

Louisiana Tutoring Initiative

Request for Applications (RFA)

Louisiana Tutoring Initiative Application Guide

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Section 1: Overview and Objectives of Louisiana Tutoring Initiatives

Louisiana has two tutoring initiatives that were launched during the 2020-2021 school year: Accelerate and Real-time Early Access to Literacy (REAL). Both of these initiatives can use the services of approved vendors to provide acceleration through effective tutoring. The Louisiana Department of Education will not enter into any contract with any of the approved applicants. Local school districts may enter into contracts with approved applicants in accordance with applicable law and local school district procurement policy.

Accelerate, Louisiana's Pre-K-High School Tutoring Strategy for Students Enrolled in Pre-K through high school

Louisiana believes that equal-access, effective tutoring is a priority and can improve student achievement. To effectively address and prevent unfinished learning, students must be provided with extra time to learn.

Accelerate is an equal-access, just-in-time tutoring model that is focused on identifying, celebrating, and building upon the assets students bring to the learning experience. An acceleration approach addresses unfinished learning in an equitable way. Acceleration means connecting unfinished learning in the context of new learning, integrating new information and the needed prior knowledge.

The backbone of this strategy is deeply rooted in strong evidence on best practices for tutoring and addressing unfinished learning that fall into three pillars: Intentional Structures, High-quality Materials, and Effective Instruction.

Multiple funding sources can support the implementation of Accelerate. School systems can use funds from their General Fund, Title I, CARES, CAA, and Direct Student Services allocations.

Real-time Early Access to Literacy (REAL) Tutoring Strategy for Students Enrolled in Pre-K through grade 3 Enrolled in CIR/UIR-A Schools

Early literacy is a critical predictor of educational and lifelong success. Louisiana is working urgently to improve early literacy outcomes and ensure all students are reading on grade level by the end of grade 3. All Louisiana students must be proficient in reading in order to successfully transition to higher grade levels and to become college and career ready.

In order to support Louisiana's ambitious literacy goals the Department applied for and was awarded \$17 million through the Education Stabilization Fund Rethinking Education Models (ESF-REM) grant. The ESF-REM award is funding Louisiana's [Real-time Early Access to Literacy \(REAL\)](#) program, which provides support through devices, connectivity, and tutoring to students in Pre-K through grade 3. REAL funding is allocated to school systems so that they can provide microgrants to eligible families. Families will use their microgrant accounts to enroll in tutoring services through the REAL Portal.

The purpose of this RFA is to identify organizations that will provide tutoring services to Pre-K to high school students to address unfinished learning through the Accelerate program and/or the Real-time Early Access to Literacy (REAL) program, which specifically targets Pre-K to grade 3 students, enrolled in CIR/UIR-A schools. All tutoring service providers must offer a virtual support option for students learning remotely and must provide instruction aligned to the high-quality curriculum implemented in each student's school.

The primary objectives of the Louisiana Tutoring Initiative are to:

- **Support literacy for Louisiana’s Pre-K through high school learners.** In grades Pre-K-2, foundational skills are necessary and central components of an effective, comprehensive reading program designed to develop proficient readers with the capacity to comprehend texts across a range of types and disciplines. To address unfinished learning tutors should support students in concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, syntax, and fluency in a logical and transparent progression. To accelerate students in grades 3 through high school, tutoring should focus on supporting students in accessing the features of complex, current grade-level texts by building knowledge, vocabulary, or foundational skills.
- **Support the development of mathematical concepts and skills for Louisiana’s Pre-K through high school learners.** Targeted tutoring can address unfinished learning and support learners in their mathematical development. To support students who have unfinished learning in math, students should be engaged with previous grade-level content in a timely manner, with explicit connections to the on-grade-level content with which students are currently engaging. Tutors should review data specific to essential prerequisite knowledge and skills for upcoming lessons and determine when and how to act based on the evidence of the unfinished learning in class.
- **Develop strong relationships with families to support learning.** Student learning is supported by parents and reinforced outside of school hours increases student outcomes. Service providers must be prepared to support all parents, including parents with low levels of literacy attainment and parents who speak a language other than English. Parents should have the opportunity to provide feedback and receive support throughout the tutoring process.
- **Align to and complement school systems’ existing work with high-quality curricula.** Tutoring service providers are expected to communicate student progress to classroom teachers and additional school staff. With intentional planning, tutoring services will align to classroom instruction and support student progress towards grade level standards.
- **Implement tutoring best practices.** Effective tutoring programs provide initial training and ongoing support for tutors, define formal time commitments for tutors, design structured tutoring sessions, carefully monitor tutoring services, and ensure close alignment to classroom instruction and curriculum.

Section 2: RFA Application / Selection Processes

The table below outlines the RFA process for the Louisiana Tutoring Initiative. Tutoring applicants may submit an application to become an Accelerate Tutoring Service Provider and/or a REAL Tutoring Service Provider.

Tutoring applicants interested in submitting an application to become an Accelerate Tutoring Service Provider should select the application titled, Louisiana Tutoring Initiative RFA: Accelerate.

Tutoring applicants interested in submitting an application to become a Real-time Early Access to Literacy (REAL) Tutoring Service Provider should select the application titled, Louisiana Tutoring Initiative RFA: Real-time Early Access to Literacy (REAL).

Tutoring applicants interested in submitting an application to serve as a Tutoring Service Provider for Real-time Early Access to Literacy (REAL) and Accelerate must complete both applications.

	Accelerate and REAL Program Provider RFA Process	Application Window 1	Application Window 2	Application Window 3
Step 1	<p>Tutoring applicants submit an application via https://tinyurl.com/ms226vxp to become an Accelerate Tutoring Service Provider.</p> <p>Tutoring applicants submit an application via https://tinyurl.com/3d7k33zs to become a Real-time Early Access to Literacy (REAL) Tutoring Service Provider.</p> <p>New users will need to create an account and select the Louisiana Tutoring Initiative Provider RFA.</p>	Closes October 27	Closes December 1	Closes April 1
Step 2	The LDOE schedules and convenes review panels to review applications. Rejected applicants receive feedback and will have one opportunity to resubmit applications.	Reviewed by November 4	Reviewed by December 15	Reviewed by April 15
Step 3	Approved tutoring providers will be added as options in the Louisiana Tutoring Vendor Guide.	Within 7 days after approval		

For inquiries about application windows email Markecia.Barthelemy@la.gov.

Section 3: Required Application Components and Format

Tutoring applicants submit an application via <https://louisianabelieves.smapply.io/>.

No cover letters, executive summaries, or organizational marketing materials will be accepted.

Tutoring Provider Application Template: Required Components Description		
Section	Application Section	Template Section Components
1	Provider Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact information ● Company or organization overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ structure ○ mission statement ○ prior work ○ third party evaluations
2	Provider Goals and Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interest in Accelerate and/or REAL Tutoring Program ● Approach to ELA and math instruction ● Summary of experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ tutoring programs ○ tutor training ○ other relevant programs ● Administrative structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ operations ○ supervision ○ assessment of tutoring services ● Quality measurement of services
3	Program Description and Scope of Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategy to support Accelerate and/or REAL Program goals ● Alignment to high quality curriculum and assessments ● Supporting students with English as a second language ● Supporting students with disabilities ● Qualifications of tutors, including background checks to align with school system expectations. ● Format/technologies used to deliver tutoring ● Scope of services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ availability ○ number of tutors ○ daily/weekly schedules ○ zip codes (for potential in-person services)
4	Engagement and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plan that includes how provider will engage and collaborate with families and schools about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ each child’s progress and needs ○ increasing literacy and math education, capacity and involvement ○ addressing questions/concerns for all families, including those with low levels of literacy/English proficiency ○ alignment between classroom instruction and tutoring services

5	Proposed Pricing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overall cost per hour of tutoring provided inclusive of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ administrative costs ○ training of staff ○ technology ○ tutor compensation
6	References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1-3 Letters of Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Required - head of organization ○ Optional - current or previous partner ○ Optional - choice
7	Signature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Required for consideration
8	Appendix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sample scope and sequence for a select grade level ● Sample lesson for 8 tutoring sessions with facilitation notes ● Job description for job posting for tutors

Section 4: Application Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria

LDOE provides rigorous evaluation criteria for RFA applications. Applications are evaluated based on:

- 1) Ability of provider to help Louisiana achieve key education goals
- 2) Commitment of provider to serve young learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities
- 3) Quality of tutoring, connection to school-based learning, and proposed instructors
- 4) Commitment of provider to engage stakeholders
- 5) Cost effectiveness

All determinations of whether or not an application meets these evaluation criteria will be indicated on a "Pass / Fail" basis. The LDOE will interpret these evaluation criteria as indicated in the table below.

Evaluation Criteria	How the Evaluation Criteria will be Assessed: Evaluation Sub-Components
<p>Section 1: Provider’s mission and work aligns with program goals.</p>	<p>1a) Provider’s organizational mission aligns with the goals of Accelerate and/or REAL. 1b) Provider has relevant experience to conduct the work. 1c) Provider has a history of effective completion of work and/or favorable reviews.</p>
<p>Section 2: Provider communicates goals and background.</p>	<p>2a) Provider’s methodology and approach to reading and math instruction are aligned to Accelerate. 2b) Provider is qualified to conduct high-quality tutoring in a remote environment. 2c) Provider’s organizational structure for operation, supervision, and assessment of tutoring services will promote high quality of services. 2d) Provider presents a clear plan for using data to drive student achievement and communicate results to stakeholders.</p>
<p>Section 3: Provider demonstrates the ability to achieve key program goals.</p>	<p>3a) Provider communicates a sound strategy to support reading and math achievement. 3b) Provider will align services to the high quality curriculum used in Louisiana schools. 3c) Provider is committed to serving all young learners, including students with disabilities and English Learners. 3d) Provider lists reasonable qualifications, hiring process and background checks for tutors and describes a plan to assess tutor effectiveness. 3e) Provider presents a clear plan for the use of technology to deliver services. 3f) Provider offers flexible options for in-person delivery and/or summer services.</p>
<p>Section 4: Provider engages and collaborates with all stakeholders.</p>	<p>4a) Provider describes a clear plan for engaging with families and schools. 4b) Provider is committed to assisting families who may lack high-level literacy skills or English proficiency. 4c) Provider offers support to families who have questions</p>

	<p>or concerns about their child’s tutoring experience.</p> <p>4d) Provider includes a plan for collaborating with teachers about individual students’ goals.</p> <p>4e) Provider will communicate student progress to parents and teachers at least monthly.</p>
<p>Section 5: Provider rate is cost effective.</p>	<p>5a) Provider will not charge over \$40/hr for tutoring services. (Please note that the LDOE will publish hourly rates, which may impact a family’s service selection.)</p> <p>5b) Proposed rate(s) is/are at fair market value considering materials, activities and qualifications.</p>

Evaluation Process Notes

LDOE evaluation teams will evaluate each application based on the Evaluation Criteria.

- Applications must “pass” all five eligibility standards to be accepted. In order to “pass” a standard the provider must meet each sub-component of that standard.
- Applicants who do not meet all five standards will be able to revise and resubmit their application package one time should they choose to do so. If the applicant chooses not to reapply, then the application’s determination of rejection and do not proceed are final.
- A provider’s application package will be accepted and listed on the La Tutoring Initiative Provider Page if:
 - the application achieves a “pass” on all five evaluation criteria; and
 - the application conforms with all of the RFA’s administrative and legal requirements.
- No appeals will be considered at any stage.
- Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to submit new proposals during future RFA application processes.
- LDOE may observe approved programs and review resources periodically to ensure alignment to program quality.

Section 5: List of Appendices

The following appendices will provide applicants with useful information

Appendix 1: Miscellaneous Resources

Resource	URL Link	Information Included
INACOL National Standards for Quality Online Teaching	http://www.inacol.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/national-standards-for-quality-online-teaching-v2.pdf	National standards that provide teachers a set of criteria for effective online learning to guarantee that the teachers are better able to understand the technology, new teaching methods and digital course content to foster a personalized online learning environment for every student.
Instructional Materials Review	https://louisianabelieves.com/academics/ONLINE-INSTRUCTIONAL-MATERIALS-REVIEWS/curricular-resources-annotated-reviews	Curriculum vetted and annotated by the instructional materials review process.

Appendix 2: Definitions

1. Application Timeframe

- 1.1. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. It is solely the responsibility of all applicants to make sure their application is completed and emailed to Markecia.Barthelemy@la.gov.

2. Applicant Code of Conduct

- 2.1. Applicants are responsible for determining that there will be no conflict or violation of the Ethics Code once they begin working with students, schools, and families. Ethics issues are interpreted by the Louisiana Board of Ethics.

3. Public Disclosure

- 3.1. All materials submitted in response to this request become the property of the State. Selection or rejection of an application does not affect this right.
- 3.2. Only information that is in the nature of legitimate trade secrets or non-published financial data may be deemed proprietary or confidential. Any material within an application identified as such must be clearly marked in the applications and will be handled in accordance with the Louisiana Public Record Act, R.S. 44: 1-44 and applicable rules and regulations. Any application marked as confidential or proprietary in its entirety may be rejected without further consideration or recourse.
- 3.3. By submitting, the applicant grants the State of Louisiana Department of Education the right and license to republish its application, if the Department so chooses, as an example or sample application for the edification of other applicants.

4. Determination of Responsibility

- 4.1. Determination of the applicant's responsibility relating to this RFA shall be made according to the standards set forth in LAC 34: 136. The State must find that the applicant:
- 4.1.1. Has adequate financial resources for performance, or has the ability to obtain such resources as required during performance.
 - 4.1.2. Has the necessary experience, organization, technical qualifications, skills, and facilities, or has the ability to obtain them.
 - 4.1.3. Is able to comply with the proposed or required time of delivery or performance schedule.
 - 4.1.4. Has a satisfactory record of integrity, judgment, and performance.
 - 4.1.5. Is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive an award under applicable laws and regulations.
 - 4.1.6. Applicants should ensure that their application contains sufficient information for the State to make its determination by presenting acceptable evidence of the ability to perform the services called for by this RFA.

5. Right to Prohibit Award

- 5.1. Any public entity is authorized to reject an application from a business in which any individual with an ownership interest of five percent or more has been convicted of or has entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to any state felony or equivalent federal felony crime committed in the solicitation or execution of a contract or bid awarded under the laws governing public contracts.

6. RFA Addenda

- 6.1. The State reserves the right to change the calendar of events or revise any part of the RFA by issuing an addendum to the RFA at any time.

7. Waiver of Administrative Informalities

- 7.1. The State reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive administrative informalities contained in any applications.

8. Application Rejection

- 8.1. Issuance of this RFA in no way constitutes a commitment by to award a contract. The State reserves the right to accept or reject, in whole or part, all applications submitted and/or cancel this announcement if it is determined to be in the State's best interest.

9. Withdrawal and Re-submission of Applications

- 9.1. An applicant may withdraw an application that has been submitted at any time up to the date and time the application is due. To accomplish this, a written request signed by the authorized representative of the applicant must be submitted to the RFA Coordinator.

10. Subcontracting Information

- 10.1 The prime contractor shall not contract with any other party for furnishing any of the work and professional services herein contracted for without the express written approval of the State.

11. Cost of Preparing Applications

- 11.1 The State is not liable for any costs incurred by prospective applicants prior to issuance of or entering into a contract. Costs associated with developing an application, preparing for oral presentations and interviews, and any other expenses incurred by the applicants in responding to this RFA are entirely the responsibility of the applicants, and shall not be reimbursed in any manner by the State of Louisiana.

12. Errors and Omissions in Applications

- 12.1. The State will not be liable for any errors in applications. The State reserves the right to make corrections or amendments due to errors identified in applications by the State or the applicant. The State, at its option, has the right to request clarification or additional information from the applicants.

13. Corporation Requirements

- 13.1. If the applicant is a corporation not incorporated under the laws of the State of Louisiana, the applicant shall have obtained a certificate of authority pursuant to R. S. 12:301-302 from the Secretary of State of Louisiana.
- 13.2. If the applicant is a for-profit corporation whose stock is not publicly traded, the applicant shall ensure that a disclosure of ownership form has been properly filed with the Secretary of State of Louisiana.