



2021-22 Start-Up & Expansion Grants Application Announcement

Tennessee Department of Education | September 2021



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Middle School Start-Up & Expansion Grant

Background

In February 2019, Governor Bill Lee announced the Future Workforce Initiative aimed at increasing access to (a) CTE and (b) science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in the classroom. This grant will emphasize middle school career and technical education (CTE) classrooms across Tennessee with the goal of adding an additional 100 new middle school STEM programs by 2022.

Priorities

Applicants for the Middle School STEM and CTE Career Exploration Start-Up & Expansion Grants will be required to demonstrate the ability to create sustainable, positive change in their district aligned to the following priorities:

1. **Alignment:** Demonstration of a clear progression of course offerings between middle schools and high schools for their students.
2. **Strong advisement for all students:** Demonstration of a plan for projects and activities focused on career guidance and advisement through a blend of rigorous and engaging core academic and career and technical education.
3. **Industry partnerships:** Expanding employer partnerships that create opportunities for students to participate in a culminating project-based learning experience.

The process to develop middle school STEM and CTE Career Exploration programs should include collaborative planning between key stakeholders including community partners and industry representatives; district and school-based administrators; school counselors; and general education, CTE, and special education educators.

High School School-Based Enterprise (SBE) Start-up Grant

Background

To increase student enrollment in WBL courses, the Governor has allocated funding through the Future Workforce Initiative to support LEAs in the development of self-sustaining school-based enterprises (SBEs). The 2021-22 School-Based Enterprise Start-Up Grants are intended to drive innovation in implementing meaningful work-based learning experiences for students who face barriers to participate in off-campus placements.

Priorities

Applicants for the School-Based Enterprise Start-Up Grants will be required to demonstrate the ability to create sustainable, positive change in their district aligned to the following priorities:

1. **Alignment:** Demonstration of a clear alignment between the SBE and high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations.
2. **Equity:** Demonstration of initiatives to increase enrollment of students from special populations in WBL courses for the operation of its school-based enterprise.
3. **Industry partnerships:** Projects where employers offer guidance and assistance to students operating the school-based enterprise.

The process to develop a school-based enterprise should include collaborative planning between key stakeholders including community partners and industry representatives; district and school-based administrators; school counselors; and general education, CTE, and special education educators.

Award and Accountability Information

Award:

- *Type of Award:* Discretionary
- *Estimated Amount of Available Funds:* **\$500,000 STEM; \$250,000 CTE Career Exploration; \$120,000 High School WBL SBE**
- *Estimated Number of Awards:* 75 awards; all grant awards will be **capped at \$10,000 per middle school and \$20,000 per high school.**
- *Project Period:* A total of 7 months from Dec. 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022. All funds must be obligated by June 30, 2022 and liquidated by Sept. 30, 2022.
- *Funds to be Released:* All grant funds will be available on Dec. 1, 2021.

Accountability Requirements: Awarded applicants will be required to complete the following to remain in good standing:

- Final report or presentation on the achievements and expenditures made possible through the funding opportunity. This will be a culminating artifact and will occur no later than July 30, 2022.

Note: The department is not bound by any funding or award estimates in this notice. Additional programmatic requirements may be required to ensure compliance.

Applicant Eligibility and Submission

Eligible Applicants: Local education agencies (LEAs), as defined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), or who will act as the fiscal agent for a regional consortium of LEAs, postsecondary institutions, and industry partners.

A [Notice of Intent to Apply](#) must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. (CT) on **Oct. 14, 2021**. Failure to do so will disqualify any subsequent submitted grant application.

Applicants will complete all requirements, including their proposed budget and an Assurances and Signatures form, inside the ePlan platform (eplan.tn.gov). The application will be available in the LEA Document Library on **Oct. 18, 2021**.

Application Questions for Middle School STEM Start-Up & Expansion Grant

The Middle School STEM Start-Up & Expansion Grant questions can be found below. Applicants should use these questions to develop robust, thoughtful responses prior to entry in ePlan.

1. What middle school STEM courses and aligned 9-12 approved CTE program(s) of study is identified for this grant?
2. What career assessment will students be utilizing in the 2021-22 school year, per [T.C.A. 49-6-412](#)?
3. What are your intended goals for the middle school STEM program? What are the specific outcomes for each identified goal?
4. What is the proposed use of the grant funds? Please provide a detailed list.
5. Identify strategic partnerships (postsecondary, industry, and other districts) already in place that will provide an advantage in implementing the middle school STEM program.
6. What commitments (funding or otherwise) are anticipated by the district to ensure sustainability of the middle school STEM program once the grant funds expire? Please be specific.
7. How many middle school students will be impacted during the grant year? What is the anticipated impact to nontraditional students enrolling in the aligned 9-12 approved CTE program(s) of study as a result of the program?

Application Questions for Middle School CTE Career Exploration Start-Up & Expansion Grant

The Middle School CTE Career Exploration Start-Up & Expansion Grant questions can be found below. Applicants should use these questions to develop robust, thoughtful responses prior to entry in ePlan.

1. Provide information showing how the middle school CTE Career Exploration program will be aligned with 9-12 approved CTE program(s) of study that will prepare students for high-skill, high-wage, and/or in-demand occupations.
2. What career assessment will students be utilizing in the 2021-22 school year, per [T.C.A. 49-6-412](#)?
3. What are your intended goals for the middle school CTE Career Exploration program? What are the specific outcomes for each identified goal?
4. What is the proposed use of the grant funds? Please provide a detailed list.
5. Identify strategic partnerships (postsecondary, industry, and other districts) already in place who will provide an advantage in implementing the middle school CTE Career Exploration program.
6. What commitments (funding or otherwise) are anticipated by the district to ensure sustainability of the middle school CTE Career Exploration program once the grant funds expire? Please be specific.
7. How many middle school students will be impacted during the grant year? What is the anticipated impact to nontraditional students enrolling in 9-12 approved CTE program of study as a result of the program?

Application Questions for High School SBE Start-Up Grant

The High School SBE Start-Up Grant questions can be found below. Applicants should use these questions to develop robust, thoughtful responses prior to entry in ePlan.

1. Provide information showing how the SBE startup aligns with CTE program(s) of study that will prepare students for high-skill, high-wage, and/or in-demand occupations.
2. What are your intended goals for the SBE startup program? What are the specific outcomes for each identified goal?
3. Outline and describe up to three challenges that prohibit your students from participating in high-quality WBL experiences at local businesses.
4. Please provide a description of the school-based enterprise you intend to operate and how the SBE will increase student enrollment in WBL in your school, including:
 - a. a clear description of the SBE;
 - b. the employability skills students will develop; and
 - c. an explanation of the impact the SBE will have on enrollment in WBL courses. Additional credit will be awarded when the applicant provides estimates on increased enrollment of special populations in WBL courses.
5. What is the proposed use of the grant funds? Please provide a detailed list.
6. Please provide a detailed explanation of how the SBE will remain sustainable once grant funds are exhausted, providing an estimate of annual operational costs and projected profits. Additional credit will be awarded to applicants that explain how projected profits will be used to expand the SBE, either through an increase in student enrollment in WBL and/or the startup of other SBEs, in future years.
7. Please list the local industry partner(s) who will provide guidance regarding the operation of the SBE. Additional credit will be awarded to applicants that include one or more letters of commitment from each industry partner.

Additional Information

Each year, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) prepares an index of county economic status for every county in the United States. Economic status designations are identified through a composite measure of each county's three-year average unemployment rate, per capita market income, and poverty rate. Based on these indicators, each county is then categorized as distressed, at-risk, transitional, competitive or attainment.

Tennessee has a long-term objective of having no distressed counties by 2025. To assist in attaining this state goal, proposals that serve counties designated distressed or at-risk will automatically receive points acknowledging the economic status of that area.

For the purpose of scoring proposals, applicants serving counties designated as **distressed will receive three additional points**, and those serving counties designated as **at-risk will receive one additional point**. Points will be awarded based on the county's economic status designation as of **July 1, 2021**. The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development has developed a dashboard illustrating the current economic status for all 95 counties in Tennessee as measured by the ARC. To view the TN ECD dashboard visit: [County Economic Status Map](#) .

Note: Supporting documentation can be uploaded in the "Related Documents" section of the LEA Document Library.

The deadline for submission is 11:59 p.m. (CT) on Nov. 1, 2021. The application must be fully approved through the Authorized Representative level in order to be scored.

Critical Dates

- **Tuesday, Sept. 21** Grant Announcement is released.
- **Thursday, Oct. 14:** [Notice of Intent to Apply](#) is due no later than 11:59 p.m. CT.
- **Monday, Oct. 18:** Application is available in ePlan LEA Document Library.
- **Monday, Nov. 1:** Submission of application is due no later than 11:59 p.m. CT.
- **Friday, Nov. 19:** Grant decision letters are released to applicants.
- **Wednesday, Dec. 1:** Funds are accessible to awardees.