

### Mohammed Choudhury

State Superintendent of Schools

То:	Members of the State Board of Education
From:	Mohammed Choudhury, State Superintendent of Schools
Date:	August 22, 2023
Subject:	MSDE's Grantmaking Evolution: Insights, Challenges, and the Path Forward

### Purpose

To 1) inform the State Board of Education about the significant enhancements and updates that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has made in its grant management processes; and 2) to present a detailed account of how MSDE is aligning its grant programs to the strategic plan and moving towards an outcome-based and customer support mindset, in contrast to the prior compliance-focused approach.

### **Background/Historical Perspective**

Historically, MSDE's approach to grant management was largely compliance-driven, with various challenges including a lack of streamlined processes, and inconsistencies in Request for Proposals (RFPs) and application requirements. Recently, MSDE has undertaken comprehensive efforts to innovate and improve this approach. These efforts are aimed at raising program quality expectations, aligning grant programs with the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and the State Board and MSDE's Strategic Plan, and employing modern tools to streamline the application and management experience for grantees.

### **Executive Summary**

The presentation provides a comprehensive overview of MSDE's grant administration, detailing both the structure and recent reforms. It highlights the types and accountability of various grants, the evolution of MSDE's approach from decentralized and compliance-focused to a more centralized and outcome-oriented model, and the ongoing efforts towards continuous improvement, streamlining, and modernization in grant application and management processes. MSDE staff will guide the State Board through a comprehensive review of the Department's grant administration and recent reforms, organized into five chapters:

- Grants by the Numbers
- What's in a Grant?
- Grants Administration at MSDE
- Grant Process Evolution July 2021 through Now Change and Change Management
- Continuous Improvement Ongoing Initiatives to Improve Grantmaking, Grant Monitoring, Grant Support, and Grant Administration

### MarylandPublicSchools.org

### Action

No action is required; this information is for discussion only.

### Attachments

MSDE\_StateBoard\_ GrantmakingEvolution \_8-22.23.pdf

Division of Financial Planning, Operations, and Strategy

# MSDE's Grantmaking Evolution: Insights, Challenges, and the Path Forward

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION August 22, 2023



Presented By | Justin Dayhoff, Assistant State Superintendent, Financial Planning, Operations, and Strategy

## **Presentation Highlights**

- Grants by the Numbers
- What's in a Grant?

Introduction

- Grants Administration at MSDE
- Grant Process Evolution July 2021 through Now Change and Change Management
- Continuous Improvement Ongoing Initiatives to Improve Grantmaking, Grant Monitoring, Grant Support, and Grant Administration
- Questions

- 1. Grants by the Numbers
- 2. What's in a Grant
- 3. Grant Administration at MSDE
- 4. Grant Process Evolution July 2021 through Now
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## **Grants by the Numbers**

Grants by the Numbers will present a detailed breakdown of the various grants administered by MSDE, reflecting the diverse range of funding sources and the significant amount managed at MSDE.



# MSDE Grant Summary (1 of 2)

- During fiscal year (FY) 2023, MSDE managed more than 138 grant programs, providing funds to 1,825 awardees amounting to more than \$1 billion.
- These amounts exclude the FY 23 child care stabilization grants, another grant program that alone reflected 5,700 awardees and \$50 million.
- These amounts also exclude the FY 23 child care provider and employee bonus program, which has so far awarded more than \$11 million to more than 3,000 eligible child care providers and employees.

**MSDE Grant Program Snapshot** Number of Grant Programs 138 1,825 (7,525 including child care Number of Awardees providers) Amount Awarded/Managed\* \$1,006,615,545

Total dollars exclude Blueprint State aid and one-time child care grant funding in FY 23, which account for more than \$7 billion in additional, unrestricted Blueprint formula pass-through grants and child care grants.



# MSDE Grant Summary (2 of 2)

- Most of MSDE grant programs, in quantity (not dollar value) are federal programs (70 federally funded grant programs, including Division of Rehabilitation Services federal Vocational Rehabilitation funding).
- Most grant programs are associated with three MSDE Offices and Divisions:
  - The Division of Early Childhood
  - The Division of Early Intervention/Special Education Services
  - The Office of Teaching and Learning, Instructional Programs and Services

### **MSDE Grant Program Distribution**

Federal Grant Programs	70
Formula Grant Programs (Federal and State)	30
Grants Programs Released in FY 24 So Far	44



# Grant Timing (1 of 2)

- Adoption of Blueprint Triggers Change: The Blueprint for Maryland's Future mandated rapid, systemic changes in MSDE operations, distinct from historical practices.
- **Revised Grant Application Timelines:** To align with the Blueprint's framework, MSDE adjusted grant application timelines and fund release schedules for optimal and consistent implementation across the state.
- **Streamlined and Transparent Grant Process:** MSDE introduced a one-stop website for grant applications and centralized management, aimed at simplifying the experience for grantees, standardizing application expectations, and ensuring transparent communication regarding these changes.



# For example, MSDE is completing its transition to a single, consolidate federal Title application process in 2023-2024.

Grant	FY 21 Release Date	FY 22 Release Date	FY 23 Release Date	FY 24 Release Date
Title I, Part A	10/20/20	12/1/21	7/1/22	9/15/23
Title I, Part C Migrant	3/30/21	3/30/22	1/19/23	9/15/23
Title I, Part D Sub-Part 1 Neglected and Delinquent	2/9/21	7/19/21	1/20/23	9/15/23
Title I, Part D Sub-Part 2 Neglected and Delinquent	12/10/20	3/30/22	1/20/23	9/15/23
Title II, Part A Supporting Effective Instructional Every Student Succeeds Act	6/30/21	9/22/21	9/16/22	9/15/23
Title III, Part A English Language Acquisition: State Formula Grant	7/20/2020	7/1/21	7/22/22	9/15/23
Title IV, Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment Program	1/7/21	12/7/21	7/1/22	9/15/23
Title V, Part B Rural and Low-Income Schools	8/5/2020	8/4/21	1/11/23	9/15/23



- Comparing grants for fiscal year (FY) 2024 (this year) to grants for FY 2021 (where release date data are available), MSDE is, on average, 31.86 days ahead on release/timing.
- Comparing grants for FY 2024 (this year) to grants for FY 2022, MSDE is, on average, 34.75 days ahead on release/timing.
- Of the 6 grant programs that were late this spring, all released within 30 days of the prior time, with the exception of Judy Hoyer program grant, which was 36 days late.
  - The others were 15 days, 15, days, 21 days, 4 days, and 7 days behind FY 22 release dates.

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# What's in a Grant?

This chapter distinguishes between grants and procurement, categorizes grant types, and underscores statutory definitions, discretion, competition, and accountability. It clarifies Federal vs. State formulas, mandated versus discretionary awards, and restricted versus unrestricted funding.



### Grants v. Procurement/Contracts (1 of 3)

- **Grant/Subgrant:** A grant is a "legal instrument of financial assistance between a State grantmaking entity and a non-State entity that is: used to enter into a relationship the principal purpose of which is to transfer anything of value from the grant-making entity to the grant recipient to carry out a public purpose authorized by law and not to acquire property or services for the direct benefit or use of the grant-making entity." See <u>Md. Code Ann., State Fin. & Proc. § 2-210</u>.
- **Procurement Contract:** A procurement is an "expenditure by a State agency for the acquisition, rental, purchase, or lease of supplies, services, maintenance, construction, construction-related services, architectural services, engineering services, and the lease of real property." See <u>COMAR</u> <u>21.01.03.02</u>.



- Full and Open Competition Requirement: MSDE will issue grants and procurements under a competitive process unless MSDE approves sole source justification or regulations allow for direct solicitation without competition. This includes agreements with other governmental agencies. All MSDE grants will be posted at the MSDE Grants website portal. MSDE posts procurement solicitations estimated over \$50,000 on EMMA.
- Sole Source Award: A Division may award a grant without competition in the following scenarios:
  - Grantee specifically designated by funder in writing;
  - Item is available only from a Single Source;
  - The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from publicizing a competitive solicitation; or
  - After solicitation of several sources, competition is considered inadequate.
  - Sole source justifications for procurement contracts are regulated by COMAR 21 05 05

What's in a Grant?

What's in a Grant?

## Grants v. Procurement/Contracts (3 of 3)

As part of the grants cycle, MSDE programs and/or the Office of Grants Administration and Compliance complete a Grants/Procurement checklist to verify MSDE's use of the correct vehicle (contract or grant).

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image: program for public purpose specified in authorizing statute or MSDE/State Board of Education policy.       an MSDE Division or its employees' operation.         4.       Often an academic institution or or main business operations. provide the goods or services within mission is aligned with the grant's public grant business operations. provide the following examples of grant programs:       Provides the goods or services the MS         5.       See the following examples of grant programs:       -Funds are provided to develop and manage.       -A endor is needed to provide maintenal acustome support for help-des services to many different purchasers besides the MS         5.       See the following examples of grant programs:       -A endor is needed to provide maintenal acustome support for help-des services.       -A endor is needed to provide maintenal acustome support for help-des services.         5.       See the following examples of grant programs to nerrow achievement gaps between students.       -A endor is needed to provide advice.         -Funds are made available for applicants to create a robotics education program after the school day.       -A tengarcy needs a new IT portal for families to receive childcare scholarship award as a grant)         Provide Explanation:		Grantee has responsibility for programmatic decision-making or management responsibilities for the program.	d	Yendors operate under the direction of th ASDE and lack overall independent ecision-making/management esponsibilities.
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MSDE is responsible for managing several different types of grants – federal Title/federal formula grants, State formula grants, and other competitive and non-competitive State program grants.

- Federal Title and Federal Formula Grants: Financial resources allocated to states or local entities based on predetermined criteria set out in federal legislation. The grants ensure that federal funds address national priorities and are distributed according to authorizing statute. The distribution methodology is usually rooted in legislation and aims to provide resources where they are most needed.
  - **Example:** Title I funds, distributed to school districts with a high percentage of low-income students, ensuring that children who face more challenges get additional resources.
- As they are derived from federal statutes, the conditions and allocation methods are fixed at the national level and have less state flexibility.



MSDE is responsible for managing several different types of grants – federal Title/federal formula grants, State formula grants, and other competitive and non-competitive State program grants.

- **State Formula Grants:** Monetary assistance given by state governments to local entities based on specific formulas reflecting the needs and demographics of those entities. The programs allow states to ensure that specific needs within the state are met, particularly when there's a desire to equalize opportunities or resources among different regions or populations.
  - **Example:** Maryland provides Special Education Blueprint State aid funds to school districts based on the number of students with special needs in each LEA.
- These grants help level the playing field and ensure that all areas of the State, regardless of their individual wealth or resources, receive essential funding.



MSDE is responsible for managing several different types of grants – federal Title/federal formula grants, State formula grants, and other competitive and non-competitive State program grants.

- State Program (Non-formula) Grants: Targeted funds for specific state initiatives, projects, or programs, not determined by a set formula. These programs encourage new initiatives, pilot programs, or responses to immediate state-level challenges or opportunities and allow for a more tailored approach to funding, focusing on specific outcomes or goals.
  - **Example:** Maryland Leads.
- This grant type offers flexibility and allows states to allocate resources to new, innovative, or pressing needs as they arise.



## **Competitive Grants v. Non-Competitive Grants**

In managing educational funding for the state, the Maryland State Department of Education differentiates between competitive and non-competitive grant programs. This distinction, detailed below, illuminates the characteristics and implications of each type for the State's educational endeavors.

- **Competitive Grants:** Grants that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) awards based on a competitive process or specific criteria. Funding is not guaranteed and depends on MSDE's review of the proposal's merit, alignment with strategic priorities, and available funds. Flexibility allows MSDE to address emerging educational needs, invest in promising practices, and encourage innovation.
- Non-Competitive/Direct Grants: Grants distributed by MSDE based on pre-determined formulas or requirements and priorities set in legislation or policy no competitive application process. Funding is automatically determined by set criteria such as student enrollment, demographic data, specific mandated awardees in State law, or specific programmatic needs in the authorizing appropriation.



# Restricted v. Unrestricted Grants (1 of 2)

Grantee understanding of the type of grant they have received is essential to ensure compliance and effective financial management.

- **Restricted Grants:** Grants that mandate detailed oversight and necessitate prior approval for each spending action. Payments are made retroactively after each invoice or expenditure has been reviewed and approved.
  - These programs:
    - Require consistent monitoring and administrative oversight.
    - Ensure alignment with grant purpose and objectives.
    - May impact the cash flow for grant recipients.



# Restricted v. Unrestricted Grants (2 of 2)

Grantee understanding of the type of grant they have received is essential to ensure compliance and effective financial management.

- **Unrestricted Grants:** Grants that allow for automatic distribution without meticulous expenditure reviews. Funds are disseminated in predetermined amounts and on a set schedule, independent of reported spending.
- These programs:
  - Provide greater flexibility for recipients in spending.
  - Reduce administrative oversight in terms of invoice approval.
  - Are beneficial for predictable budgeting and financial planning.
- Blueprint State aid is administered, by law, in six, bi-monthly payments and is an unrestricted grant. However, MSDE has implemented reporting and accountability rules per 5-406 of the Md. Education Article to ensure MSDE maintains proper oversight and monitoring of Blueprint funds.

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## **Grants Administration at MSDE**

In July 2021, MSDE faced challenges in grants administration, marked by noncompetitive awards, inconsistent monitoring, and decentralized operations. The establishment of the Office of Grants Administration and Compliance in Spring 2022 marked a significant leap towards elevating grant processes, ensuring transparency, quality, and alignment with Maryland's educational vision.

### A Snapshot of Grants Administration in July 2021: The Road Ahead

### **Setting the Scene**

As July 2021 dawned, the new Superintendent was confronted with a Grants Administration system fraught with inconsistencies, questionable practices, and oversight gaps. These challenges were deeply rooted, with significant implications for Maryland's educational landscape.

### **Significance of Grants**

Grants play a pivotal role in educational development, funding pivotal programs, and initiatives. The administration of these funds determines the efficacy of every dollar spent and, by extension, the educational outcomes for countless students.

### Mandate for Change

The initial assessment was clear: MSDE's grant administration needed a comprehensive overhaul. And with the OLA's recent findings echoing this sentiment, change wasn't just desired—it was imperative.



### Noncompetitive Awards: Creating High-Risk Grant Investment Scenarios

- **Bypassing Competition:** A noticeable volume of grants were directly awarded, circumventing competitive mechanisms. This not only raised questions about transparency but also about whether the best candidates were being chosen for funding.
- **Ambiguous Decision-making:** The new administration identified instances where grantmaking was designed based on existing grantee relationships and/or external pressures rather than outcome-driven program intent. Such actions, intentional or not, risked eroding public trust, raising ethical concerns and potentially compromising the quality of funded programs.
- **Financial Implications:** Beyond these concerns, such practices could lead to sub-optimal allocation of resources. Without competitive checks and rigorous rubrics/evaluation, there is no guarantee that the most deserving or impactful projects were receiving the necessary funding.



## **Monitoring Challenges**

From Checking Boxes to Ensuring Impact

- **The Compliance Trap:** Historically, MSDE's grant monitoring (when monitoring occurred, which did not always occur) was heavily compliance-oriented. While ensuring rules were followed, this approach overlooked assessing the real-world impact of funded projects, potentially allowing inefficient programs to persist.
- **Disparity in Evaluation:** Different divisions, different standards. This mosaic of monitoring methods made it nearly impossible to cross-compare projects or ensure that evaluations were fair and uniform.
- Lost Opportunities: Without effective monitoring, MSDE lost crucial opportunities for feedback, learning, and iterative improvement. This not only affected current grant programs but hindered the evolution of future initiatives.



A House Divided: The Pitfalls of Fragmented Administration

- **Silos in Operation:** Individual Divisions in MSDE, with their unique processes for grant administration, functioned as isolated silos. This made inter-Divisional collaboration challenging and hindered a unified strategy for state education.
- Accountability Challenges: This decentralization muddled the waters of responsibility. With no clear ownership, inefficiencies or missteps became harder to rectify, and a culture of collective responsibility was elusive.
- **Operational Inefficiencies:** Differing tools, timelines, and expectations meant resources were often duplicated, and efforts reduplicated. This not only consumed more administrative resources but also made overarching strategy alignment nearly impossible.



A Wake-up Call: Legislative Findings from 2020-2021 Underscore Urgent Reforms

- The Importance of Site Visits: OLA's emphasis on the lack of site visits was telling. These visits offer firsthand insights, qualitative assessments, and a ground-level view of grant implementation—elements that desk-based monitoring simply cannot provide.
- **A Lax Attitude:** The audit pulled no punches, highlighting areas where MSDE's oversight was superficial, risking both financial waste and compromised program outcomes. In several instances, grants with significant monetary values were inadequately monitored.
- **Invoice Irregularities:** A closer look at invoices and their supporting documents revealed lapses in due diligence. In certain cases, large sums were approved without thorough checks, raising alarms about potential misallocations or even misuse of funds.



The creation of MSDE's new Office of Grants Administration and Compliance (OGAC) in spring 2022 ushered in an era of enhanced quality, rigor, monitoring, support, and accountability for MSDE-administered grant programs.

- **Centralized Oversight:** Positioned in the Division of Financial Planning, Operations, and Strategy, OGAC offers a unified approach to managing grants and fiscal programs across MSDE.
- **Online Access:** Stakeholders can now conveniently locate and access all <u>MSDE grant programs</u> <u>online</u> providing never-before transparency and ease of access.
- **Alignment with Strategic Initiatives:** Ensures fiscal goals and objectives align with MSDE's multiyear strategic plan and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.
- **Collaboration with Content Experts:** Works alongside experts in MSDE divisions to ensure grant award processes are streamlined, accessible, and equitable.



# The Office of Grants Administration and Compliance

- **Documentation & Approval:** Reviews all grant-related materials developed by MSDE Divisions, ensuring thoroughness and accuracy before any submissions.
- **Communication:** Maintains consistent communication lines with grant staff, project directors, and finance departments, ensuring seamless integration throughout the grant cycle.
- **Grant Archive:** Supports and ensures consistent program monitoring of all grant programs, creating a comprehensive, centralized, and easily accessible archive of all MSDE grants.
- **Compliance & Reporting:** Guarantees alignment with all reporting timelines, monitoring policies, and efficiently manages grant close-outs.
- **Professional Development & Training:** Offers monthly grant-related PD for MSDE staff and ongoing technical support, training, and orientations for awardees and sub-recipients.
- New Funding Opportunities: Assists MSDE Divisions in securing new funding through federal notices or foundation/non-profit initiatives. Coordinates the submission of federal applications via SAM.gov.

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Grant Process Evolution July 2021 through Now – Change and Change Management

MSDE embarked on a transformative journey to enhance its grantmaking and improve outcomes. This involved elevating program quality expectations, transitioning from a compliance mindset to one that emphasizes outcomes and customer support, and strategically aligning grant programs with the Blueprint and the subsequent Strategic Plan.



## **Change and Change Management**

### Internal Changes (part 1 of 2)

- Raising Program Quality Expectations: In our effort to maximize the impact of state investments, we recognized the need to elevate the standards in our grantmaking. This called for challenging traditional frameworks and pushing past the "we've always done it this way" mindset. By setting and demanding higher program quality expectations, we are ensuring more effective and efficient use of resources, ultimately aiming for superior outcomes from every dollar invested.
- Shifting MSDE from Compliance Mindset to Outcome-Based and Customer Support Mindset: Historically, our approach was compliance-centric, focusing primarily on ensuring processes were followed. But for truly transformative results, we have shifted to an outcome-based and customer support mindset. This transition, though challenging, has meant pivoting from ticking boxes to prioritizing the end results of our grants and the satisfaction and needs of our grantees. Our vision now is to ensure every grant creates tangible, lasting positive change while offering our partners robust support.



## **Change and Change Management**

### Internal Changes (part 2 of 2)

• Aligning Grant Programs to the Blueprint and, now, the Strategic Plan: Our commitment to forward-thinking investment and impact is evident in our endeavors to align grant programs with the Blueprint and the MSBOE and MSDE's Strategic Plan. This alignment ensures that our grant-making efforts are not only consistent but also synergized with our broader organizational goals. By having our grant programs reflect the milestones set in the Blueprint and Strategic Plan, we are effectively setting a coherent direction for State investments, emphasizing strategic planning, and fostering a culture of continual growth and improvement.



## Providing clear guidance on program expectations.

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#### Required Components

- To be considered for funding, proposals must include:
- Qualified key personnel, including club sponsor;
- Student access to essential technologies and materials; this may include physical and/or virtual robotics platforms;
- Activities aligned to recognized robotics standards, curriculum, or instructional programs;
- Schedule of meeting dates and location;
- Evidence of compliance with the LSS safety and privacy policies, including those related to non-system employees;
- Equivalent access for students with disabilities regarding location, technologies, and digital resources, and:
- Description of how the proposal will be implemented consistent with
   applicable disinfecting, social distancing, masking, and other COVID-19
- related safety and health guidelines

#### Eligible Applicants:

- A public school with an existing robotics program,
   A public school developing a robotics program,
- A nonprofit entity partnering with a public school to support an existing robotics program,
- A nonprofit entity partnering with a public school to develop a robotics program,
- A nonprofit entity supporting an existing robotics program where the majority (51% or more) of members are public school students, and
   A nonprofit entity developing a robotics program where the majority (51% or
- more) of members are public school students.

#### Proposal Review:

- The review of proposals will be a two-part process.
   Written applications will be pre-screened for eligibility and inclusion of all required sections. Applicants not meeting all pre-screen requirements will not be read.
- A review committee established by the MSDE will evaluate written applications. The committee will be composed of representatives from outside agencies and MSDE personnel. Reviewers will comment upon the proposals and assign numerical scores based on a common rubric.

The MSDE will consider geographic distribution when making awards.

Award Notification: Notification of awards will be sent by mail on or about Monday,October 5, 2020.

Total Funds Available: \$350,000.00

Length of Grants: Pending Release of Funds

Estimated Number of Grants: Thirty-five

Estimated Average Grant Amount: \$10,000.00 The former grant program request for proposal, while emphasizing the necessary components a program should include to qualify for funding, left little room for imaginative program design. **Applicants did not have clear guidance on or leadership toward the types of programs that might be best suited for success**.

The primary focus was on ticking the prescribed boxes, with innovation and creativity often taking a backseat.

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## Providing clear guidance on program expectations.

#### Maryland Robotics Grant Program 2024

Maryland Robotics Grant Program 2024

May 25 - July 10, 2023

#### **Program Requirements**

To be considered for funding, a Maryland robotics grant program must demonstrate a commitment to the following outcomes:

- The school or organization has developed effective strategies to inform and prepare students for entry into Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs of study at their LEA. This may include activities such as career exploration, mentorship programs, and industry partnerships.
- The school or organization has clear intentions to use the robotics program to build a K-12 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) pipeline. This means that the program should be designed to engage students and encourage them to continue their STEM education to and through high school.
- Students will have access to essential technologies and materials, including physical and/or virtual
  robotics platforms. The grant program should provide students with the necessary tools and
  resources to fully participate in the robotics program and achieve the program's well-articulated
  learning objectives.
- Student activities are aligned with the Maryland K-12 Computer Science Standards and/or the Standards for Technological and Engineering Literacy. The program should be designed to support and enhance the existing curriculum or instructional programs and should be consistent with the learning objectives of these standards.
- Logistics, such as meeting dates, times, and locations, is clearly articulated and supports the goals
  of the program. The program should be well-organized and clearly communicate the expectations
  for student participation and engagement.
- Compliance with LEA safety and privacy policies, including those for non-system employees, is
  documented. The program should be conducted in accordance with all relevant policies and
  regulations to ensure the safety and privacy of students and staft.
- Access for students with disabilities regarding location, technologies, and digital resources is readly available. The program should be designed to accommodate students with a range of disabilities and ensure that they have equal access to the program's learning opportunities.

#### The strongest grant applications will connect proposed activities to their long-term impact on CTE and STEM programs. Applicants should address the following questions in their application:

- How will the robotics program be intentionally used to increase enrollment in CTE pathways and STEM courses?
   What recruitment strategies will be implemented to target participation from traditionally
- Interferences of acoustic formation of the students and students of color?
   How will the proposed robotics program align with the Maryland K-12 Computer Science
- Standards and/or the Standards for Technological and Engineering Literacy? • What strategies will be used to sustain the robotics program beyond the grant funding period? • How will you involve parents, guardians, and the wider community in supporting the program and
- encouraging student participation? How vill you measure the success of your program, both in terms of student engagement and achievement, as well as long term impact on CTE and STEM enrollment?
- What kind of professional development or training opportunities will be provided for the instructors involved in the program?
- What practices will be integrated into the program to ensure that the program is accessible to all students?
- How will school resource personnel, including school counselors and administrators, be informed
  of the program, and leveraged for program support, recruitment, and retention?

#### Resources to consider when developing answers to these questions:

**Questions and Resources to Consider** 

Kindergarten Robotics: Using Robotics to Motivate Math. Science, and Engineering Literacy in Elementary School (Center for Engineering Education Outreach)

STEM in Afterschool System Building Toolkit (Statewide Afterschool Networks) Code.org's Robotics Curriculum (Code.org)

Robotics Education and Competition (REC) Foundation (REC Foundation)

Teaching Robotics at the Primary School: An Innovative Approach (Science Direct)

Impact of Robotics and Geospatial Technology Interventions on Youth STEM Learning and Attitudes (University of Nebraska)

LEGO Robotics: STEM Sport of the Mind (International Society for Technology in Education)

Today's grant information guides mark a significant departure from this traditional approach. These guides are now crafted to **inspire innovation** while ensuring alignment with MSDE's overarching objectives. By **drawing clear parallels, seeding imagination, and even offering preliminary drafts, MSDE has made its vision transparent**.

This revamped approach clearly communicates what is envisioned for successful programs, fostering a more collaborative and supportive application process. As a result, **applicants are better positioned to design programs that not only meet grant criteria but are also intrinsically aligned with the Department's larger goals for educational excellence**.

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### **Leveraging Application Requirements to Drive Outcomes**

School Name	Free and Reduced Price %*	Facility Type	Total Enrollment Served by Proposed Equipment	Equipment Requested	Cost of Equipment, Installation, etc.	Key Focus Area(s)	Child Nutrition Program(s) Utilizing Equipment
		☐ School ☐ Production Kitchen ☐ Central Kitchen				Meal quality Food safety Energy efficiency Expand participation	SBP
		School Production Kitchen Central Kitchen				Meal     quality     Food     safety     Energy     efficiency     Expand     participation	SBP
		School Production Kitchen Central Kitchen				Meal quality Food safety Energy efficiency Expand participation	SBP
		☐ School ☐ Production Kitchen ☐ Central Kitchen				Meal quality Food safety Energy efficiency Expand participation	SBP
		School kitchen Production Kitchen Central Kitchen				Meal quality Food safety Energy efficiency Expand participation	SBP

\* Current free and reduced price meal data is available at: <u>www.eatsmartmaryland.org</u>.

#### PROPOSAL NARRATIVE OUTLINE (to be submitted with Proposal)

#### 1. Effective and Efficient Use of Resources

- Describe the equipment requested:
- Will this equipment replace an older model of the same type of equipment or will this be the first of its kind in the kitchen?
- Is there existing local funding for equipment purchases?
- Include the cost of maintenance and repair over the past year for present equipment.
   Include an estimate of cost of repairs vs. purchase of new equipment.
- Are parts available to repair old equipment?
- Will old equipment be moved to another school?
- · Include the cost of removal of old piece of equipment, if known.
- · Will the equipment improve the overall school meals programs infrastructure and food service?

#### 2. Focus Areas

- Discuss how the request fits the key focus area(s) indicated in the Project Details chart and the Priorities on page 2. Additional aspects to consider may be:
- Changes to menus (e.g., increase fresh and/or local fruits/vegetables, new foods) due to time saved because
  of equipment.
   Health inspection orders to update or replace equipment.
- Health hispection orders to update or replace equipment.
   Does the building's current electrical and plumbing systems support requested equipment
- · Does the equipment have computerized alarm systems or temperature control auto recording?
- Estimate participation increases impacted by this equipment.
- How the equipment will highlight healthier menu options or increase access to and appeal of nutritious foods?
   Energy rating on new equipment vs. old equipment being replaced.
- Energy raing on new equipment vs. old equip
   A Procurement Process
- Procurement Process
- Present a proposed timeline for the procurement of the requested equipment • Will funds be expended within one year if awarded a grant?
- Whit turks be expended within one year if awarded a grant?
   What steps will be taken to procure this equipment competitively, quickly, and successfully?
- Describe the LEA approval process to purchase the equipment.
- · Discuss any additional costs needed to fully install/utilize this equipment
- Is the requested equipment a stand-alone item or a part of a larger plan. For larger plans, indicate which
  items must be funded for the plan to be successful and what other funds exist if only partially funded.

#### 4. Justification for funding:

Discuss the reasons why the LEA/school(s) should be selected for an equipment assistance grant. Summarize the impact that new or renovated equipment will have on this site's food service. Summarize how a grant will benefit the students who participate in the school meals programs. Previously, MSDE's grant application requirements focused mainly on logistical prerequisites without clear guidance on expected outcomes. This often left applicants navigating **ambiguous directives**, with an emphasis on strict compliance rather than on meaningful, tangible results.

The resulting programs, though aligned with application specifications, could be misaligned with MSDE's overarching vision and lack a way to gauge and measure program and investment success.



### Leveraging Application Requirements to Drive Outcomes

Equipment Assistance Grants for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) 12/26/2022 -2/1/2023

of these Equipment Assistance Grants will benefit recipient SFAs by enabling them to meet equipment needs associated with a return to standard operating procedures

#### Priority will be given to:

High-needs schools (i.e., schools in underserved areas and schools with limited access to other resources) where 50 percent or more of the enrolled students are eligible for free or reduced-price

- Other factors include, but are not limited to, the following
- · Opportunities to realize meaningful impacts on nutrition and quality of meals (such as serving more local foods or replacing fryers with combination steamer overs)

   Strategies for adopting lunchroom changes that provide more convenience and appeal to the
- student population (e.g., highlighting healthier choices, redesigning menus that target healthier entrees/options) The age of food service equipment or lack of appropriate items
   The availability of existing State and local funding for equipment purchase
- · Priority is also given to schools that have not previously received an NSLP Equipment Gran

Schools are encouraged to implement innovative strategies for school lunch programs that encourage nealthy eating and efficient food service delivery. Allowable equipment for purchase under this program is listed in Attachment A. If desired equipment is not listed, complete the attached Equipment and Other apital Expenditures Approval Request

Funding proposals must contain the following to be considered for funding:

- Completed Grant Application Resumes for key personnel
- A signed C-1-25 MSDE budget form
- signed state recipient assurances page A signed federal recipient assurances page

### Application for Funding

#### REQUIRED COMPONENTS

#### A. Application Cover Page (1 Page)

The cover page should include all contact information and grant partnership information including the total amount of the grant and the organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number

#### B. Project Narrative (up to 5-page limit)

The FY 22 Equipment Assistance Grant provides funds that will allow the NSLP Operators to purchas uipment to serve healthier school meals, improve food safety, and expand access to school meals. The application for funding must include information about the services to be supported by the funding, as well as the outcomes expected

Justification for Funding

Discuss the reasons why the LEA/school(s) should be selected for an equipment assistance grant. marize the impact that new or renovated equipment will have on this site's food ser Summarize how a grant will benefit the students who participate in the school meals programs

Goals, Measurable Outcomes and Milestone

Equipment Assistance Grants for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) 12/26/2022 -2/1/2023

Indicate the performance goal(s) to which you will target the resources provided by this grant. Identify what are the measurable outcomes. List the goal(s) and measurable outcome(s) for each equipment request. See the example below.

#### Evidence of Impact

Describe how the proposed plan and strategies being implemented will lead to the desired impact. List the evidence of impact for each equipment request. See the example below

Example of Documenting Goals, Measurable Outcomes and Evidence of Impact

Facility Name	Facility Type Select all that apply	Equipment Requested	Cost of Equipment, Installation, etc.	Key Focus Areas Select all that apply	CN Program(s) Using Equipment Select all that apply	Total Enrollment Served by Proposed Equipment	Free and Reduced- Price Percentage
Lima Elementary School	School Production Kitchen Central Kitchen	Dish machine	\$55,000	Meal     Quality     Food     Safety     Energy     Efficiency     Expand     Participation	□ SBP ⊠ NSLP	310	82%
Justification for funding	A new dish mach has replacement sanitization of re	parts. A new r	nachine will also				
Goal(s)	the energy	efficiency of th Infunction, and	is equipment, r	educe the use o	of disposable tra	eplacement part ays/utensils due ntain adequate	to dish
Measurable Outcome(s)	Improve energy efficiency     Reduce use of disposable trays/utensils     Maintain adequate sanitization of recusable dishware						
Evidence of Impact	<ul> <li>Cost to pure</li> <li>Warranty p</li> <li>Replacement</li> </ul>	chase disposab rovided for one	le trays/utensile year on new e ily obtained for	s will be reduce	d by 95% covers replacer	ectric and Gas E nent parts and I	S
Mike Middle School	School Production Kitchen Central Kitchen	4 well- hot/cold drop-in	\$28,000	Meal     Quality     Food     Safety     Seregy     Efficiency     Efficiency     Participation	SBP NSLP	450	100%
Justification for funding	Adding a 4-well population and	expand particip	ation in NSLP				
Goal(s)	<ol> <li>Add 4-well hot/cold drop-in to serving line to meet higher volume of meals served due to increased student population</li> </ol>						
Measurable Outcome(s)	Expand capacity of serving line     Equipment purchased will be energy efficient     Equipment will assure food is held at proper temperature						
Evidence of Impact	<ul> <li>Equipment</li> </ul>	will be Energy	Star rated, which	h will decrease	the electric/ga	e of 50% particl s bill by 2% of installation) I	

Mandand State Department of Education

The revamped MSDE grant application process champions clarity and measurable outcomes. Detailed goal expectations, illustrated with concrete program examples, guide applicants towards success. Applications now **provide prospective grantees with** detailed information about expected goals and the metrics that will gauge success.

Instead of ambiguous directives, MSDE paints a clearer picture of its aspirations by providing multiple examples of program goals indicative of success. This data-driven approach ensures not just compliance but the realization of impactful results that resonate with MSDE's objectives.

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### **Consistent, Clear Review Rubrics and Criteria**

#### **Required Components**

Proposals must use the prescribed format on page 5 of this RFP; all submissions must contain the following elements to be considered for funding Project Cover Sheet: Must use <u>Appendix A</u> form, page 20;

- Project Abstract;
- · Table of Contents
- Project Narrative
- Statement of Need: May include data from the 2019/2020 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment;
- · LECAC Goals, Alignment with Statewide Goals, Milestones, and Strategies;
- · Evaluation & Dissemination Plan: (The evaluation will be an internal self-evaluation/reflection and can
- e completed by Chair/Co-Chair of the Council or a designee at no cost) Management Plan/Key Personnel: At a minimum, include Chair/Co-Chair, Fiscal Agent, list of all council members (highlighting the Head Start representative) and subcommittees
- · Integration with Early Childhood System Development and Strategic Planning;
- Sustainability Plan;
- · Equity Assurances; and
- <u>Appendices</u>: (See page 18)
- Budget Narrative Form (<u>Appendix B</u>, page 19)
   Itemized Budget Form / C-1-25 (<u>Appendix C</u>, page 21)
- Action Plan (Appendix D, page 25) Management Plan Worksheet (Appendix E, page 26)
- Project Timeline (Appendix F, page 27)
- By-Laws (Appendix G, page 29)
- Recipient Signed Assurances (Appendix H. page 30-27)
- Résumé of Key Personnel Signed Letters of Commitment from the local Judy Center and other project partners (as
- appropriate)

#### Priority

Competitive Priority: Local Councils that meet a 10% match (including in-kind) will receive up to ten (10) extra points

Eligible Applicants: Identified fiscal agents of the Local Early Childhood Advisory Councils in the State of Maryland, as verified by the MSDE grant manager.

#### Proposal Review

- The review of proposals will be a four-part process 1) Written applications will be pre-screened for submission requirements and inclusion of all required sections.
- Applicants not meeting all prescreen requirements will not be read. 2) A review committee established by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will evaluate written applications. The committee will be composed of MSDE personnel. Reviewers will comment upon
- the proposals and assign numerical score Applicants should be available for individual follow-up questions as determined by the review committee
- 4) Final approval for awards will be determined by the review committee.
- MSDE reserves the right to take into consideration geographic distribution when making awards.

#### Award Notification

Notification of awards will be sent by e-mail by Monday, June 1, 2020

#### Total Funds Available \$600,000

The amount of total funds available is contingent upon the continuing availability of federal funding for the Preschool Development Grant Birth-5 Renewal Grant.

Length of Grants: Six months (July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020)

#### Project Period:

July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022 This application covers the full Project Period. Grantees will be required to submit an annual budget for January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 and January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022.

Estimated Number of Grants Up to 24

Estimated Average Grant Amount: \$25,000 per year (\$75,000 over three years)

#### Fund Use:

- Cost(s) incurred prior to the approval of the grant may not be funded through the award. The following are examples of approved uses for grant funds in accordance with purposes of the grant. Other costs not listed here may be presented to the grant manager for determination.
- Professional development for partnering agencies. Additional professional development sessions may depend on the training needs of staff and needs assessment/strategic plan.
- Materials and supplies (i.e. instructional materials, books, related supplies for family involvement or home visiting activities, purchase of state recommended curriculum for child care partners).
- Costs for a meeting trained facilitator, costs for purchasing supplies to facilitate meetings, costs for materials including promotion and social public awareness, and costs to secure a temporary project nanager to oversee the meeting prep, logistics and minutes
- Costs of MSDE approved local initiatives, costs for travel reimbursement, costs associated with stipends for members and parents to attend meetings, costs for covering substitutes if teachers are attending professional development, and costs for hotel accommodations to attend PD to support the goals of this
- o Costs for increasing the capacity of LECACs to serve as early care and learning local governance
- entities, including staffing Indirect costs (may not exceed 10% or the total fund request).

#### Funds may not be used for:

- Supplanting existing program funds
- Capital improvements; Teacher and assistant salaries & benefits.
- Special employee compensation; or
- Purchase of office furniture and equipment

In the past, MSDE employed a variety of assessment rubrics for grant determinations of differing quality, content, type, and expectation. Also, MSDE rarely released a scoring rubric with a grant RFP, which meant that applicants were unaware of program quality and design expectations.

### With varied criteria and a lack of

**uniformity**, it was challenging to ensure a fair and transparent evaluation process for all applicants.



#### **Consistent, Clear Review Rubrics and Criteria**

Areas	Level 3	Vement Scoring F	Level 1	Areas	Level 3 Exceeds Criteria	Level 2 Meets Criteria	Level 1 Does Not Meet Criteri
Project Abstract	Exceeds Criteria The project abstract outlines a concise and comprehensive summary of the target population, goals, strategies, and partnerships.	Meets Criteria The project abstract addresses the required components.	Does Not Meet Criteria The project abstract is missing or does not address the required components.	Evidence of Impact	The proposal provides two or more examples that explain the history of impact on the target population including discussion of past efforts, failures, and successes toward influencing change. The proposed activity/project and how the target population is expected to be influenced by the efforts of specific- to implementing this grant.	The proposal provides at least one example that explains the history of impact on the target population. The proposal describes the future impact of the activity/project and how the target population will be influenced by change.	No examples that explain the history of impact on the target population. The proposal does not describe the future impact of the activity/project.
Extent of Need	The main problem and contributing factors are clear, concise, and demonstrate considerable understanding of the issues. The proposal details who is affected by the problem, and when and	The main problem is clear and concise. The proposal identifies who is affected by the problem and when the problem exists. Data supports the identified problem. Local	The main problem is missing or is not clear. The proposal does not accurately identify the target population(s). Data has not identified or does not support the problem stated.				
	where the problem exists, including historical impacts on the target population(s). Current qualitative and quantitative data is cited to clarify illustrate the problem. Data is derived to clarify illustrate the problem. Data is derived data references. Applicant demonstrates extensive history of expertise and aligns to evidence-based practices pacific to the population they intend to serve that llustrate progress in the	data is referenced to document the problem and includes demographic and other statistics. Applicant identifies demographics or other statistics relevant for the population(a) intended to be served. Applicant provides an example of their history of expertise or aligns to evidence-based practices specific to the population they intend to serve.	Applicant does not identify demographics or other statistics of the population(s) intended to be served. No citations or research included in proposal, The proposal lacks details of how the funds will address the problem.	Goals, Measurable Outcomes, and Milestones	The goal(s) are measurable, clearly adjened to the extent of need, and ambitiously focused on effectuating change. Realistic and attainable outcomes illustrate a distinguishable effort to significant progress. Milestones for each intended outcome ensure continued monitoring for success and include response to meeting targets.	The goal(c) are measurable and aligned to the extent of need. Outcomes are realistic and attainable. Milestones are provided for measuring progress of each intended outcome.	The goal(s) are not measurable are not clear aligned to the extent of need. Outcomes are not realisti or attainable. Milestones are not provided or do not align to outcomes.
	addressing the identified problems.			Strategies	The proposal provides several rationales for selecting specific,	The proposal provides a clear rationale for selecting a specific	No rationale for selecting specific strategies and

MSDE has now implemented standardized and rigorous rubrics, ensuring that all grant applications are assessed using consistent, objective criteria, and releasing rubrics in each grant information guide.

This not only **elevates the evaluation process and rigor of evaluation criteria** but also **provides clear direction for applicants, promoting transparency and fairness in determining successful grant recipients**.



#### External Changes (part 1 of 2)

- **Open Competition:** To ensure fairness, transparency, and the pursuit of excellence, MSDE has championed an open competition framework for our grants wherever possible and appropriate. This approach allows a wide array of entities to compete, fostering innovation, and ensuring that State investments are directed towards the most impactful and promising initiatives. By diversifying and expanding our grantee pool, MSDE is inviting fresh perspectives and solutions that meet the evolving needs of our education ecosystem.
- **Grant Monitoring:** MSDE has committed to ensuring that our grants not only provide financial resources but also guidance throughout the grant tenure. MSDE instituted mandatory site visits for all programs and rigorous reviews of invoice submissions. These measures ensure compliance with relevant federal and state laws and regulations. But beyond compliance, our checks throughout the grant process are designed to offer more hands-on support, allowing grantees the flexibility to adjust, modify, and course-correct during the grant performance period. This proactive approach eliminates the pitfalls of waiting until a final report to address challenges, ensuring timely interventions and more successful grant outcomes.



#### External Changes (part 2 of 2)

- Increased Accountability: In an era driven by data and results, we've bolstered our emphasis on measurable outcomes in our grant determination process. Our focus is not just on allocating funds but on the broader impacts of those funds. Grantees are now required to consistently submit measures of success and provide real-time data. This allows MSDE to gauge the ongoing effectiveness of grant programs, ensuring they are achieving desired results and making necessary adjustments when they're not. It's about creating a transparent, iterative relationship where progress is continually assessed and celebrated.
- **Customer Service and Support:** Our commitment to grantees extends beyond funds it's about building a collaborative partnership. To this end, we've implemented mandatory Technical Assistance (TA) sessions at the outset of every grant, ensuring grantees have a clear understanding of expectations and processes. Furthermore, our dedicated staff now makes themselves available for one-on-one meetings upon applicant requests. This offers grantees personalized guidance and underscores our dedication to their success, fostering a culture of mutual respect and collaboration.



Navigating the transformative shifts in grant management, both internally and externally, has required deliberate change management, met at times with resistance but always driven by our commitment to showcasing success and sustaining investment.

- Internal Change Management: Spearheaded by the newly established Office of Grants Administration and Compliance, our internal change management initiatives have been crucial. This office has been instrumental in challenging long-standing practices, elevating standards, and championing a forward-thinking approach to grant-making. Its establishment signifies MSDE's dedication to procedural excellence and a robust framework that not only allocates funds but also ensures they achieve maximum impact.
- External Change Management: Communication and technical assistance have been the linchpins of our external change management strategy. Recognizing that change, especially when introducing heightened accountability, can be daunting for many grantees, our emphasis has been on open, transparent communication. By providing consistent technical assistance, we're demystifying the grant process, offering much-needed support, and reframing this shift not as a threat but as an opportunity. It's our way of ensuring grantees view these changes as tools to underscore their successes and further the collective mission of educational advancement.



Implementing significant changes in grant administration has encountered some resistance along the way, but MSDE remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring accountability, supporting grantees, and optimizing the impact of State investments.

- **Competitive vs Direct Grants:** Frequent requests for non-competitive, direct awards countered by MSDE's commitment to fair, competitive processes that uphold state investments.
- **Detailed Invoice Reviews:** Questions about the necessity of detailed review of invoices and accountability, while MSDE prioritizes thorough oversight to ensure proper use of funds.
- **Subgrantee Accountability:** Challenges with payments to MSDE subrecipients arising from local audits and whistleblower complaints, yet MSDE remains steadfast in enforcing accountability while nurturing positive relations with grantees to minimize fraud, waste, and abuse.
- **State Audit Interactions:** Specific grants, such as those highlighted in the OLA audit report, spotlight the tension between strict compliance and grantee autonomy, illustrating MSDE's balance of adhering to audit findings while advocating for programmatic success.



Expanding the tent of grant awardees presents new challenges and areas of growth for MSDE and new opportunities for external individuals and entities to engage in and support key State initiatives.

**Challenges Faced:** With the inclusion of newer, and often smaller entities, MSDE has observed grantees:

- Submitting incorrect invoices, leading to administrative delays and miscommunication.
- Needing advance payments instead of the traditional retroactive payments post-invoice approval.
- Struggling with processes such as acquiring a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) or understanding payment timelines, indicating a potential knowledge gap in grant management.
- Smaller entities, in particular, often require more intensive support due to limited resources or less experience in handling grants.



By recognizing and addressing these challenges head-on, MSDE reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that every grant, regardless of the awardee's size or experience, is set up for success. We view these challenges not as setbacks, but as growth points, allowing us to refine our approach and better serve our expanding community of grantees.

**MSDE's Proactive Response:** In the face of these challenges, MSDE has not been passive. Our actions include:

- Offering frequent meetings, sometimes as often as weekly or bi-weekly, especially for newer grantees, to provide support, clarify doubts, and streamline processes.
- Developing a comprehensive "Grant Toolkit" specifically tailored for first-time grant awardees, ensuring they have the resources and knowledge to navigate the grant process efficiently.

- 1. Grants by the Numbers
- 2. What's in a Grant
- 3. Grant Administration at MSDE
- 4. Grant Process Evolution July 2021 through Now
- 5. Continuous Improvement
- 6. Questions

#### **Continuous Improvement**

At MSDE, the journey towards effective grants administration does not stop with the establishment of foundational structures and processes. We remain committed to continuous improvement, fine-tuning our applications, and optimizing our management systems to meet the evolving needs of our stakeholders.



# New Local ESSA Consolidated Application and Process (1 of 2)

- **Unified Application Process:** One single Grant Information Guide, one application template, and one deadline for multiple Title funds:
  - Title I (Parts A, C, D Sub-Parts 1 & 2), Title II Part A, Title III Part A (both English Language Acquisition & Immigrant), Title IV Part A, and Title V Part B.
  - Result: A significant reduction by 300-400 pages, easing the burden on local education agencies (LEAs).
- **Streamlined Timing:** The new Grant Information Guide and application will be released by September 15th.
  - A consistent performance period for planned activities in LEA entitlement applications will span 15 months (e.g., for 2023-2024: July 1, 2023 September 30, 2024).
  - LEAs can also request an extension for the utilization of unspent funds with each year's application to extend to a 27-month performance period.



## New Local ESSA Consolidated Application and Process (2 of 2)

- **Improved Grant Award Notices:** Conditional NOGAs will be released earlier (in August and September), offering LEAs earlier access to resources while they finalize applications.
- **Looking Forward:** For 2024-2025, the application will be released in May 2024, allowing LEAs more time for strategic planning and implementation.
- Master Plan Submissions: LEAs no longer need to submit a consolidated master plan due to the repeal under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.
- **Change Management:** MSDE recognizes the novelty of this process for everyone involved.
  - Extensive scheduled and on-demand technical assistance will be provided.
  - The agency is open to feedback and will make adjustments based on LEA input.
  - The overarching goal: Reduced LEA effort, enhanced cross-team collaboration, strategic resource planning, and the optimized use of funds to support student outcomes for targeted and eligible groups.



#### **New E-Grants Systems**

The current grant application process, while thorough, has room for enhanced efficiency. By testing with the BOOST program, we're aiming to reduce paperwork, increase transparency, and minimize errors.

- **Boosted by BOOST Testing:** The BOOST program serves as the ideal candidate for testing due to its unique requirements and its significant scope/scale. The insights gathered here will inform the broader implementation across other grant programs.
- Benefits Envisioned with the New E-grants Platform:
  - **Unified Dashboard:** A centralized dashboard will offer an overview of all grant applications, their stages, required evaluations, and clearances—ensuring no application goes unnoticed.
  - **Instant Communication:** Prompt feedback cycles, elucidated directions, and rapid issue resolutions will become the norm, thanks to the platform's built-in communication features.
  - **Data-led Insights:** Harnessing the analytics capabilities of the new system, MSDE can derive actionable insights, ensuring that funds reach where they are most impactful.



## **Perkins Late Liquidation Request**

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins V) funds CTE programs with the goal to enhance the academic, career, and technical skills of students in secondary and postsecondary CTE programs.

- Inherited Issues: In January 2023, the MSDE Consolidated Annual Report for Carl D. Perkinsfunded Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs showed an unobligated State Leadership fund balance of \$844,163.19, of which \$652,626.19 is in Funds for General State Leadership Activities, \$191,421.50 in Funds for Individuals in State Institutions, and \$115.50 in Funds for Special Population Recruitment.
- Lapsed Funding Nationally: Maryland, along with multiple states, saw lapsed federal Perkins funds. Notably, California and Puerto Rico had lapses amounting to \$13,000,000 and \$10,000,000 respectively.
- Addressing the Lapse: MSDE identified grant allocation discrepancies and approached USDE for a late liquidation request. Pending final confirmation, MSDE plans to draw down the full balance of \$844,163.19.



## **Prekindergarten Expansion Grant – Piloting Short Form Applications**

Where and when able, MSDE is streamlining its award processes to recognize the <u>time tax</u> and level of effort required by applicants like, for example, by offering a modified short form application for proven programs, ensuring timely renewals and acknowledging the track record of success in compliance with established criteria.

- To expedite the award process and ensure grantees can move without interruption into the 2023 2024 school year, for the 2023-2024 Prekindergarten Expansion Grant, MSDE reviewed applications on a rolling basis beginning April 25, 2023.
- Applicants seeking renewal or expansion to an existing approved program were allowed to submit a modified short form application if the applicant's site(s) has(had) a track record of success. A track record of success means an applicant had maintained a lead teacher who meets the grant requirements; and met and/or maintained a minimum Maryland EXCELS Level 4 or above, in compliance with fiscal guidelines.

- 1. Grants by the Numbers
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- 5. Continuous Improvement
- 6. Questions

## Questions

- 1. Grants by the Numbers
- 2. What's in a Grant
- 3. Grant Administration at MSDE
- 4. Grant Process Evolution July 2021 through Now
- 5. Continuous Improvement

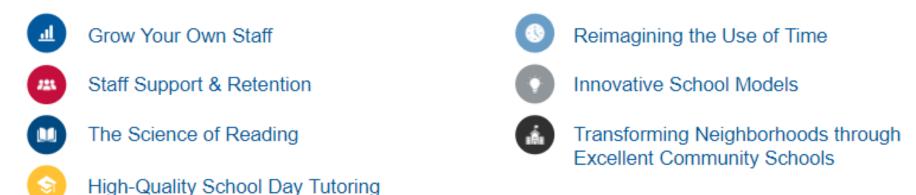
#### Addendum: One-Time Programs

MSDE has leveraged one-time COVID-19 discretionary funding to create innovative and sustainable programs. This section offers a glimpse at those programs and their primary goals and initiatives.



#### **Maryland Leads**

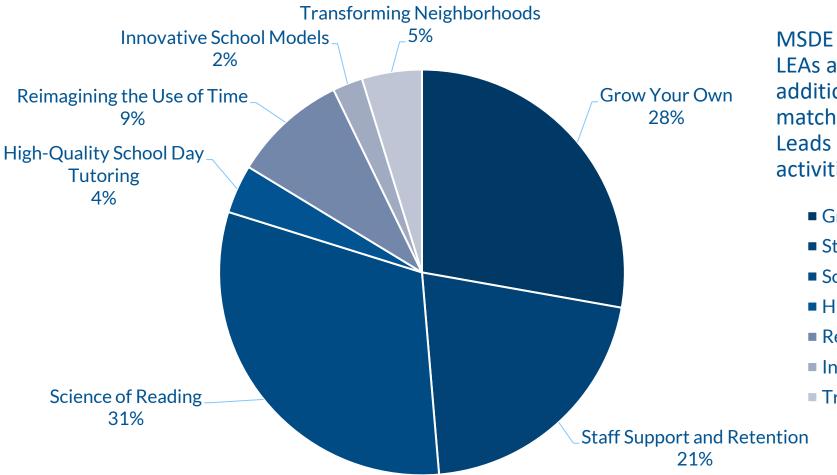
<u>Maryland Leads</u> is a new grant initiative designed to support Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in utilizing federal funds to overcome the learning loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, accelerate student learning to narrow opportunity and achievement gaps, and provide more targeted support for historically underserved students and their communities.



- Each strategy contains focus areas and best practices from the field.
- LEAs will have the opportunity to work with best-in-class partners to execute approved plans.

Distribute \$165M+ ESSER State Set-Aside funds to LEAs through a noncompetitive but highly-selective grant process. QUITY AND EXCELLENCE

#### Maryland Leads Program Investments, Awarded Funds by High Leverage Strategy Area



MSDE awarded **\$170,500,000** to LEAs and generated an additional **\$25,000,000** in local matching support for Maryland Leads approved programs and activities.

- Grow Your Own
- Staff Support and Retention
- Science of Reading
- High-Quality School Day Tutoring
- Reimagining the Use of Time
- Innovative School Models
- Transforming Neighborhoods

#### **Maryland Rebuilds**

Maryland Rebuilds Grant Opportunity is designed to **support the state's childcare system** in utilizing federal funds to stabilize, strengthen, and sustain the childcare system and mitigate the impact from the COVID-19 pandemic. In total, **MSDE awarded more than \$23 million in funding** to nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, local education agencies, private childcare providers, and public prekindergarten programs to help support the state's childcare community.

- Expanding Access to Quality Child Care.
- Early Learning Models of Excellence.
- Expanding Mental Health Supports and Services.
- Growing a Highly-Effective Child Care Workforce.
- Boosting Family Child Care.
- Advancing a Coordinated Prekindergarten Enrollment System.



#### GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

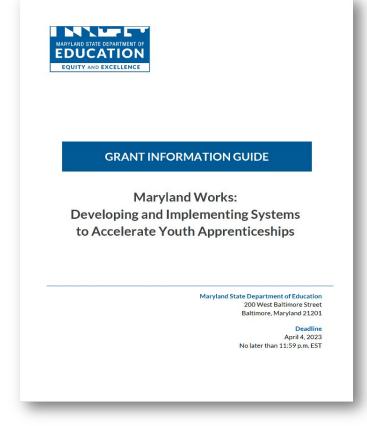
Maryland Rebuilds: Grant Opportunity Transforming Maryland's Early Childhood Education System for the Future

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



#### **Maryland Works**

- Serve as the catalyst for scaling registered apprenticeship programs across the state via \$12 million in one-time State set-aside funds so that by 2030-2031, at least 45% of high-school graduates will have completed a registered apprenticeship program and received an industry-recognized credential as intended by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future
- Ensure at least 10% of an LEA's graduating seniors in 2024-2025 participate in a registered youth apprenticeship that leads to an industry-recognized credential for every LEA included in the Maryland Works grant
- Build the infrastructure to launch and sustain strong registered apprenticeship programs that are industry-aligned and meet the workforce needs in Maryland for years to come.

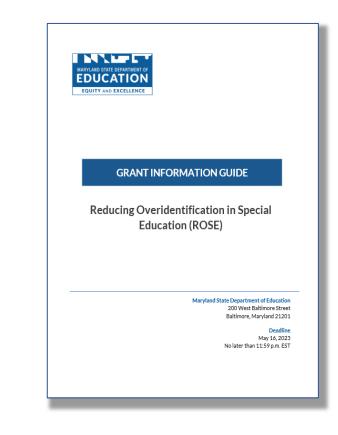


Leverage ESSER funds to develop Pre-K-12 pipelines for the most needed professions



#### The Reducing Overidentification in Special Education Grant Program

- The \$3 million ROSE program is designed to seed resources for up to three local education agencies (LEAs) to mitigate the effects of pandemic learning loss on persistently underperforming students who risk being misidentified for special education services due to their race, sex, gender, home language, and/or income status.
- The program also connects to and supports Blueprint implementation efforts associated with special education policies, processes, and practices.
- <u>Awards Announced August 2023</u>



ATION



- Improve math proficiency for Maryland's secondary students, narrow and close the achievement gap, and mitigate the learning loss resulting from the pandemic.
- Promote equity in math education by prioritizing middle school students in grades 6-8, Algebra students of any grade level, and historically underserved students such as African American students, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with special needs.
- Establish a long-term infrastructure that can **recruit**, **train**, **and deploy a robust team of qualified tutors** that will provide high-quality, school day tutoring to students who are not proficient in math.

