

QUESTIONS FROM SC COMMUNITY BLOCK GRANTS FOR EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM

Informational Call: Friday, October 5, 2018

Applications are due by 12 noon on Wednesday, November 7, 2018. Our office is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding SC Government Holidays.

Email electronic copy to Bunnie Ward at bward@eoc.sc.gov. You will receive an email when your application has been received.

Ten copies should be mailed or hand-delivered to:

SC Education Oversight Committee Office
1205 Pendleton Street
Edgar A. Brown Building, Suite 502
Columbia, SC 29201.

- **Correction to budget detail required by grant RFP: (1) April 2019-June 2019 and (2) July 2019-June 2020. A separate budget template should be completed for each of these budget periods.**
- **A new resource for transition to kindergarten is: Education Commission of the States: Transitions & Alignment from Preschool to Kindergarten at <https://www.ecs.org/transitions-and-alignment-from-preschool-to-kindergarten/>.**
- The Evaluation of Community Block Grants, 2016-17 Cohort Report is included in the email as an attachment.
- Collaboration Opportunities – EOC strongly encourages partnerships, including collaboration among multiple districts, higher education, faith-based, private centers, nonprofits, community foundations, and their entrepreneurial public educators to undertake state-of-the-art initiatives to improve students’ kindergarten readiness and to share the results of these efforts with the state’s public education community.
- Grantees will participate in a quarterly, informal non-audit reporting/evaluation to provide progress updates on implementation of grant strategies included in their logic model and budget status. There may be a request for grantee participation in additional presentations/meetings related to their grant-funded project. Challenges, goals and interventions will be discussed as well as indications, expected project outputs and specific outcomes.

OVERVIEW

This is the 4th year the General Assembly authorized and funded Proviso 1.65 (Appendix A, page R-1) which provides guidance and intent for a 4K Education Pilot Program. Grant awards cannot exceed \$250,000 and are one-time funding.

Proviso 1.65 requires the Grants Review Committee include four business representatives and three education representatives. The education representatives have experience in early childhood education, technical assistance and grant management.

Districts are encouraged to review the scoring guidelines for new and recurring grant proposals. The points awarded for each section reflect the weight of each area in the grant proposal.

Proposals should include strategies that are grounded in evidence, and the evidence or research should be included in the proposals.

Priority Points: Required by Proviso, the proposals may earn priority points based on (1) the poverty index of the geographic area where the project may be implemented and/or (2) if schools within the geographic area of the project have more students scoring “does not meet expectations” on SC Ready than the state average.

Timeline:

November 7, 2018 by 12:00 p.m.	Grant proposals are due to the EOC office.
January 17, 2019, in Columbia, S.C.	Selected applicants interviewed by Grants Committee. Each applicant selected for an interview will be notified of a specific interview time.
January 23, 2019	Successful applicants are notified. EOC develops press release.
February 2019	EOC Allocation of grant funds to grantees.
Spring 2019	Grants Orientation Meeting to encourage interaction among districts.

QUESTIONS:

1. Q: Can matching funds be in-kind or cash? Is there a requirement that some portion of the matching funds are cash?

A: Matching funds can be in-kind support and/or cash. Provide specific numbers for cash match or in-kind match. Staff salary, portions of time, and community partnership time allocations must have a percentage and dollar amount. Proposals with more budget specificity will be more competitive.

2. Q: What is the poverty index that EOC is using to determine poverty?

A: The Poverty Index for 2016-17 will be used. A link to the Index is included in the RFP and is on the SC Department of Education's website.

3. Q: Is there anything different about this grant application from last year?

A: Yes. The grant has been designed to require (and reward) grant proposals that provide realistic, measurable strategies and budgets that are itemized by strategy.

On the Cover page, please use a "elevator" sentence to describe your proposed project and do not use more than the space given.

4. Q: Is the expectation to expand 4K?

A: Specific expansion of 4K services is not a goal of the grant, but the addition of 4K classrooms is an allowable activity. Be prepared to provide rationale for the need to add classrooms and how the cost for the classroom will be sustained at the end of this grant cycle.

5. Q: My district is not a CERDEP district. Are we required to meet all of the CERDEP requirements, including DSS licensing requirements, to be eligible for the grant?

A: If a district does not receive CERDEP funds, the district is encouraged to meet CERDEP's programmatic/instructional requirements. Due to cost and the limited timeframe of this grant, the applicant is not required to meet DSS licensing requirements. CERDEP's programmatic/instruction requirements are outlined in the SCDE CERDEP Guidelines.

6. Q: Do all funds have to be expended prior to July 1, 2019?

A: All funds will be awarded in an up-front, lump sum. The grant is considered a "living document" and as "paper does not equal practice," the grant allows for adjustment and is considered a pilot program. Actual project implementation may occur during the July 2019-June 2020 time frame. Funds may be expended after July 1, 2019. However, the project must begin prior to July 1, 2019.

7. Q: If we collaborate with outside partners, do the personnel have to be state certified?

A: Teacher and staff requirements are dependent upon the staff's employer. If a teacher is paid by the school district, the teacher must be certified. If the teacher is paid by a private

child care provider, the teacher must meet First Steps requirements. Feel free to call Bunnie Ward at the EOC if you would like to discuss a specific situation.

8. Q: Can you have a mix of certified and non-certified providers?

A: Yes.

9. Q: Can an individual school apply for the grant?

A: Yes. The school's district must be the lead project manager and grants will only be awarded to the district. However, the proposal may focus on a specific school or group of schools within a district. The proposed project does not have to be districtwide. If the proposal will affect a school or group of schools, the poverty index and SCReady scores for the affected schools should be included, not the poverty index and SCReady scores for the entire district. not a subcontractor/project partner.

10. Q: Can you clarify the page limits for the application.

A: The proposal must not exceed 30 pages. The 30-page limited does not include (a) letters of support, (b) budget, (c) footnotes or endnotes, (d) cover page and (e) cover sheet. **Proposals over 30 pages will not be considered.**

11. Q. What is the Quarterly Report?

A: The Quarterly Report is a brief update on the implementation progress of the project, with information about upcoming project events, activities, lessons learned, adjustments to the project and status of project budget expenditures.

12. Q: How do we contact you?

A: Bunnie Lempesis Ward at bward@eoc.sc.gov (803) 734-2803 or Hope Johnson Jones at hjones@eoc.sc.gov or (803) 734-6148.

13. Q: Can you describe some of the current grants?

A: Project descriptions for all of the Awardees can be found on page R-7.

14. Q: Can you explain the timeline?

A: The proposals will be reviewed by the Grants Committee beginning November 9, 2018. The Grants Committee will select a group of proposals for in-person interviews. The interviews are scheduled for January 17, 2019 in Columbia, SC. District contacts on the Cover Sheet will be notified by phone and email if their district has been selected for an interview. The focus of the interview will be for Grants Committee members to ask clarification questions about the proposals. Each district will have 20-30 minutes for the Q & A process. Districts selected for a grant award will be notified via email, phone and/or letter by January 23, 2019.