. Applications must include all required supporting documentation and be submitted within the designated application window. Priority for funding is given to applications submitted during the first window.

Available Funds and Duration of Grant

This grant application is being released; however, the funding available for distribution to Administrative Units is contingent upon an approved appropriation for the grant program during

the current Colorado legislative session. The legislature finalizes available funds by June 30. If approved, the one-year grant window would begin on July 1.

The grant's one-year term will begin on July 1, 2026, for the 2026-2027 school year. Additional grant funding for subsequent years will be contingent upon annual appropriations by the State legislature. Recipients must reapply to be considered for any future funding if available.

Note: The carryover of funds is not permitted under this grant. Funds must be expended by June 30, 2027. If funds remain, the AU must return unused funds to CDE. Once returned to CDE, funds do not remain dedicated to gifted education. Funds may not be used for the upcoming costs for screening tests or qualified personnel.

Allowable Use of Funds

Administrative Units (AUs) may submit one application that includes up to four funding requests in the following areas:

1. Universal screening costs for Kindergarten through 2nd grade;
2. Universal screening costs at a middle-level grade, aligned with the development of each student's ICAP by the end of 8th grade;
3. Middle-level screening costs for students already identified as gifted (to support ICAP planning); and
4. Half-time salary and benefits for a qualified professional responsible for overseeing the gifted education program.

Any costs the AU saves by obtaining the grant may NOT be returned into the AU's General Fund but may be used to increase or enhance the costs incurred in implementing the AU's gifted education program [2-20-205 (2)(e)].

Universal Screening Details

Universal screening, for the purposes of section 22-20-205 C.R.S., means the systematic assessment of all students within a grade level of an Administrative Unit for identifying exceptional ability or potential, especially in underrepresented populations; and/or universal screening in conjunction with creation of each gifted child's individual career and academic plan (ICAP).

Universal screening must include every student within the chosen grade level within the Administrative Unit, ensuring equitable access to gifted identification. This requirement applies to students enrolled in AU-authorized charter schools as well as those receiving special education services or multilingual instruction. The goal is to provide all students-regardless of educational setting or support needs-the opportunity to participate in gifted identification assessments and programming.

The measurement tool(s) for elementary and middle level universal screening must be fair and reliable tool(s) for administration in diverse populations.

Eligible expenses include:

- cognitive assessments (e.g., CogAT, NNAT)
- behavior observation scales (if administered to all students)
- answer documents and scoring materials (if variance for paper-pencil testing is approved)
- shipping costs
- basic-level reporting packages.

Ineligible expenses include:

- miscellaneous supplies
- stipends for training or test administration
- vendor training costs
- indirect costs.

Universal Screening Costs

ECEA rules state grant funds are to be used towards the per-pupil cost of screening. Additional administrative or training costs are not included in the per-pupil assessment calculation and may not be requested as part of this grant.

Variance for Paper-Pencil Screening: Tests are typically administered online. However, a variance for paper-pencil may be requested. The Variance Request for Paper-Pencil Assessment USQP Grant is due March 15, 2026, and available by request from the Office of Gifted Education.

Eligible universal screening expenditures:

- Tests (online) or Variance for Paper-Pencil
 - Cognitive Assessments such as CogAT, NGAT, or NNAT;
 - Behavior Observation Scales (norm-referenced) as the universal screener K-2; (only if administered to all students);
 - Behavior Observation Scales as the universal screener, Middle level (only if administered to all students) or for already identified students in conjunction with ICAP development; and
 - Two different tests at the middle level are allowed:
 - one for already identified gifted students (to be used for ICAP planning) and
 - one for non-identified students (to find additional gifted students). Reimbursement for tests will be based on the typical cost of CogAT and NNAT assessments for current fiscal year.
- If a variance has been obtained for paper and pencil testing, eligible expenses also include:
 - Answer documents
 - Publisher's scoring or hand-scoring materials (e.g., key, norms manual)
 - Shipping costs
 - Basic-level assessment reporting package (e.g., CD Rom)

Ineligible universal screening expenditures that will not be funded:

- Miscellaneous supplies;
- Two different tests for the same student at a grade level (e.g., SIGS Observation Scale and the CogAT for a 2nd grade student is not allowed or the CogAT Screener and the CogAT Complete for a 5th grade student);
- 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).

Note: If an individual test is administered to some students and a group test is administered to the remaining students in the grade level, reimbursement for each test is the cost of the group-administered test.

Qualified Personnel Details

Grant funds must be used exclusively to support the salary and benefits of the Administrative Unit's Gifted Director of Record, as defined by House Bill 14-1102. This position must meet the following requirements:

- **Minimum FTE Requirement:** The Gifted Director of Record must dedicate at least 0.5 FTE to gifted education responsibilities to be eligible for the grant.
- **Qualifications:** The individual must hold, or be actively pursuing, a gifted education endorsement or advanced degree.
- **Role:** The Gifted Director of Record is responsible for administering and implementing the AU's gifted education program in compliance with ECEA rules.

If the position exceeds 0.5 FTE, the grant will cover up to 0.5 FTE. **If the position is less than 0.5 FTE, the AU is not eligible to apply for this grant.**

Required documentation includes name of the individual or job posting for vacant positions, salary and benefits information, and district salary schedule.

Qualified Personnel Costs

The following outlines allowable and non-allowable expenses for the Qualified Personnel portion of the USQP Grant. These guidelines ensure funds are used exclusively for their intended purpose and in compliance with grant requirements.

Eligible Expenses

- Salary for the AU Gifted Director of Record, up to 0.5 FTE dedicated to [gifted education responsibilities](#).
- Benefits associated with the AU Gifted Director of Record position, calculated at 0.5 FTE.

Ineligible Expenses

- Salary or benefits for any position other than the AU Gifted Director of Record.
- Costs for AU Gifted Director of Record positions with less than 0.5 FTE dedicated to gifted education (these positions are not eligible for the grant).
- Stipends, bonuses, or additional compensation beyond base salary and benefits.
- Indirect costs, administrative overhead, or expenses unrelated to the Gifted Director of Record role.
- Professional development, training, or travel costs.
- Supplies, technology, or materials not directly tied to the Gifted Director of Record salary and benefits.

Completing the Application

Applications must be submitted through [GAINS](#). Hard copy or email submissions will not be accepted.

Statement of Need

Include a short narrative of 250 words or fewer that describes how the grant(s) support a rigorous learning environment and culture that develops gifted students' areas of exceptionality and coordinates programs and services among available support systems.

Universal Screening

Provide the requested information for each grant for which the AU is applying.

Note: Multiple district AUs and BOCES- Aggregate your requests by test type and cost, then provide district detail in the narrative. For example, enter a quantity of 100 (number of students going into 2nd grade in the three districts administering this particular assessment), the quoted cost per assessment of \$14.75, and include a narrative that specifies the three districts administering CogAT Level 8 to second grade, along with the number of students in each district.

Universal Screening K-2

For Universal Screening K-2, you will need to know your total AU grade level student count. When documenting the student level count, use October count for the previous grade. For example, if you are testing 2nd grade, you will use 1st grade October count.

Universal Screening K-2 Assessment Information – the application requires the name and level of the Assessment to be administered, delivery method, grade level, and number of tests ordered. Costs, amounts requested, and overall funding request totals will be captured in the budget.

Universal Screening 5-8

For Universal Screening 5-8, you will need to know your total AU grade level student count and the total number of students identified as gifted if you are using more than one assessment (i.e., gifted and non-identified gifted are given a different assessment). When documenting the

student level count, use October count for the previous grade. For example, if you are testing 6th grade you will use 5th grade October count.

Universal Screening 5-8 Assessment Information – the application requires the name and level of the Assessment to be administered, delivery method, grade level, and number of tests ordered. If requesting two different assessments for already identified and non-identified students, the total number of requested assessments may not exceed the overall total of students within the grade. Costs, amounts requested, and overall funding request totals will be captured in the budget.

Other Eligible Costs

If additional funds are being requested, provide a detailed, itemized list of the items. Eligible expenses include: answer documents, publisher's scoring or hand-scoring materials (e.g., key, norms manual); shipping costs; and basic-level assessment reporting package.

Please note: cost per item and total requested costs will be captured in the "Budget" section of the grant application.

Qualified Personnel

Provide the requested information if you wish to apply for grant funds to support the hiring of a qualified person to oversee gifted education in your AU. Grant funds may be used to support a 0.5 FTE position. Review the [role and responsibilities](#) document to ensure you understand the requirements of this position before applying.

**If you are new to the role and not yet highly qualified in gifted education, please request the USQP GT Non-Qualified Candidate Working Towards Endorsement form from our office and include it with your application.

Budget

As you enter information into the budget section of the USQP application, follow the instructions below.

Salary for Qualified Personnel

In the Budget Detail section for salary:

- Enter 0.5 in the quantity field.
- Enter the full 1.0 salary for the gifted director of record position in the cost field.
 - Note: even if you are not full time, enter the salary amount as if you WERE full time.

This will:

- Automatically calculate the 0.5 FTE salary for the position.
- Ensure you are requesting the maximum grant amount allowed.

The example below shows how this section should appear in the application.

Budget Detail		Narrative Description
Object Code:	0100 - Salaries	Salary of GT Coordinator
Function Code:	Instruction - Instructional Program	
Location Code:	[REDACTED]	
Quantity:	0.50	
Cost:	\$117,367.21	
Line Item Total:	\$58,683.60	

Benefits for Qualified Personnel

In the Budget Detail section, enter benefits:

- Start by entering 0.5 in the quantity field.
- Input the full cost of benefits for a 1.0 position in the cost field.

This will:

- Automatically calculate the 0.5 FTE benefit cost, which is the maximum allowable for the grant.

The example below shows how to complete the Benefits section of the application.

Budget Detail		Narrative Description
Object Code:	0200 - Employee Benefits	District benefits for GT Coordinator
Function Code:	Instruction - Instructional Program	
Location Code:	[REDACTED]	
Quantity:	0.50	
Cost:	\$40,335.00	
Line Item Total:	\$20,167.50	

Supplies for Universal Screening

In the Supplies section, enter the cost of the assessments used for universal screening:

For each assessment and grade level:

- Input the number of assessments needed in the quantity field.
- The quantity should match the number of students in the previous grade from the latest October Count, which you entered in the previous section of the grant application.
- If there is a discrepancy between the quantity and October Count numbers:
 - Explain the discrepancy in the narrative.
- Enter the cost of a single assessment in the cost field.
 - This will automatically calculate the total cost to universal screen with that assessment.

In the narrative description, include:

- The grade level and the name of the assessment.
- If applicable (BOCES, multi-district, or different testing at charter schools):

- Include the districts that are testing at this grade level and with this assessment.

Repeat these steps for each additional assessment:

- Create a separate entry for each grade level and each assessment.

The example below demonstrates how to complete the Supplies section of the USQP grant application.

Budget Detail		Narrative Description
Object Code: 0600 - Supplies		2nd grade CogAT Universal Screen
Function Code: Instruction - Instructional Program		
Location Code: [REDACTED]		
Quantity: 2,228.00		
Cost: \$15.91		
Line Item Total: \$35,447.48		
Item Key 14672		
Object Code: 0600 - Supplies		6th Grade Iowa Test of Basic Skills for Identified Students
Function Code: Instruction - Instructional Program		
Location Code: [REDACTED]		
Quantity: 202.00		
Cost: \$16.05		
Line Item Total: \$3,242.10		
Item Key 14675		
Object Code: 0600 - Supplies		6th grade CogAT Universal Screen
Function Code: Instruction - Instructional Program		
Location Code: [REDACTED]		
Quantity: 172.00		
Cost: \$15.91		
Line Item Total: \$2,736.52		

If you have additional costs, such as shipping and handling or scoring fees, enter them in the Other section of the budget detail, following the same process.

Related Documents

These documents are not optional if you have applied for funds in the related area of the USQP application. This means you must include Salary and Qualified Personnel Documentation if you have applied for that part of the grant.

Upload your documents in the "Related Documents" section:

This includes:

- Vendor Quotes
- Salary information
- Qualified Personnel Documentation
 - Evidence of endorsement or advanced degree in gifted education
 - Evidence of working toward endorsement

BOCES and Multi/District Specific Directions

If your BOCES requires signatures from all superintendents on a grant:

- Include that documentation as well.

If your BOCES has an authorized representative who can approve the grant application:

- It is not necessary to provide additional signatures.

Grant Distribution

As defined in section 22-20-205(2)(d), C.R.S., the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) will distribute grant funds to approved applicants, subject to available appropriations. Grant funds are typically distributed by CDE Grants Fiscal in August or September.

If sufficient funds are available to fully fund all applications, each Administrative Unit (AU) will receive its full approved amount. If funds are insufficient to fully fund all day-one applications, CDE will distribute funds on a pro rata basis. This proportional distribution will apply to the total amount approved for each AU. If funds remain after day-one distributions, day-two and day-three applications will be funded in the same manner until all funds are expended.

When an AU receives less than the requested amount, the AU must either:

- Supplement the grant with local funds to fully implement universal screening and/or employ qualified personnel; or
- Determine which allowable activities will be funded, which may include partial implementation based on available funds.

If the grant request is not fully funded, the AU Gifted Education Director of Record will decide how to allocate funds among allowable uses. This may include prioritizing one activity over another, selecting fewer grade levels for screening, or funding less than 0.5 FTE for the Gifted Director of Record salary and benefits.

Evaluation and Reporting

As part of grant compliance, Administrative Units are required to submit a [Final Expenditure Report](#) at the conclusion of the grant period. This report documents how funds were spent and ensures accountability for allowable uses. The report must be completed and submitted through the GAINS system. Evidence of progress toward endorsement must also be submitted to the Office of Gifted Education for personnel supported by grant funds who do not currently hold an endorsement or advanced degree in gifted education.

Data Privacy

CDE takes seriously its obligation to protect the privacy of student and educator Personally Identifiable Information (PII) collected, used, shared, and stored. PII will not be collected through the Universal Screening and Qualified Personnel 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.

Note: Documents submitted as part of the application must not contain any personally identifiable student or educator information, including names, identification numbers, or anything that could identify an individual. All data should be referenced/included in the aggregate, and the aggregate counts should be redacted to remove small numbers under n=16 for students or n=5 for educators.

Information reported to CDE in relation to grant activities is not confidential and is subject to public request. Awarded grantees should ensure reported information does not contain Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or confidential information.

Assurances

Applicants will agree to the below Assurances within the Universal Screening and Qualified Personnel Grant application in GAINS.

The applicant hereby applies for and, if awarded, accepts the state funds requested in this application. In consideration of the receipt of these grant funds, the applicant agrees that the General Assurances form for all state funds and the terms therein are specifically incorporated by reference in this application. The applicant also certifies that all program and pertinent administrative requirements will be met. In addition, grantees that accept Universal Screening and Qualified Personnel Grant funding agree to the following assurances:

1. The AU will annually provide the Colorado Department of Education with the evaluation information required.
2. Where an AU already uses state or local funds to fulfill these purposes, the AU must use the additional grant money received for other costs incurred in implementing the AU's gifted education program.
3. The AU Comprehensive Program Plan is current and has been submitted to CDE.
4. The Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) gifted education requirements are current for all districts in the AU and have been submitted to CDE.
5. The grantee will not discriminate against anyone regarding race, gender, national origin, color, disability, or age.
6. Funded projects will maintain appropriate fiscal and program records, and fiscal audits of this program will be conducted by the grantees as part of their regular audits.
7. If any findings of misuse of these funds are discovered, project funds will be returned to CDE.
8. The grantee will maintain sole responsibility for the project even though subcontractors 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 in budget allocation due to a pro rata distribution must be reported on the end of year budget report in terms of allowable uses.

Duplication of Benefits

Federal or State funds generally cannot be used to pay for the exact same cost or activity already paid for from another source of funding. This is sometimes referred to as a prohibition on duplication of benefits (DOB), or “double-dipping.” Entities using multiple funding sources should be aware of the different authorities and program requirements for each funding source, being careful to avoid DOB in instances where they are paying for similar costs or activities from multiple sources. (2CFR200.302) Subrecipients should avoid a duplication of benefits for any federal or state award. A duplication of benefits occurs when the amount of the assistance (i.e., funding) to a beneficiary exceeds the total allowable assistance (i.e., based on the total allocable expenses) to that beneficiary for that purpose.

9. Applicant certifies no duplication of benefits resulting in this funding will occur. If awarded, the Awardee (applicant) will notify in writing CDE should this occur.

Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

Recipients of grant funds are responsible for taking steps to reduce fraud, waste, and abuse.

Fraud, Waste, and Abuse can come in many forms, such as:

1. Embezzlement, bribery, or other public corruption involving federal or state funds;
2. Serious mismanagement involving federal or state programs or funds;
3. Theft or misuse of Federal student aid to include knowledge of fraud, waste, or abuse involving a financial aid administrator or other entity official(s), or knowledge of fraud, waste, or abuse involving a student loan servicer or collection agency;
4. Knowledge that your entity is not complying with regulations or laws involving Federal student aid or other federal or state program or operation requirements;
5. Conflicts of interest-violation of arm’s length agreements;
6. Contract and procurement irregularities;
7. Theft or abuse of government property;
8. Employee misconduct; or
9. Ethics violations by officials.

Entities are required to have a procedure or methodology for timely reporting, in writing, of any noted violations that may potentially affect the federal or state award. (2CFR200.113)

10. Applicant certifies there are sufficient internal controls in place to reduce or eliminate the possibility of fraud, waste, and abuse with these, or any funds within their agency, and if an instance occurs. If awarded, the Awardee (applicant) will notify CDE in writing.

Conflict of Interest

The applicant hereby certifies that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, there are no present or currently planned interests (financial, contractual, organizational, or otherwise) relating to the work to be performed under the contract or grant resulting from this award that would create any actual or potential conflict of interest (or apparent conflicts of interest) (including conflicts of interest for immediate family members: spouses, parents, children) that would impinge on its

ability to render impartial, technically sound, and objective assistance or advice or result in it being given an unfair competitive advantage. In this clause, the term “potential conflict” means reasonably foreseeable conflict of interest. The applicant further certifies that it has and will continue to exercise due diligence in identifying and removing or mitigating, to the Government's or Colorado Department of Education’s satisfaction, such conflict of interest (or apparent conflict of interest).

11. Applicant certifies there are sufficient internal controls in place to reduce or eliminate the possibility of any conflicts of interest with these or any funds within their agency. If awarded, the Awardee (applicant) will notify CDE in writing. (2CFR200.112)

The Colorado Department of Education may terminate a grant award upon thirty 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 GAINS and approved by CDE before modifications are made to the expenditures.

Approvals for this grant must be captured in GAINS from the following personnel:

- Applicant Authorized Representative
- Applicant Fiscal Manager