

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

RFA # GDO—SSOS-BPG—15

District of Columbia

Office of the State Superintendent of Education



FY 2015 State System of Support Best Practices Grant

RFA Release Date

December 2, 2014

Intent to Apply Deadline (Mandatory)

December 12, 2014

Pre-Application Conference (Mandatory)

December 12, 2014

Application Submission Deadline

January 9, 2015

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Checklist for Application
FY 2015 State System of Support Best Practices Grant

- The applicant submitted the Intent to Apply form via email to katherine.cox@dc.gov by December 12, 2014. Hard copies of the form may also be handed to Katherine Cox in person at the mandatory pre-application conference on December 12, 2014. Please see Appendix 1 in the Request for Applications (RFA) for a copy of the form.
- The applicant attended the mandatory pre-application conference. Please see Section 2 in the Request for Applications (RFA).
- The applicant has responded to all sections of the Request for Application (“RFA”) and the application contains all the information and appendices requested. Please see Section 3 for more detail, as well as the Application workbook.
 - Tab 1 – Table of Contents
 - Tab 2 – Applicant Information & Certification (“Info & Certification”)
 - Tab 3 – Assurances
 - Tab 4 – Eligibility and Partnerships
 - Tab 5 – Project Description
 - Tab 6 – Logic Model
 - Tab 7 – Budget Narrative
 - Tab 8 – Itemized Expenditures
 - Tab 9 – Budget Summary
- The applicant has made certain the Application adheres to the direction and criteria of each section of this RFA.
- The applicant has submitted:
 - One (1) electronic copy in Excel format, and
 - One (1) signed PDF copy of the signature page, both emailed to katherine.cox@dc.gov
- Complete Applications are due by 5:00 pm on Friday, January 9, 2015. Applications received via email at or after 5:01 p.m. EST, on Friday, January 9, 2015, will not be reviewed. Any additions or deletions to an application will not be accepted after the deadline of 5:00 p.m. No hard copies of the application will be accepted at OSSE.**

Request for Applications
RFA # GDO—SSOS-BPG—15

Section 1: General Information

1.1 Introduction

The Division of Elementary, Secondary and Specialized Education (“DESSE”), within the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), is soliciting applications from District of Columbia public schools that have successfully implemented academic improvement strategies and are willing to partner with other schools to disseminate and support the replication of these practices. This grant opportunity is a component of OSSE’s State System of Support (“SSOS”).

1.2 Purpose of Funds

The purpose of the grant is to reward schools for implementing best and promising practices, to foster innovation through the dissemination of these practices, and to provide funding to build effective relationships between higher-performing schools and schools in need of appropriate supports aimed at raising student achievement. Grantees will be required to partner with at least one school in Priority or Focus status.

1.3 Source of Funding

There are two sources of federal funds from the United States Department of Education available for this grant opportunity: Race to the Top (“RTTT”) grants funds, also known as State Incentive Grant funds, made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, (Pub. L. No. 111-5, §14006, 123 Stat. 115, 2183), and Scholarships for Opportunity and Results (“SOAR”) Act funds made available through the DC School Choice Incentive Program, 84.370C, Public Law 108-199, III, DC School Incentive Act of 2003; Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act, effective April 15, 2011 (Pub. L. 112-10; 125 Stat. 201).

1.4 Requirement of Funding

As a component of OSSE’s State System of Support (“SSOS”), all successful applicants will be required to comply with information requests from OSSE in order to evaluate the impact of the SSOS Best Practices Grant. Successful applicants who receive some or all of their funds from the SOAR Act may also be required to comply with information requests from OSSE or the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES) designed to monitor and evaluate the use of SOAR funds and how such funds are contributing to student achievement.

1.5 Funds Available and Funding Period

At least \$1,700,000 will be available for awards. Individual grants are expected to range between \$100,000 and \$500,000 per award. The amount of each award will be, in part, determined by the number of proposed Priority and Focus school partners. The duration of this grant is for a period of one (1) year from the grant award date, although applicants who can implement their proposed plan by June 30, 2015, may be given funding priority.

1.6 Eligibility

OSSE seeks applications from all schools that believe that they have identified and successfully implemented practices or strategies that have led to improved student achievement. LEAs may submit an application on behalf of one or more school(s) that meet(s) the eligibility criteria described below but all applications will be evaluated at the school level. Schools which are part of multi-campus LEAs must submit applications that demonstrate LEA-level commitment to the project in order to be considered.

Schools in the following categories are eligible to apply:

- Category 1: Schools who have been in Reward or Rising Status and have achieved cumulative growth of at least ten (10) points over the course of two (2) years in Reading or Math;
- Category 2: Schools who are currently rated Tier I in PCSB's Performance Management Framework and schools who are rated Tier II with an overall percentage point rating of greater than fifty percent (50%); and
- Category 3: Schools that are "beating the odds" and have demonstrated strong or significantly improved performance of specific student subgroups or groups of students typically considered "at-risk" while at least maintaining achievement levels for all other groups. Examples of successful applicants in this category include schools that have successfully exited Priority or Focus status through the demonstrated implementation of school-wide strategies or schools in Developing status with significant growth for a given subgroup.

1.7 Funding Priority

In addition to the criteria above, priority for funding may be given on the basis of any of the following:

- *Cross-LEA Collaboration*: Applications from schools proposing to partner with schools in other LEAs may be given funding priority.
- *Cross-Sector Collaboration*: Applications from DCPS schools proposing to partner with charter schools and applications for charter school proposing to partner with DCPS schools may be given funding priority.
- *Accelerating Improvement*: Schools who can implement their proposed plan by June 30, 2015, may be given funding priority.
- *Maximizing Impact*: Schools who propose to partner with more than one Priority school may be given funding priority.
- *Hitting the Ground Running*: Schools who identify proposed partners and include a letter of commitment from the partner may be given funding priority.

1.8 Permissible Use of Funds

The funds associated with this RFA are strictly on a reimbursement basis and may only be used for allowable grant project expenditures during the grant period as follows:

- Costs must meet requirements of permissible use of Federal Funds within EDGAR 34 CFR Part 75, Part 76 and Part 80 and applicable OMB Circulars;
- Align with and support the principles outlined in the ESEA Flexibility Waiver;
- Align with and support the principles of the State System of Support; and
- Meet the conditions of the grant award notification and performance agreement.

All grant project budgets will be reviewed by a peer review panel, as well as DESSE staff to ensure expenditures are allowable and meet the intent of the purposes of this RFA. Examples of permissible uses of funds may include, if appropriate to support the proposed project, joint professional development activities, including hiring substitutes to enable teachers and staff to attend the professional development activities; tuition/expenses for certification programs; stipends for teachers and staff identified to participate in the project; and/or the purchase of materials.

Additional guidance about standards for determining costs for federal grants is available from Office of Management and Budget (OMB) at:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/omb/fedreg/2005/083105_a87.pdf

Section 2: Schedule

2.1 RFA Release

The RFA release date is December 2, 2014. The RFA is available online at www.osse.dc.gov or by contacting Katherine Cox at Katherine.cox@dc.gov to request an electronic copy.

2.2 Pre-Application Conference

The mandatory pre-application conference will be on December 12, 2014, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, 810 First Street, NE, 8th Floor (Room 806A), Washington, DC, 20002. Each interested school must send at least one representative in order to meet the attendance requirement.

2.3 Intent to Apply

All eligible entities seeking to receive funding under this RFA, must submit their Intent to Apply notification form (please see appendix), signed by an authorized signer, via email to katherine.cox@dc.gov by 5:00 p.m. on December 12, 2014. **Failure to submit the Intent to Apply notification will result in disqualification of the Applicant prior to review.**

2.4 Contact Person(s)

Applicants are advised that the following OSSE employees are the authorized contact persons for the grant program:

- Katherine Cox, Director, Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support, katherine.cox@dc.gov
- Elisabeth Morse, Deputy Assistant Superintendent for Policy, Planning & Charter Support, elisabeth.morse@dc.gov

2.5 Applications Due

Applications are due **January 9, 2015 by 5:00pm** and must be emailed to katherine.cox@dc.gov. Please use the following naming convention in the subject line: School Name_SSOS Best Practices Grant Application. (Example: Vine St. Middle School_SSOS Best Practices Grant Application)

2.6 Updates

Information and updates regarding the grant competitions will be emailed only to those schools that submit an Intent to Apply form and attend the mandatory Pre-Application Conference(s).

2.7 Awards Announcement

Awards will be announced via email and the OSSE website. It is expected that awards will be announced on **January 31, 2015**. OPCSFS will disseminate award letters and grant award notifications within 7-14 days after the awards announcement.

Section 3: Application

3.1 Application Content

The Application includes the following tabs:

- Tab 1 – Table of Contents
- Tab 2 – Applicant Information & Certification (“Info & Certification”)
 - Applicant Information
 - Total Funds Requested
 - LEA Certification
- Tab 3 – Assurances
- Tab 4 – Eligibility & Partnerships
 - Eligibility
 - Partnerships
- Tab 5 – Project Description
 - Describe Best Practice(s)
 - Detailed Partnership Plan
 - Measuring Success
 - Continued Progress & Innovation
 - Commitment to Learning Support Network
- Tab 6 – Logic Model
 - Complete at Least One Logic Model
- Tab 7 – Budget Narrative
- Tab 8 – Itemized Expenditures
- Tab 9 – Budget Summary

Section 4: Scoring

4.1 Review Panel

All grants within this RFA are competitive. A review panel or panels, depending on the number of applications submitted, will be convened to review, score, and rank each application. The review panel(s) will be composed of neutral, qualified, professional individuals selected for their expertise, knowledge or related experiences. Upon completion of its review, the panel(s) shall make recommendations for awards based on the scoring rubric(s). OSSE’s Division of Elementary, Secondary and Specialized will make all final award decisions.

[Appendix 1: Notice of Intent to Apply - Please see the next page.]



State System of Support Best Practices Grant

Notification of Intent to Apply

Please submit a signed, scanned PDF copy to katherine.cox@dc.gov with “Intent to Apply SSOS BPG” in the subject line by 5:00 pm on **Friday, December 12, 2014**. Hard copies may also be handed to Katherine Cox in person at the mandatory pre-application conference on December 12, 2014.

RE: Please accept this notification that the following *eligible* organization intends to apply for consideration of funding under the State System of Support Best Practices Grant.

School Name

School Address

Application Contact Person

Telephone

Email Address

Authorized LEA Representative Name and Title

Signature

Date