

DORS

Peer Mentoring

for Students with

Disabilities

Pre-Employment

Transition

Services

No. PreETS#2



Request for Grant

Proposal

Maryland State Department of
Education (MSDE)
Division of Rehabilitation Services
(DORS)
2301 Argonne Drive
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Release Date
Wednesday, November 20, 2019

Deadline for Application
~~Friday, January 3, 2020~~
Friday, January 17, 2020

No later than 11:59 p.m. EST

Notification Date
On or before
~~Friday, January 24, 2020~~
Friday, February 7, 2020

Proposal Application Guide

Name of Program	Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) Peer-Mentoring for Students with Disabilities Pre-Employment Transition Services, Pre-ETS#1
Authorization	Funding is made available through the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services -Vocational Rehabilitation Grants to States, Funds reserved for Pre-Employment Transition Services, CFDA 84.126, Award #H126A190027.
Total Funds Available	\$1,275,000 Up to \$425,000 is available per successful applicant for the entirety of the three (3) year program.
Total Number of Awards	Three (3) three-year awards per LEA covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 - July 17, 2020 to June 30, 2021 • Year 2 - July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 • Year 3 - July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023
Deadline for Receipt of Application	Thursday, January 3, 2020 Friday, January 17, 2020 No later than 11:59PM, EST. See Application Submission Instructions for details.
Award Notification	Notification of successful applicants will be sent by email no later than Friday, January 24, 2020 . Friday, February 7, 2020
Background and Purpose	<p>Consistent with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), which amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, effective July 22, 2014, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) seeks to provide/coordinate Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), specifically to students with disabilities beginning as early as age 14 through the end of the school year in which the student turns 21.</p> <p>Pre-ETS are similar to the regular ‘Transition Services’ but are focused on younger students, beginning at age 14 in at least high school.</p> <p>There are five (5) distinct services that can be provided under Pre-ETS, one of which is Instruction in Self-Advocacy. This service may include peer mentoring.</p> <p>The purpose of the DORS Peer-Mentoring for Students with Disabilities project is to increase access to Pre-Employment Transition Services, specifically peer mentoring, as well as improve self-advocacy in students with disabilities throughout the State of Maryland, with a particular focus on rural and underserved areas of Maryland. It is anticipated that participation in peer-mentoring will not only improve students’ abilities to advocate for their needs, but will also improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities through promoting high school completion and linkages to post-school services and supports.</p> <p>Peer mentoring is defined as a person close in age to his or her mentee who acts as a sounding board for ideas and plans and provides guidance in an informal manner. Mentoring relationships can address the needs of special needs students to stay in school, contribute to the students’ self-</p>

	esteem, and identify realistic career and academic goals. Research indicates that mentoring is especially effective in helping youth with disabilities transition into the workplace and adulthood.
Eligible Applicants	Proposers shall be one of the 24 Maryland Local School Systems (LLS).
Technical Assistance	For Request for Proposal (RFP) technical assistance, please contact: Ms. Jill Pierce, Staff Specialist for Transitioning Email: jill.pierce@maryland.gov Mr. Derick Serra, Program Manager, Technical Assistant Branch Email: derick.serra@maryland.gov All questions must be submitted via email before the application deadline. All responses to questions received by this date will be posted upon receipt at dors.maryland.gov and no later than Friday, January 3, 2020.
Renewable	At sole discretion of MSDE/DORS Selected proposals will receive technical assistance, at no charge to the school unit, through The Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center through its partner, Policy Works (http://disabilitypolicyworks.org/).(http://www.wintac.org/content/wipps#wipp3)
Geographic Area	Maryland
Required Components of Application	<p>Responses to this RFP should describe specific strategies for developing and carrying out peer mentoring activities, to supplement and not supplant school-based transition services, as Pre-Employment Transition Services through “Introduction to Self-Advocacy”.</p> <p>The proposed peer-mentoring program shall serve a minimum of 10 (ten) student mentees per academic school year within the student’s local education system, and ensure coordination with the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP or 504 Plan).</p> <p>Responses should include, at minimum, the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hiring Peer-Mentoring Coordinator(s) Identified position(s) to be responsible for coordinating the project and supervising/training all mentors. 2. Program Location(s) Identified school(s) in which the project will take place. 3. Recruitment/hiring of peer-mentors: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. This must be done through the LEA’s payroll process to ensure that the students hired are compensated in accordance with State and federal labor laws, including workers’ compensation. b. Peer-mentors are expected to work with mentee(s) for a minimum of 3 hours per week, throughout one academic school year. c. LEA shall submit the necessary tax information for the individuals and pay the required withholding taxes, submitting both employee and employer share as required by law. 4. At a minimum, peer-mentoring activities include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Communication with teachers and school staff, potential

	<p>employers, post-secondary institutes, parents, etc.;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> b. Requesting accommodations; c. Self-advocacy and participation in the IEP; d. Ongoing sustained encouragement and motivation for student (based on students individual goals); e. Encouraging participation in school and community activities; f. Acting as a role model and promoting self-determination; and; g. Establishing the appropriate times to contact the coordinator when a student may need more support and assistance beyond peer-mentoring. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Peer-mentoring training to be provided by the Peer-Mentoring Coordinator(s) (technical assistance will be provided by partner, PolicyWorks, the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center). 6. Peer-mentoring group activities to be facilitated by the Peer-Mentoring Coordinator(s). Activities should, at minimum, cover the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Vocational Rehabilitation services and assistance in connecting the mentees to access vocational rehabilitation services (if in at least their next to last year of high school); b. General career exploration; c. Post-secondary exploration (discussion of resources and assistance with completion of financial aid forms; application process to college, etc.); d. Identification of other sources of support and resources for students; and e. Identification of need and application of a reasonable accommodation at school and on the job. 7. Roles and responsibilities of the Peer-Mentoring Coordinator(s), which are not limited to, but shall include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identifying potential participants and referral to DORS: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Working with DORS to identify mentees to participate in the program and insuring a connection for mentees to DORS through referral and gathering of required documentation (Attachment A); and ii. Assisting DORS by obtaining required documentation to confirm that each mentee qualifies for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Attachment A and documentation of disability), prior to participation in the program. b. Providing ongoing structured guidance and supervision to peer mentors; c. Conducting monthly mentoring check-ins with students; d. Providing oversight of the proposed program; and e. Reporting to DORS. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Monthly progress reports for each mentee (Attachment B); and ii. Quarterly program progress reports (Attachment C); f. Developing relationships with all participating schools
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	<p>and community organizations (as appropriate);</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> g. Recruiting student mentors (mentors must be students of the LSS submitting the proposal); h. Matching mentors with students selected to participate as mentees; i. Representing the LSS as the main point of contact for this program; j. Facilitating monthly (at minimum) group mentoring meetings; k. Implementing quarterly activities for mentors and students with disabilities; and l. Managing an evaluation tool to monitor success of program. <p>8. Letter of support from the State Superintendent of the LSS.</p> <p><u>Special Notes:</u> At a minimum, peer mentoring will include 3 hours of peer mentoring services to all assigned students. The LSS will determine the most appropriate means to address the unique needs of the population served.</p> <p>The response must ensure cooperative planning with the local DORS management prior to submission of the application.</p> <p>A student with a disability, who requires services that are beyond the limited scope of Pre-ETS, should be referred to DORS for a determination of eligibility for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. An Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) may be developed for receipt of those services.</p>
<p>Memorandum of Understanding</p>	<p>Successful applicants are required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (see Attachment D for sample MOU), which delineates the roles and responsibilities of partners, including the reporting of individual monthly student mentee reports; quarterly progress and financial reports; and final summary reports. Failure to comply fully with the MOU and MSDE/DORS Assurances (Attachment E) may subject the grantee to penalties as outlined by 34 CFR 76 and 80.43.</p>
<p>Limitations on the Use of Funds</p>	<p>Responses should outline fees for the provision of the peer-mentoring program to students with disabilities as a Pre-Employment Transition Service. Funds may be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student mentor stipends; ● Personnel expenses, including salary and fringe, for the Peer-Mentoring Coordinator(s); ● Administrative costs; ● Mileage; and ● Program material and supplies to support the implementation of the program. <p>Cost(s) incurred outside the project period (e.g., prior to the approval of the funding) will not be funded. No funds will be allowed for meals or food. Funds may not be used for construction or renovation or to pay for indirect or subsequent time beyond the project period.</p>

<p>Budget</p>	<p>The budget must show costs breakdown and justifications, e.g., per year not to exceed \$425,000 over three years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff costs – number of weeks/hours per day/hourly wage, plus fringe; ● Student costs – number of students/number of weeks/hours per day/hourly wage; ● Administrative/overhead costs/percentage; ● In-kind support, if used, and as appropriate; ● Other (describe). <p>See Attachment F for budget template.</p>
<p>Proposal Review</p>	<p>The review of proposals will be conducted as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applications will undergo a technical review upon submission to ensure completeness. 2. A Review Committee established by the MSDE/DORS will evaluate applications using a scoring rubric outlined in this RFP. 3. Applicants may be contacted for clarifications as determined by the Review Committee. 4. Final approval for awards will be determined by the Review Committee.

Proposal Selection Criteria

Proposal Cover Sheet

1 page limit

Total Points=0

Every proposal must have a Proposal Cover Sheet. No other page may cover the proposal cover sheet. The subsequent information must be clearly stated in the following order:

1. Name of LEA;
2. Federal ID#;
3. The words, DORS Peer-Mentoring for Students with Disability - PreEmployment Transition Services, PreETS#1;
4. Name of contact and mailing address;
5. Telephone, fax, and email address of contact person;
6. Abstract (100-word limit); and
7. Dated signature (blue ink) of local Superintendent of Schools.

Project Narrative

10 page limit

Total Points=40

The Project Narrative is an opportunity to convince the readers that the proposed participation in this project is sound and deserves to receive funding. The Project Narrative should demonstrate the applicant's needs and capacity to meet the project goals and activities.

1. Project Activities (15 points)

- a. Role of the Peer-Mentoring Coordinator;
- b. Role of the mentors;
- c. Role of the mentees;
- d. Group activities based on curriculum (curriculum outline should be attached); and
- e. Individual mentee and mentor activities.

2. Recruitment and Enrollment (10 points)

Demonstrate the projects ability to:

- a. Partner with DORS and recruit a minimum of 10 students with disabilities to participate in the project as "mentees" (to include the identification of the number of students with disabilities that may qualify to receive DORS funded Pre-Employment Transition Services);
 - i. Responses should describe the nature and extent of the collaborative partnerships between DORS and the LEA. It is expected, at minimum, respondents will collaborate with their local DORS office when identifying students to participate in the project.
- b. Recruit and employ a minimum of 10 students to participate in the project as "mentors" (preference is for "mentors" also to be considered Students with Disabilities); and
- c. Identify specific population of students with disabilities (if any) to be targeted for participation in the project (grade level, disability, years out of age, etc.).

3. Key Personnel (10 points)

Demonstrate that the applicant:

- a. Has the ability to hire a Peer-Mentoring Coordinator(s) to coordinate the project;
- b. Has the appropriate staff capacity and partners (if applicable) to meet the requirements of this project (list an explanation of any other staff involvement);
- c. Has identified key partners, if applicable (include letters of commitment);
- d. Has identified a process of connecting recruited "mentees" to DORS for prior approval to participate in the project using required DORS forms (Attachment A); and
- e. Has identified a process of referring recruited "mentees" to DORS.

4. Letter(s) of Commitment (5 points)

A letter of commitment is required from the LEA's Superintendent's office, CEO or Acting Official (additional letters of commitment from other partners are required if they are intended to be involved in this project) and must include:

- a. A statement acknowledging and supporting the goal and objectives of the project;
- b. The LEA's expected gains from the project;
- c. As appropriate, the expertise and resources the LEA is making towards the project;
- d. A clear statement detailing the responsibilities of the partner; and
- e. A clear statement that the partner intends to continue a partnership with DORS beyond the awarded period.

Budget and Budget Narrative

Total Points=10

No page limit

The budget should provide and detail a good faith itemized estimate of the costs to the project for three years; and, that demonstrates reasonable and cost-effective approaches. It should integrate other sources of funding or services already provided by the applicant to students with disabilities. All costs described in the project narrative shall appear in the budget narrative and must have a corresponding entry in the itemized budget.

Attachment F, Budget Template, must be used in specifying project costs.

Appendices

Total Points=0

No page limit

The following Appendices must be included but will not apply to the page limit of the Project Narrative. Include other Appendices as deemed necessary:

1. Peer-Mentoring Curriculum overview (for both group activities and activities expected of the peer-mentors);
2. MSDE Recipient Assurances - *signed (blue ink)*;
3. Budget Narrative/Justification; and
4. Letter(s) of Commitment.

TOTAL MAXIMUM POINTS=50

Proposal Submission Requirements

- Cover sheet, signed by Local Superintendent in blue ink;
- Summary, not to exceed one page;
- Project Narrative, not to exceed 10 pages, excluding the forms required for submission. The narrative must use one-inch margins, double line spacing, and 12 point font. Charts may use single spacing and type size of 10-point font. Required forms and letter of commitment **do not** count toward the 10 page limit. See Proposal Selection Criteria;
- Letter of commitment from the LEA's School Superintendent, signed in blue ink;
- MSDE Recipient Assurances (Attachment E), signed in blue ink; and
- Transmittal: **Email/scan electronically entire proposal with blue ink signature on cover page to:**

Attention:

Jill Pierce Staff Specialist, Transition & Supported Employment, Email: jill.pierce@maryland.gov
and

Derick Serra, Program Manager, Technical Assistant Branch, Email: derick.serra@maryland.gov

The proposal must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. on ~~Friday, January 3, 2020.~~ Friday, January 17, 2020.

Non-discrimination Statement:

The Maryland State department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For inquiries related to Department policy, please contact:

Equity Assurance and Compliance Office
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent for Finance and Administration
Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street- 6th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2595
410-767-0426 - voice
410-767-0431 - fax
410-333-6442 - TTY/TDD