



Grant Information Guide and Application for Participation

Elementary Talent Development Mini-Grant SY 2025

Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Deadline
December 13, 2024
No later than 5:00 p.m. EDT

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Program Description

The Maryland State Department of Education is committed to supporting academic achievement and growth for students of all backgrounds and educational levels. The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future acknowledges the importance of all students while providing additional equitable support. Identification and inclusion in gifted and advanced programs remains an area of continued growth. Specifically, underidentification of certain racial and ethnic groups, students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students who come from economically disadvantaged households has led to large opportunity gaps. This mini-grant focuses on applying recent evidence-based recommendations to create a more diverse pipeline of advanced learners. The major goal is to open advanced education for all students who could benefit from it.

Frontloading, as described here, refers to a promising strategy in which students are universally exposed to enriched academic experiences in the early grades. This strategy aims to lift up students from the beginning of their educational journeys so that more of them have an opportunity to be identified for advanced programs later. When focused on underserved student groups, it can raise their achievement significantly which enables more students for advanced offerings in the years to come. This serves as an actionable support strategy for including more underserved students in gifted and advanced programs while also providing primary grade level support for more students being post-CCR ready by the end of 10th grade.

Recently MSDE’s Office of Research, Planning, and Program Evaluation summarized the research landscape on the effect of programs that front-load talent development strategies on GT identification. The team concluded that the evidence suggests that front-loading skills development can improve equity in GT programs. This mini-grant opportunity highlights MSDE’s support for evidence-based best practices. Below is an example of this promising practice within the field.

- **Baltimore City Logical Reasoning:** City schools have recently seen some success with increasing equitable representation in programming. While many factors can contribute to this positive change, leaders point to inclusion of logical reasoning lessons at the primary grade levels before universal screening. The type of thinking students are exposed to through these lessons is the same thinking they must demonstrate on the cognitive abilities assessments used in universal screening. Based in research, these lessons help provide opportunities and level the playing field for underserved students which aligns with further inclusion in GT programs. Without interventions or support, underserved student groups will continue to be excluded from programs.

This mini-grant focuses on the following key areas to expand access equitably to gifted and advanced programs:

- Providing instructional materials as front-loaded talent development programming.
- School and grade level professional learning activities related to early talent development.
- Specific and ongoing implementation and coaching support for individual classroom teachers.

GRANT OVERVIEW

Name of Grant Program

Elementary Talent Development Mini-Grant SY 2025

Purpose

Under this grant program, MSDE is inviting local school systems to identify schools to support talent development initiatives that lead to increases of underserved student groups in gifted and advanced programming.

Dissemination

This Grant Information Guide (GIG) was released on **September 13th 2024**.

Deadline

December 13, 2024

Grant Period

July 1, 2024 - September 30, 2026

Funding Amount Available

The total amount of funding available is \$100,000. Awards of up to \$10,000 per school will be distributed. LEAs can develop plans for up to three participating schools and can be awarded up to \$30,000.

Grant awards are contingent on the availability of funding.

Estimated Number of Grants

MSDE anticipates awarding grants to at least ten schools.

Eligibility

Funding eligibility is limited to public elementary schools with low enrollments of gifted students but high overall enrollments of underserved populations. LEAs will work with school leaders to identify schools seeking funding. School and central office leadership must commit to plans for successful implementation. Additionally, if selected, school teams implementing the talent development frontloading program must participate in and complete MSDE professional learning.

Submission Instructions

One application per LEA with all schools seeking funding will be accepted. Plans should be developed in collaboration with the school and LEA central office leadership.

This funding opportunity can be found on the MSDE Grants webpage. Grant applications must be submitted by 5:00 p.m.

December 13, 2024, via email to anthony.vargas@maryland.gov.

Authorization

Title IV, Part A of the ESEA is the Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) program

PROGRAM CONTACT

Anthony Vargas

Director, Advanced Academics and Gifted/Talented Programs

Office of Teaching and Learning

Phone: (410) 767-0182

Anthony.Vargas@maryland.gov

State Responsibilities

MSDE is responsible for providing required information, data, documentation, and technical assistance to facilitate the grantee's performance of the work. MSDE program staff will be available and make every effort to support on demand additional assistance when requested throughout the grant period. In addition, MSDE will monitor program implementation throughout the grant performance period to ensure each school is on target to meet its goals and fully expend its awarded program resources. Additionally, MSDE will provide school or team specific professional learning as well as coaching support in the form of at least two site visits for feedback on implementation.

Use of Funds

The following are examples of approved uses for the grant funds in accordance with the purpose of the grant. Other costs not listed here may be presented to the grant manager for determination of allowable expenditures.

Funds may be used for:

- Professional development for staff aligned to early talent development
- Evidence-based talent development resources and materials
- Teacher-leader stipend for talent development coaching and program implementation

Funds may not be used for:

- Food purchases;
- Activities or materials not reasonable and necessary;
- Activities that supplant the responsibilities of the LEA;
- Activities mandated through local and state legislation; and/or
- Activities not related to early talent development.

Project Proposal

GRANT APPLICATION

As a requirement for this program, applicants must address all areas in the grant application template found later in this document.

Project Description

The Project Description should be factual, brief, and focused on the LEA and schools selected project. The Project Description should cover the core aspects of the proposed project, such as the schools and target grade levels, a brief description of the goals, the strategies to meet identified goals, and intentional integration within the current curriculum and school day. The Project Description should be one page or less.

Extent of Need

Identify a clearly defined problem, and how the use of these funds will address the problem. Applicants should include a brief overview of the target audience and expected outcomes. A compelling proposal will have a clearly defined problem supported by school specific needs assessments.

Goals and Measurable Outcomes

State the overall goal(s) of the project. The goal(s) should address the main problem identified at the beginning of the needs assessment. Include all relevant groups and individuals in the target population. While there should be at least one goal, it is possible to have multiple goals; however, the more goals established, the more complex the project becomes. Goals must have long-term deadlines. Think about how to measure the change projected in each objective. If there is no way to measure a goal, it is not measurable, and should be rewritten. Measurable Outcomes are the anticipated outcomes to be accomplished for the term of the project and must be related to the goal(s). An exemplar goal focuses on increasing representation of students in gifted/advanced programs and increasing achievement of those students.

Plan of Operation, Key Personnel, and Timeline

The Plan of Operation includes the strategies and activities that will be implemented to achieve the project's goals, outcomes, and milestones. Describe a plan of operation that addresses, at a minimum, the key components of the program's implementation or expansion. Include a timeline and the key personnel associated with the plan of operation. Ensure that all administrative and key personnel responsible for the successful implementation and monitoring of the grant requirements are included. A compelling proposal addresses sustainability after the grant funds.

Strategies

Strategies are broad approaches (methods, procedures, techniques) employed to realize outcomes and accomplish goals. Applicants should begin this section with a justification as to why specific strategies were chosen, how they will help in accomplishing the stated goals, and the key personnel responsible for each strategy. What strategies will be used to reach project milestones, accomplish outcomes, and achieve project goals? Discuss how and why these strategies were chosen. Applicants should describe the targeted populations to be impacted by the strategies chosen and how they will be impacted. Exemplary strategies will improve equity within gifted/advanced programs as well as student achievement within those programs.

Evidence of Impact

Discuss your organization's history of impact on the target population, what has worked, what has not worked, and your track record in effectuating change. Document current or past efforts to address the problem. Show why those efforts failed or are inadequate to address the total need. Discuss how past performance has informed the proposed activities, and the future impact your proposed key activities are likely to have on the target population. Briefly identify new or other proposed evidence-based

strategies that will be implemented and how they will be measured to determine the impact on the target population.

Budget and Budget Narrative

The project’s budget should detail all related project expenses in a separate itemized budget. It should demonstrate the extent to which the budget is reasonable, cost-effective, and integrates other sources of funding. All costs described in the project narrative should appear in the budget narrative and must have a corresponding entry in the itemized budget for that year. Reviewers should be able to see a clear connection between the management plan and the budget line items.

Provide content justifying any line-item expenses that are not obvious from the project narrative. Discuss and align line-item activities in the budget narrative. Explain how the estimated cost of each line item was derived if the rationale is not obvious. An MSDE [Grant Budget C-1-25](#) form must also be completed, signed, and submitted as an appendix.

Following the budget narrative, include a line-item description. Group line items according to the following categories: Salaries and Wages, Contracted Services, Supplies and Materials, Other Charges, Equipment, and Transfers (indirect costs). Total each category. Each line must be detailed and specific. General expenses should be broken down into specific line items. There is no page limit for the budget, so be as detailed as possible. Here is an example of the budget and budget narrative template.

1. Salaries and Wages (list each position separately)

Line item	Calculation	Requested	In-Kind	Total
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
	Total for Salaries and Wages:	\$	\$	\$

Using the space below, explain how the costs for salaries and wages above are necessary, reasonable, and cost-effective.

Type response here.

The Review Process

The review of proposals will be a three-part process:

- Written applications will be pre-screened for submission requirements and inclusion of all required sections. Applications not meeting all pre-screen requirements may be returned to the applicant for revisions.
- A review committee established by MSDE will evaluate applications using the scoring rubric. The scoring rubric is tailored to the grant program, its intent, and intended impact on the target population.
- Final approval for awards will be determined by the review committee.

MSDE reserves the right to take into consideration geographic distribution when making awards.

Early Learners Talent Development Frontloading Mini-Grant Scoring Rubric

EXTENT OF NEED

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>The main problem and contributing factors are clear, concise, and demonstrate considerable understanding of the issues.</p> <p>The proposal details who is affected by the problem, and when and where the problem exists, including historical impacts on the target population(s).</p> <p>Data supports the identified problem. Local data is referenced to document the problem and includes demographic and other statistics.</p>	<p>The main problem is clear and concise.</p> <p>The proposal identifies who is affected by the problem and when the problem exists.</p> <p>Data supports the identified problem. Local data is referenced to document the problem and includes demographic and other statistics.</p>	<p>The main problem is missing or is not clear.</p> <p>The proposal does not accurately identify the target population(s).</p> <p>Data has not identified or does not support the problem stated.</p> <p>The proposal lacks details of how the funds will address the problem.</p>

GOALS AND MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>The goal(s) are measurable, clearly aligned to the extent of need, and ambitiously focused on effectuating change.</p> <p>Realistic and attainable outcomes illustrate a distinguishable effort to significant progress.</p>	<p>The goal(s) are measurable and aligned to the extent of need.</p> <p>Outcomes are realistic and attainable.</p>	<p>The goal(s) are not measurable are not clearly aligned to the extent of need.</p> <p>Outcomes are not realistic or attainable.</p>

PLAN OF OPERATION, KEY PERSONNEL, AND TIMELINE

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>All requirements listed in the "meets criteria" are listed and the applicant provides additional information. The plan outlines a clear commitment from school and district leadership with specific monitoring and action items regarding implementation. Expansion of programming beyond grant funding is clearly addressed.</p>	<p>The plan is clear and concise. There is a timeline and experienced personnel (with percentage of time) for all key activities. Names and titles are present. The plan outlines a commitment from school and district leadership regarding implementation. Sustainability of programming beyond grant funding is clearly addressed.</p>	<p>The plan of operation provided does not address the items identified in the extent of need. The plan does not demonstrate a clear commitment from school and district leadership regarding implementation. No information regarding sustainability after grant funding is included.</p>

STRATEGIES

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>The proposal provides several rationales for selecting specific, evidence-based strategies, and precisely how they will be implemented to ensure outcomes are achieved. Multiple broad strategies are identified with detailed and systematic methods, procedures, or techniques for successful implementation.</p>	<p>The proposal provides a clear rationale for selecting a specific strategy and how it will help achieve the outcome.</p> <p>Applicant provides broad strategies and includes the methods, procedures, and techniques for implementation.</p>	<p>No rationale for selecting specific strategies and how they will help achieve the outcome.</p> <p>Applicant only states some of the strategies, but does not include the necessary methods, procedures, or techniques for implementing.</p>

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>The application identifies how proposed strategies are evidence-based and will lead to the desired impact and lists success data for their existing program. They also provide information on how this intervention will be monitored and assessed beyond the current PreK-2 implementation cohort.</p>	<p>The applicant describes how the proposed program goals are research-based. There is data on how students in the program have progressed in prior years, and a description of what the intended impact of the proposed activities will be on the target population.</p>	<p>The application does not identify evidence of impact.</p>

BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE

Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteria
<p>The budget is detailed and comprehensive of all activities for successful implementation. The budget aligns to the proposal and does not rely entirely on grant funds. There are no mathematical errors, and all expenses are cost effective and appear necessary.</p>	<p>The budget is complete. The budget aligns to the proposal and is free of mathematical errors. Expenses are reasonable and allowable.</p>	<p>Budget does not align with the proposal, includes costs that are not reasonable or allowable, or has several mathematical errors.</p>

Timeline and Reporting Requirements

Date	Timeline Event
September 13, 2024	The Grant Information Guide and the application for participating are released.
September 18, 2024	All Advanced Academic and Gifted/Talented LEA leaders will receive this grant information through a session at the Content Collaborative
September 23 and September 26, 2024	MSDE will hold virtual open office hours for interested applicants.
December 13, 2024	The grant application is due.
January 24, 2025	MSDE will notify applicants of the award status.
September 30, 2026	The grant period ends.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Date	Reporting Requirement
Ongoing	Fiscal and programmatic monitoring
June 30, 2025	Interim Progress Report (C-1-25C) and interim Progress & Cumulative Variance reports are due.
January 5, 2026	Interim Progress Report (C-1-25C) and interim Progress & Cumulative Variance reports are due.
June 30, 2026	Final Progress Report (C-1-25D) and final Progress & Cumulative Variance reports are due.

Notes: Any requests for amendments must be submitted at least 45 days before the grant period ends, and must be submitted using the C-1-25B form found in the Grant Forms Workbook on the MSDE Grants [webpage](#). Final invoices must be submitted no later than 60 days after the grant period ends.

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 Operations

Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street - 2nd Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2595

410-767-0123 - voice
410-767-0431 - fax
Deaf and hard of hearing use Relay.

Customer Service Support Sessions

MSDE will hold one general customer service support session for all LEA Advanced Academic and Gifted/Talented leaders during our fall content collaborative listed below. During this session, MSDE personnel will provide an overview of the application process. Additionally, MSDE will hold two virtual office hour sessions for interested applicants. Session information is included below.

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

During Content Collaborative
Video call link: meet.google.com/cjn-fzcp-fpj

MSDE staff will also hold virtual open office hours on:

Monday, September 23, 2024

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
Video call link: meet.google.com/pcw-dsfj-wzx

Thursday, September 26, 2024

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Video call link: meet.google.com/kft-mupv-tcb

MSDE staff will also be available to provide technical assistance throughout the grant application process. If you have questions about the application or the process, please contact:

Anthony Vargas
Director, Advanced Academics and Gifted/Talented Programs
Office of Teaching and Learning
Phone: (410) 767-0182
Anthony.Vargas@maryland.gov

Grant Application – Proposal Cover Page

Institution/Agency/Jurisdiction Name:

Project Title:

Date of Submission:

Name of Contact Person:

Institution/Agency Address:

Contact Person Phone:

Contact Person Email:

UEI Number and SAM.gov registration screenshot:

Amount of the request for grant period (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025): \$

(Should agree with Proposed Budget)

Signature of Applicant

Date

Grant Application – Project Proposal

Project Proposal Refer to the Project Proposal section of this document for guidance.	
Project Description:	
Extent of Need:	
Goals and Measurable Outcomes:	

Goal	Identified Need	Milestone	Expected Outcome

Plan of Operation, Key Personnel, and Timeline:

Timeline	Strategy	Person Responsible and Tasks	FTE%

Strategies:

[Empty text area for Strategies]

Evidence of Impact:

[Empty text area for Evidence of Impact]

Grant Application - Budget and Budget Narrative

Please provide a detailed description of the requested funds that will be spent by using the categories listed below. Add more rows if needed. An MSDE [Grant Budget C-1-25](#) form must also be completed, signed, and submitted as an appendix.

1. SALARIES AND WAGES (LIST EACH POSITION SEPARATELY)

Line item	Calculation	Requested	In-Kind	Total
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
Total for Salaries and Wages:		\$	\$	\$

Using the space below, explain how the costs for salaries and wages above are necessary, reasonable, and cost-effective.

Type response here.

2. CONTRACTED SERVICES

Line item	Calculation	Requested	In-Kind	Total
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
Total for Contracted Services:		\$	\$	\$

Using the space below, explain how the costs for contracted services above are necessary, reasonable, and cost-effective.

Type response here.

3. SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS

Line item	Calculation	Requested	In-Kind	Total
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
Total Supplies and Materials:		\$	\$	\$

Using the space below, explain how the costs for supplies and materials above are necessary, reasonable, and cost-effective.

Type response here.

4. OTHER CHARGES

Line item	Calculation	Requested	In-Kind	Total
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
Total for Other Charges:		\$	\$	\$

Using the space below, explain how the costs for other charges above are necessary, reasonable, and cost-effective.

Type response here.

5. EQUIPMENT

Line item	Calculation	Requested	In-Kind	Total
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
Total for Equipment:		\$	\$	\$

Using the space below, explain how the costs for equipment above are necessary, reasonable, and cost-effective.

Type response here.

6. TRANSFERS (INDIRECT COSTS)

Line item	Calculation	Requested	In-Kind	Total
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
		\$	\$	\$
Total for Transfers:		\$	\$	\$

Using the space below, explain how the costs for transfers (indirect costs) above are necessary, reasonable, and cost-effective.

Type response here.

Total amount requested: \$

Grant Application - The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Section 427

Each application must develop and describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the project or activity to be conducted with such assistance, by addressing the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers to equitable participation.

[Section 427 of the GEPA Form](#)

[Section 427 of the GEPA Notice to All Applicants](#)

Grant Application - Appendices

Appendix A: [A signed recipient assurances page](#)

Appendix B: [A signed C-1-25 MSDE budget form](#)

Appendix C: A completed [GEPA Section 427 Statement](#)