

Removing Barriers to CTE Programs for English Language Learner's and Students with Disabilities Grant

1. It appears as though the RFP is requesting two levels of a Needs Assessment. The first, or preliminary one, is needed for the proposal and requires research on current enrollment of students with disabilities, English language learners, and other items as explained in the RFP. Then, the RFP makes mention of a larger, more formal Needs Assessment undertaken as part of the grant award (page 4), including entities to be surveyed and from whom data will be collected. Also, on page 3, the list of expected outcomes at the completion of the year of funding includes "A summary of barriers and challenges gathered through a formal needs analysis....." Is this an accurate interpretation? If so, does this mean that an applicant, if they so choose, would be allowed to fund a Needs Assessment consultant to conduct the larger, more formal Needs Assessment if they decided they could not conduct it themselves?

A. You are correct.

2. In the RFP for this opportunity on page 3, the Expected Outcomes are listed as:
"A summary of barriers and challenges faced by SWD and ELL populations accessing CTE programs in school districts and BOCES gathered through a formal needs analysis that includes a review of labor projections. Development of an implementation plan addressing the barriers are identified, populations to be targeted and any priorities specific to the applicant. Each applicant must indicate responsibility of school districts and BOCES, community colleges, and business or community partners, with specific actions that will increase access to CTE programs by SWD and ELL/MLL." On page 4 the Needs section of the narrative calls for the following: "The needs analysis should describe the current enrollment of SWDs and ELLs in CTE programs, workforce labor projections, demographics of regional business workforce, potential business partners, awareness level of the need to address SWDs and ELLs by non-education entities (REDCs, DOL, business partners), that will be undertaken in the program including the entities to be surveyed and data collected. The report will include recommendations for implementing strategies addressing the barriers and challenges to accessing CTE programs by SWD and ELL/MLL students." Reading both of these statements, it is unclear where the information that should be gathered and presented in our response to the RFP ends and the information that will be gathered and later reported on during implementation begins. For example: would an analysis of the demographics of the regional business workforce be gathered and presented now in our grant narrative. or is that one of the things we should be prepared to do during implementation? Does the "awareness level" of the need in the business community need to be surveyed and analyzed before we apply, or is that something we would estimate now and follow up on in greater detail if we receive the grant? Is the "report" referred to in the last sentence quoted a document that will be prepared to summarize the work done during the grant period, or does it refer to the information you wish to see in our grant narrative? Please clarify.

A: Please note that the Expected Outcomes section has been clarified in the revised RFP. The grant proposal should contain information gathered using existing data and perceived challenges in the coverage area and describe them. This may be done through a preliminary survey of other entities or partners. The needs analysis report (at the end of the grant period) should provide a plan for eliminating the barriers and possible implementation strategies after conducting a formal needs analysis.

3. Is a survey to have been completed for the *Needs Analysis*? The *Needs Analysis* section description for the Grant Application Narrative says "to be surveyed" and "to be undertaken in the program" (future tense) but the scoring rubric states "analysis of surveyed entities" (past

tense). Should a survey be completed prior to application submission with results summarized in the *Needs Analysis* section or completed as part of the project activities and reported in the final report?

A. A: Please note that the Needs Analysis section has been clarified in the revised RFP. The Grant Application Narrative should describe the current enrollment of your focus population in CTE programs, workforce labor projections, demographics of regional business workforce, potential business partners, and awareness level of the need to address your focus population by non-education entities.

4. I am confused by the two *Expected Outcomes* on the second page of the Application Guidance and how they differ from the data required in the grant narrative. What is the difference between the first *Expected Outcome* that concerns a summary of barriers and challenges gathered through a formal needs analysis and the *Needs Analysis* section in the grant narrative?

A. See answer to question #2

5. What is the difference between the second *Expected Outcome* that concerns an implementation plan and the plan to be described in the *Targeted Populations and Priorities* section in the grant narrative? Is the plan to be created as an outcome of the project (planning grant) or implemented as described in the narrative (implementation grant)?

A. See answer to question #2

6. The “expected outcomes” on page 3: are applicants to complete this work before submitting an application, i.e., as part of the application-writing process? Or are these items to be completed by the end of the grant period?

A. See answer to question #2

7. On page 4 under the “Needs Analysis” section – what is the report you’re referring to? And is that to be submitted with the application, or created as part of the grant-funded programming?

A. A report is not required with the application. Please see the Needs Analysis section of the revised RFP.

8. Regarding your grant entitled “Removing Barriers to CTE Programs for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities, GC#17-015, I have a question regarding overall eligibility. It was unclear to me if grant proposals targeting just ELLs would be eligible for funding or if the fundamental requirement must include students who are both SWD and ELLs?

A. Please review the revised RFP as it clarifies that applicants should focus their application on either SWDs or ELLs..

9. For grant awardees, will State Ed provide guidance on conducting the formal needs assessment?

A. No, each applicant must determine the extent of the review based on their own populations and circumstances.

10. Can you suggest any models or templates for the formal needs assessment?

A. No, again this will be determined by local applicant scope of coverage.

11. Can the formal needs assessment be done in-house as long as applicants can demonstrate capacity?
A. Yes
12. In the needs analysis section, are there particular demographics that you are looking for in regard to the regional business workforce?
A. No
13. How will the additional points be allocated for applications addressing a greater number of populations and priorities, as mentioned on the bottom of page 4?
A. See revised RFP and Attachment 2- Scoring Rubric
14. We are interested in making significant improvements to a student-run, school-based enterprise – targeting students with significant disabilities in an industry area that is supported by our Regional Economic Development Council. The guidance identifies that the “cost of accessibility equipment” is an allowable expense; however, are costs related to equipment needed to support a targeted school-based enterprise an allowable expenditure? This would only be a portion of our complete proposal.
A. All proposed expenditures should be detailed in the budget narrative with a supporting rationale.
15. Should the grant application narrative be single or double-spaced? If charts are included, can they be single-spaced?
A. The narrative may be single or double spaced. Charts may be single spaced.
16. For planning purposes, when are awards expected to be announced?
A. Once proposals are received by the due date and depending on the number of responses, it is anticipated that all awards would be announced prior to the start of the 2017-18 school year.
17. Are there any other formatting requirements other than the 10-page limit (e.g., single vs. double spaced, font style, font size, page borders)?
A. No
18. Is the budget narrative included in the 10-page limit?
A. No
19. Please confirm that school districts do NOT need to submit the Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire and pre-qualify in the Grants Gateway.
A. Please see the list of exempt entities found at:
[Vendor Responsibility Documentation Requirements for State Contracting Entities](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep/resources_docreq_agency.htm)
(http://www.osc.state.ny.us/vendrep/resources_docreq_agency.htm)
20. Can grant funds be used to fund consultant teacher and/or remedial teacher support for SWDs for a particular initiative aimed at removing barrier for SWDs?
A. Yes, but understand that the funds must be expended by August 31, 2018 with no expectation of continued funding.

21. Do the targeted CTE programs for this grant have to only include SED approved CTE programs or can they be non-approved CTE programs as well?
- A. State-approved CTE programs are not a requirement of the grant.**
22. Could we fund a pilot research project of whether additional supports in the form of special ed teacher services in the CTE programs have an effect on SWDs success?
- A. No.**
23. Would a BOCES with an existing CTE program and a focus on serving incarcerated youth be eligible to apply for this program? These youth are provided standards-based high school courses, High School Equivalency Exam Preparation, English Language acquisition, academic intervention services, and career development. While these youth are with us on average for 45-90 days - and never for more than two years - BOCES works to return them to their home districts on track for college and career.
- A. Yes**
24. Is a district eligible to apply if it does not currently have a CTE program but wants to create one, which from the beginning eliminates barriers to ELLs and SWD and promotes gender equity?
- A. No**
25. Can this be written for just ELL or does it have to be ELL in SPED?
- A. The application could be written for just ELLs or just SWDs. See revised RFP and Attachment 2- Scoring Rubric**
26. Can these funds be used to provide CTE for adults with disabilities or who are English Language Learners?
- A. No, the intent of the funding is to remove barriers in secondary school or BOCES settings.**
27. And, if that's not an appropriate population for this RFP, does NYSED anticipate releasing an RFP for that adult population?
- A. No similar RFP with an adult focus is currently being planned.**
28. If a school district is applying, are they required to partner with a BOCES?
- A. No**
29. What is SED's definition of partner for this application? I.e., do partners need to be part of the planning? Or can they just participate in the proposed programming and qualify as a partner?
- A. A partnership or partner in this instance is an arrangement that provides mutual benefits to all involved.**
30. What is SED referring to when it mentions "technical materials" on the top of page 4? (Can you give an example?)
- A. Career and Technical Education programs in occupational areas have subject specific content such as automotive repair procedure manuals, software development tools, etc.**
31. Do you expect to offer this grant again?

- A. **There is no indication of continued funding at this time.**
32. The last bullet under the Budget Narrative on top of page 5 – “not exceed the available funds in the proposed service area” – what does that mean? All applicants, regardless of region of the state can ask for up to \$200,000, correct? What are the services areas you are referring to – are they areas of the state? Or programs for students?
- A. **The third bullet was included in error. It has been removed from the revised RFP.**
33. Are there any types of expenses not allowed?
- A. **Information about the categories of expenditures and general information on allowable costs, applicable cost principles, and administrative regulations are available in the Fiscal Guidelines for Federal and State Aided Grants at: [Fiscal Guidelines for Federal and State Grants](http://www.oms.nysed.gov/cafe/guidance/guidelines.html) (<http://www.oms.nysed.gov/cafe/guidance/guidelines.html>).**
34. Can New York City get more than one grant?
- A. **For purposes of this grant New York City is considered one school district. School districts and BOCES may only serve as fiscal agents in one award.**
35. Will a program that is replicable be viewed as a stronger application than others?
- A. **All submitted proposals will be reviewed using the criteria found in the rubric in the RFP (Attachment 2).**
36. How do you define “existing CTE program”? What constitutes a program officially being a CTE program?
- A. **CTE programs use the State learning standards of career development and occupational studies as a framework. In grades nine through twelve, career and technical education includes the specific disciplines of agriculture education, business and marketing education, family and consumer science education, health occupations education, technical education, technology education and trade/industrial education and with teachers having certification in these areas.**
37. Can programming to be used to help students in K-12 only? Or could programming also help ELLs/SWDs/gender equity for adult students?
- A. **The intent of the funding is to remove barriers in secondary school or BOCES settings.**
38. We would like to hand-deliver our grant applications. Is that permissible? If yes, what time will your offices close on March 2? In the past, we have been required to have a person’s name for delivery purposes when we arrived. Can you provide a name that we can use?
- A. **Please do not hand deliver as it does not guarantee timely or proper date stamping as would a postmark.**
39. All purchases of our BOCES are subject to the provisions of General Municipal Law Sections 103, which stipulates that purchases of commodities, on which the BOCES spends in excess of \$20,000 annually, must be procured through BOCES bid, NYS contract, or other viable government contract. BOCES does not have a discretionary spending threshold for M/WBE purchases. In the grant application, BOCES will specify the items for which funding is requested,

along with the anticipated M/WBE vendors of those products, with the greatest degree of accuracy possible. However, in instances where an item is not available on an already-established contract through an M/WBE vendor, it may become necessary to go through the competitive bid process, which cannot be undertaken prior to the grant award due to the uncertainty of funding. How is the grant recipient required to handle these situations? Including, is it okay if we have to change M/WBEs during grant implementation, if a competitive bid process after receiving the award dictates we use a different M/WBE than listed in our application?

A. NYSED encourages applicants to submit completed M/WBE documentation with the grant proposal. However, due to varying circumstances, grantees may request additional time to secure M/WBE participation. Grantees are allowed up to 30 days from date of notification of award to be in compliance. Where M/WBE vendors/providers cannot be identified, the grantee should indicate "TBD" in the submission documents. The M/WBE Grant Coordinator will work with grantee within the 30 day window to reach compliance.

40. If a lead applicant BOCES or school district partners with a university, may the personnel costs of the partner university be excluded from the M/WBE calculation in the same manner as the lead applicant's--as was done for the 21st Century Community Learning Center applications?

A. No, this is not a requirement of the RFP.