

Louisiana Believes

Opportunity Grant:

Using Collaboration to Build Vocational and Post-Secondary Educational Programming for Students Taking an Alternate Assessment

This grant provides funding to teams that will collaboratively plan and build new programs to prepare students with disabilities, taking the alternate assessment, for employment and/or post-secondary educational opportunities. Total grant funding is \$350,000. Applications must be submitted to specialeducation@la.gov no later than 5:00pm, Monday, July 10, 2017.

John White
State Superintendent of Education

June 2017

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REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)

Opportunity Grant:

Using Collaboration to Build Vocational and Post-Secondary Educational Programming for Students Taking an Alternate Assessment

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

On a state level, Louisiana has made tremendous progress ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities taking an alternate assessment, have access to high school diploma pathways that prepare them for meaningful post-secondary experiences. With the introduction of the [Jump Start career and technical education program](#), and the [pathway to a Career Diploma for students assessed an alternate assessment](#), students with significant disabilities have a path to a diploma infused with components that prepare them for independence, employment, and life-long learning beyond high school.

On a national level, there have been noteworthy work readiness and post-secondary education reforms that influence the lives of these high school students that take an alternate assessment. As part of the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\)](#), school systems can use a systematized approach known as Pre-Employment Transition Services, or PreETS, in conjunction with or independent of vocational rehabilitation agencies, to equip students with disabilities with skills necessary to seek employment in integrated and competitive settings. On a post-secondary educational level, programs that allow students with more significant disabilities to continue their education on a college campus are becoming common place. Louisiana currently has five post-secondary programs.

Collectively, the progressive changes that have taken place on both the state and national levels create an atmosphere that is ripe with opportunities for high school students with significant disabilities taking an alternate assessment. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are now tasked with identifying, building, and implementing vocational and educational programs that will prepare these students for post-secondary lives enriched with competitive, integrated employment and life-long learning opportunities.

With new opportunities, new challenges exist. LEAs may not always have the expertise or resources to independently build new programs and establish community partnerships that meet the needs of this population of students. This grant is intended to address that challenge by funding collaborative partnerships focused on leveraging expertise across multiple LEAs and/or other cooperative relationships with an institute of higher education (IHE). The result of this grant will be regional self-sustaining consortia's that focus on meeting the post-secondary career and educational needs of high school students that take the alternate assessment.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) is committed to ensuring students who take the alternate assessment are prepared for a successful life after high school and will work with partners across the state to establish at least five new regional consortiums that specifically address the career preparation needs of this population of students. This grant provides funding for teams to come together and collaboratively develop and build new programs to prepare students with disabilities taking the alternate assessment for employment and/or post-secondary educational opportunities. Teams should be comprised of the following members:

- consortiums of LEAs, and/or
- LEA(s), and an IHE.

Applications must explain how the funds will achieve all of the following priorities:

Priority 1: Establish self-sustaining partnerships between an LEA and another LEA(s) and/or an IHE to address post-secondary employment and educational opportunities for students with disabilities taking the alternate assessment by

- i) building community work-based learning experiences and/or post-secondary educational experiences,
- ii) crafting structures to address the mobility components associated with students getting to and from community work-based learning experiences and/or post-secondary educational programs, and
- iii) creating an atmosphere of high expectations that all students have the capacity to be employed in an integrated, competitive setting and/or continue life-long learning at an institute of higher education.

Priority 2: Through the partnership, create programs that will increase the number of students with disabilities taking the alternate assessment who:

- i) obtain employment in an integrated setting after completing high school and/or
- ii) attend an institute of higher education for concurrent or post-secondary learning experiences.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The application must contain the following components in the order given. The Project Details section should be kept to five (5) single-spaced pages or less.

- A. Cover Page Form
- B. Budget Form
- C. Project Details
 - Project Narrative
 - Project Timeline
 - Sustainability Plan

Submit the application (Cover Page, Budget Page, and Project Details) via email to specialeducation@la.gov by 5p.m., Monday, July 10, 2017.

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ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS

All Louisiana LEAs and IHEs are eligible to apply for funds. Although this will be a collaborative project, there should be only one fiscal agent responsible for submitting the application and overseeing the use of funds.

An informational webinar will be held on June 15, 2017 at 9am for any partnership seeking additional information.

Conference number: 1-855-240-2575

Participant Code: 30160130

Link: <https://louisianaschools.adobeconnect.com/transition/>

AVAILABLE FUNDING

The project will be funded using IDEA, Part B funds. The individual grant amounts awarded to each accepted proposal will vary, depending on the quality of the individual application, the amount of students impacted by the funds, the dollar amount requested, and the number of proposals received. Applications are limited to no more than \$75,000.

Maximum Amount Available	\$350,000
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All funds for this project must be spent by September 30, 2018. Awards will be announced in August 2017.

NOTE:

- Funds requested under this grant must not replace or supplant monies used to support existing programs and must be dedicated to serving only students with disabilities.
- Funds are meant to encourage collaboration, planning, and creation of programs and should not be used to sustain activities or already existing programs.
- Collaboration between two or more LEAs and/or IHEs is a requirement and must be included in all stages of the grant including but not limited to implementing the provisions of the grant, and sustaining services beyond the life of the grant.
- Grants awards will be made for one year only and are intended to support local establishment and ownership of strategic sustainable partnerships.
- Questions regarding allowable and unallowable expenses may be directed to specialeducation@la.gov

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS:

Eligible applicants wishing to apply for funds under this grant must complete and submit the application (Cover Page, Budget, and Project Details) to SpecialEducation@la.gov by 5:00 pm Monday, July 10, 2017. Questions should be sent to SpecialEducation@la.gov.

TIMELINE:

Applications released: Monday, June 12, 2017

Informational Webinar: Thursday, June 15, 2017

Applications Due: Monday, July 10, 2017

Phone Interviews: July 19-20, 2017 (as needed)

Award Notification: August 16, 2017

APPLICATION

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COVER PAGE FORM

Complete all information below.

Name of Submitting Organization/Fiscal Agent:		
Address of Institution (Department/Unit Address, City, State, Zip Code):		
Title of Proposal:		
<i>The signature below certifies that the institution and the proposal are in compliance with all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations.</i>		
Authorized Representative	Name:	
	Name of Organization:	
	Title:	
	Telephone:	
	Email Address:	
	SIGNATURE:	

BUDGET FORM

Describe how the funds will be spent for each of the categories identified below. Please add to this form as you see fit to accommodate all identified budget items specific to your project.

Budget Item	Description	Amount
Overhead and Administration		
Program Implementation		
Collaboration and Professional Development		
Supplies		
Other Objects		
TOTAL		

PROJECT DETAILS

The Project Details should be a maximum of 5 single-spaced pages and is composed of four areas that must be included in the order given:

- Project Narrative
- Project Timeline
- Sustainability Plan

I. Project Narrative

The narrative must include the following information in the order listed below:

a. **Priority One**

Describe the partnership that will be created by this project. Details should include at least the following information:

- i. fiscal agent name, contact information
- ii. partnership name(s), contact information
- iii. rationale for choosing partner(s)

Additionally describe, in detail, how the partnership will address the following:

- i. building community work-based learning experiences and/or post-secondary educational experiences;
- ii. crafting structures to address the mobility components associated with students getting to and from community work-based learning experiences and/or post-secondary educational programs; and
- iii. creating an atmosphere of high expectations that all students have the capacity to be employed in an integrated, competitive setting and/or continue life-long learning at an institute of higher education.

Details should include at least the following information:

- i. activities/procedures that will address these challenges;
- ii. responsibilities of each partner in addressing the challenges; and
- iii. funding options and responsibilities

b. **Priority Two**

Describe the program that will be created through the partnership. Details should include at least the following

- i. program description
- ii. program goals
- iii. program selection
 1. schools system
 2. number of students
 3. grade/age span of students
 4. process to ensure the pathways developed are in the best interest of the students enrolled
 5. process to ensure rigor and high expectations are included in the program for all targeted students.

c. Funding Expenditures

Describe, in detail, how the funding will be used to:

- i. establish the partnerships in this project, and
- ii. create the structures necessary to help students gain access to and be successful in post-secondary integrated employment and educational opportunities.

Additionally, explain how partners will use their own pools of resources to implement and sustain the structures and opportunities created by this project.

II. Project Timeline:

Outline, in detail, the timelines associated with this project. Information should include projected dates for:

- a. establishing the partnership
- b. activities or meetings related to the creation of the program
- c. achieving program goals
- d. serving the first cohort of students

III. Sustainability Plan:

Describe, in detail, how partnerships/programs created through this project will be sustained beyond the funding provided through this grant.