

Request for Applications: *Statewide Mathematics and Literacy Tutoring*



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Request for Applications: Statewide Mathematics and Literacy Tutoring

The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to solicit proposals from eligible Ohio Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) applicants to receive grant funds to address learning disruptions in mathematics and literacy due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This RFA is a program-specific guide that will outline the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) purpose, goal, eligibility and general guidelines in offering this grant program and information needed to complete an application for the opportunity.

Background

[Data from the 2020-2021 school year](#) show the major impact that the pandemic has had on student learning in Ohio. Similar to results from other states, scores were notably lower in 2020-2021 than in past years, with larger impacts on math than in English language arts. The pandemic more significantly affected learning for Ohio's historically underserved students and decreases were more marked for students in districts that primarily used a remote or hybrid education delivery model. Ohio must provide intensive supports to accelerate learning for students who have been impacted by the events of the past few years.

[Research](#) published by the Annenberg Institute at Brown University shows that high-dosage tutoring can produce "large learning gains for a wide range of students, including those who have fallen behind academically." According to the Annenberg Institute, high-dosage tutoring is defined as "more than three days per week or at a rate of at least 50 hours over 36 weeks." High-dosage tutoring was found to increase achievement "by roughly an additional three to 15 months of learning across grade levels.

More than \$6.8 billion in federal COVID relief funds have been allocated to schools and districts since the beginning of the pandemic. With this unprecedented amount of federal resources, schools and districts are best equipped to know the specific needs of students and provide tailored tutoring opportunities for struggling students. However, districts may have difficulty recruiting the number of adults needed to provide extensive tutoring services. At the same time, the state also has federal COVID relief funds for statewide activities and supports. Leveraging these funds, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) can promote statewide tutoring in K-12 mathematics and literacy through partnerships with the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) and Ohio Institutions of Higher Education to support districts and students. These learning opportunities for our students have the potential to decrease the academic impact of lost instruction time due to the pandemic. The main objective is to use these funds to provide high-quality tutoring to accelerate learning.

Purpose

ODE will award grants to Ohio Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), including 2- and 4-year public and private institutions, with teacher preparation or education programs to promote statewide tutoring in mathematics and literacy with districts and schools to accelerate learning and address disruptions. IHEs that want to participate but do not have teacher preparation or education programs may collaborate with a lead IHE having such a program. Collaborative approaches are strongly encouraged among all IHEs to ensure all schools and districts, including community schools and chartered non-public schools, in their region have the opportunity to participate. Grants will assist in expanding high-dosage tutoring programs meeting local needs for mathematics and/or literacy supports and aligning to Tier I core instruction. This funding is available to support the development, initial (startup) implementation, or extension/expansion of existing IHE-district tutoring programs grounded in evidence-based practices. It is strongly encouraged that tutoring programs are available to students as early as Summer 2022. Participating college students may benefit from direct field experience, community service, and additional incentives such as stipends and/or course credits. All funds must be encumbered by June 30, 2024, with a grant wrap-up by September 30, 2024.

Design Requirements

This grant opportunity will fund effective tutoring programs to support students to overcome learning disruptions caused by the pandemic. To ensure an effective tutoring program, grant applications should prioritize specific design requirements. The design requirements are outlined below, but applicants are not limited to the following:

Curriculum and Instruction:

Effective tutoring programs focus on high-dosage tutoring which prioritizes one-on-one tutoring or small group ratios three times a week. Alignment to statewide data and a focus on assessment data is necessary to drive individualized instruction to meet student needs.

All applications should include details on how the IHE and partnering schools and/or districts will:

- Maximize the number of K-12 students served in the program based on data-driven decision-making (e.g., Who is considered most at-risk?).
- Collaborate with classroom teachers for alignment to Tier I core instruction.
- Concentrate on mathematics and/or literacy tutoring servicing students in grades K-12 in alignment with Ohio's Learning Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts and district Tier 1 core instruction.
- Use of evidence-based, high-quality instructional materials in mathematics and literacy.
 - **Math tutoring programs should include:**
 - Tutoring instruction and materials aligned to the [Ohio Learning Standards for Mathematics](#).
 - Tutoring instruction aligned to [Standards for Mathematical Practices](#).
 - **Language and Literacy tutoring programs should include:**
 - Use of evidence-based instruction and materials aligned to the [Ohio Learning Standards for English Language Arts](#) and key instructional shifts. Dependent on needs identified by student data, this may include instruction on reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language.
 - Tutoring instruction focused on the five components of reading as outlined in the [National Reading Panel](#) report: phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension.
 - Tutoring instruction aligned to the Language and Literacy Development Continuum outlined in [Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement](#). These include strategies aligned to grade levels and skill development: Emergent Language and Literacy, Early Language and Literacy, Conventional Language and Literacy, Adolescent Language and Literacy.

Collaboration:

Collaborative approaches are an important component of this grant. All grants should include:

- Collaborative partnerships with Ohio IHEs and school(s) and/or district(s). Develop authentic partnerships with school districts that benefit the IHE, teacher education candidates, the partner school district personnel and students. Create programs that are mutually beneficial to the IHE and school districts (consider clinical/field experiences aligned with core reading and mathematics courses), volunteer hour opportunities, stipends and incentives for tutors including course credit, loan forgiveness or other benefits.

Support for Tutors:

Successful tutoring programs ensure tutors are adequately trained and receive ongoing support. Areas for training should include:

- Tutor expectations
- Tutor-student relationship
- Facilitation of tutoring sessions including strategies for learning and behavior management
- Content proficiency on effective math teaching practices and evidence-based literacy strategies
- Supporting student and learning differences
- Data collection and progress monitoring

Logistics

Logistics and details are a critical component of a successful tutoring program. Partners should consider the details of schedules, hiring and communication. Applications should include details on the following items:

- Hiring –
 - Ensure all tutors have [background checks](#).
 - Tutors appropriately trained in effective pedagogy and demonstrated content knowledge should be given priority; however, tutors from other areas of study beyond teacher preparation should also be considered.
- Schedule –
 - Establish an anticipated schedule delineating the number of children tutored; the frequency, duration, and location of the tutoring sessions; and the plan for providing tutoring during non-academic periods to minimize the amount of time children are removed from strong core instruction.
 - Develop a staffing plan and designate roles of key personnel, which may include an IHE coordinator, school or district liaison, and/or graduate assistants.
 - Outline a process or use funds to ensure transportation of tutors to and from the schools where necessary.
- Communication –
 - Create a process for ensuring regular two-way communication between the IHE and partner school(s) and district(s).
 - Establish a process for IHE and the school or district to communicate progress to grade-level teachers and parents or guardians.

Evaluation and sustainability

Consideration should be given to ongoing monitoring, evaluation and sustainability of the tutoring program. The following items should be included in the tutoring program:

- The IHE and partner school(s) and district(s) should work together to identify what elements of the tutoring program they may be able to sustain after the grant.
- In collaboration with ODE, the IHE and partner school(s) and district(s) should develop a monitoring system to evaluate the effectiveness and gauge the success of the program. This should include student outcomes in mathematics and/or literacy. Grantees will be required to submit interim and final grant activities reports to the program office. ODE reserves the right to request revisions for clarity or ask for additional information as necessary.
- Evaluate the tutoring program based on student outcomes in mathematics and literacy.
- Grantees will be required to participate in state evaluation activities.

Request for Applications (RFA): Details

Application Assistance and Timeline

The successful respondents to this RFA will propose a tutoring program that meets the criteria below and is submitted by an eligible recipient, to support schools and districts including community schools and chartered non-public schools in mathematics and/or literacy tutoring.

The application window opens Friday, March 25, 2022, and closes at 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27, 2022.

The Department will provide timely information and assistance to eligible applicants who intend to respond to this RFA. Assistance for eligible applicants will include email and phone correspondence. Applicants may send questions regarding the application and process to the email box at Tutoring@education.ohio.gov during the application period.

Funding Details

ODE will award up to \$20 million in grants to assist in expanding or developing high-dosage tutoring programs meeting local needs based on math and/or literacy data and aligning to Tier I core instruction. Individual IHEs with teacher preparation or education programs may apply or collaborations of multiple IHEs are encouraged to apply.

Qualified applicants will be awarded a grant. Awards are anticipated to range between \$150,000 and \$500,000. The final award amounts will be based on the number of qualifying applications received. Award amounts will vary based on the number of anticipated tutors and the size and number of the school(s) and district(s) served. Justification for all anticipated expenses should be included in an applicant's budget narrative submitted with the application.

Pursuant to federal requirements, this is a reimbursement grant made possible by the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund. The awarded entity will be the fiscal agent for the grant and, as such, be responsible for ensuring all federal requirements and monitoring along with any state requirements.

Each applicant must have an assigned individual retrieval number (IRN) to be able to receive funds through the Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Program (CCIP). If an applicant does not currently have an IRN, they may request to have one created through the CCIP when the grant is awarded.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include Ohio Institutions of Higher Education (IHE), including 2- and 4-year public and private institutions, with teacher preparation or education programs. IHEs that would like to participate but do not have teacher preparation or education programs may collaborate with a lead IHE having such a program. Collaborative approaches are strongly encouraged among IHEs to ensure all schools and districts, including community schools and chartered non-public schools, in their region have the opportunity to participate.

Applicants must also identify partnering schools and/or districts that have committed to working with the IHE. Applicants may serve more than one school or district; each applicant must have an established and documented agreement outlining activities and each partner's commitment to implementing the tutoring program. Each agreement must be submitted with the application. The eligible applicant should be well-positioned to leverage new or existing partnerships with a public, community or private school or a district. Eligible applicants should work closely with their identified school(s) or district(s) to co-design a tutoring program that contains clear objectives, activities, timelines and a budget.

Eligible applicants must identify as one of the below organization types:

- University or College
- Technical Institute/College
- Community Junior College

Application Review

ODE will establish an application review team. The review team will have knowledge in K-12 math instruction, K-12 literacy instruction, higher education and/or high-dosage tutoring. The application review team will conduct an evaluation of applications based on the specific criteria listed in this RFA. Review team members will be free of any conflicts of interest for all assigned applications. Each eligible application will be reviewed and scored by each member of the review team.

Timeline

| Date | Event |
|---|--|
| Friday, March 25, 2022 | Announcement of grant opportunity |
| Friday, March 25, 2022 | RFA available |
| Wednesday, April 13, 2022 | Webinar for all prospective applicants |
| Wednesday, April 27, 2022 | Application deadline |
| Friday, May 13, 2022 | Grant selection notification |
| Monday, May 16, 2022 – Tuesday, May 31, 2022 | Grant Kickoff and Webinar |

Award Process

ODE will award funding to support collaborative partnerships between IHEs and local schools and districts, including community schools and chartered non-public schools, based on the criteria outlined in this RFA. ODE will determine a quality cut score based on the scoring results and all qualified applicants meeting that threshold will be awarded a grant. The final award amount will be based on the number of qualifying applications received. Funding will be distributed among the qualifying applicants based on the number of tutors anticipated and the number of schools and districts served.

An applicant who meets the quality cut score may be required to modify the budget or an identified portion of the grant application prior to award.

Deadline

Submit the application, appendices, and budget documents by 11:59 p.m. EST on Wednesday, April 27, 2022, to the tutoring inbox at tutoring@education.ohio.gov. The electronic version must include all required components. Applications must be submitted by the time and date specified above. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

Application Submission

Applicants are required to submit a completed application and any supporting documents to the tutoring inbox at tutoring@education.ohio.gov answering all questions included in the application portion of this RFA.

Application Format

Narrative, including the Executive Summary, must not exceed eight pages, 8.5" x 11", standard letter size, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Use Arial, 11-point font. The narrative must address, in sequence, each of the required sections. Indicate each section title in bold and center information at the top of each page. Number all pages and include the applicant's name in the header of each page. Appendices must be in the order outlined in the checklist and immediately follow the application narrative. ODE has provided an [application template](#) to assist in the organization of the information required in the application narrative. Use of the template is required.

Use of Funds

This grant may be used to purchase materials and services that enable grantee to address their identified quality criteria. Examples of permitted uses include the following:

Permitted:

- Training on high-dosage tutoring, math, and literacy instructional strategies
- Development of materials or resources to aid the tutoring
- Tutor stipends
- Student or educator support services
- Operational cost
- Curriculum and materials used for instruction
- Travel reimbursement for the tutor(s)
- Equipment for implementation of the project
- Classroom supplies
- Completion of background checks for tutors
- Indirect Costs

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. If there is doubt about whether an expenditure is appropriate, please refer [Uniform Guidance, Part 200](#). For additional questions, please contact the manager of the grant at tutoring@education.ohio.gov.

Not permitted:

- Computer or connectivity hardware (for individual students and tutors)
- Recurring operational expenses to include administrative and programmatic activities, such as utilities, teaching, administrator salaries, professional dues or memberships and transportation of students
- Cost for student expeditions/field trips, travel, etc.
- Gift certificates, alcoholic beverages and school apparel for staff or students

Grant Management**Grant Assurances**

Grantees are required to sign and accept [grant assurances](#).

Conflicts of Interest

Grantees must avoid conflicts of interest when entering into contracts for equipment and services. State law regarding conflicts of interest is strict. It is the responsibility of the grantee to be in compliance with the [Ohio Ethics Law, ORC Chapter 102](#) regarding conflicts of interest.

Misuse of Funds and Grant Termination

ODE may terminate the grant award immediately if it is determined that the grantee staff or any individuals connected with the credential program have used grant funds for personal gain, performed criminal activities or broken any of the agreed upon assurances. If it is determined that any grant funds have been misused, ODE reserves the right to request the grantee return the full amount of awarded funds.

Equipment Inventory

Federal requirements specify that all equipment purchased under this grant must be inventoried. Equipment is any tangible, nonexpendable property having a useful life of more than one year. The grantee's inventory control policies and procedures should be aligned to the Auditor of State bulletins and should be made available upon request by ODE.

Grantees must maintain an inventory of equipment purchased with grant funds until disposition takes place. The inventory of records must include the following:

1. Description of the item including:
 - a. A serial number or other identification number;
 - b. Funding source of the item (name of funding title/grant);
 - c. Name of holder title;
 - d. Acquisition date;
 - e. Acquisition cost;
 - f. Percentage of state participation in the cost of the item;
 - g. Location of the item;
 - h. Use and condition of the item; and
 - i. Any ultimate disposition data including date of disposal and the sale price of the item.
2. An inventory control system and equipment maintenance procedures.
3. An ability to maintain equipment records for three years following submission of the final grant activities report. If there is an audit exception, the grantee must keep the records until all litigation, claims or audit findings have been resolved and final action is taken.

Score Rubric Criteria

Grant scorers will evaluate each application and award points based on the following criteria. Each of the quality elements will be scored by a team of reviewers. Components will be rated using a score of “0” to “4”. Applications that are missing one or more required narratives and/or appendices will not be scored. Applications missing one or more technical or quality elements will not be scored.

Following is a description of the score ratings:

Not Addressed/0 Points The response is not provided.

Poorly Developed/1 Point The response is significantly incomplete, missing required appendices or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the viability of the plan or the applicant’s capacity to execute it.

Partially Developed/2 Points The response meets less than half of the established criteria and contains substantial gaps in other areas.

Adequately Developed/3 Points The response meets the established criteria.

Fully Developed/4 Points The response demonstrates the applicant’s thorough understanding of key issues via specific and accurate information. The response presents a clear, realistic picture of how the applicant expects to operate and inspires confidence in the applicant’s capacity to execute the plan effectively.

Application Components

Eligible applicants must complete fully the following technical and quality elements to be considered. These components can be completed through the [application template](#). The application should include the following sections:

Technical Elements

The following technical elements must be completed for applications to be accepted and reviewed:

1. Applicant name and organization;
2. Organization IRN;
3. Mailing address including city, state and zip code;
4. Application contact including position, phone number and email address;
5. Grant manager including phone number and email address; and
6. Confirmation of partnering school(s) and/or district(s) with evidence of an agreement with the noted districts.

Quality Elements

The following quality elements will be reviewed by a team and scored to determine awards:

1. Executive Summary outlining the applicant's high-level project plans. The executive summary should be no longer than 300-500 words.
2. Detailed description of the planned timeline for establishing and operating the tutoring program
3. Design Requirements and Implementation, see Appendix A for more information
4. Evaluation and Sustainability
5. Math services, see Appendix A for more information
6. Language and Literacy services, see Appendix A for more information
7. Budget Narrative
 - a. ODE requires a project budget to be completed for each year of the grant. All grants are subject to federal and state audits and reviews and ODE monitoring. A Budget Narrative and a completed [budget worksheet](#) must be submitted to ODE for years 1 and 2 of the grant as part of the grant application. This budget will be reviewed and approved by ODE prior to the applicant conducting any grant activities.
 - b. Explain how the requested funds will be used to meet the objectives identified in the tutoring program. Please include how the requested funds will be used in each of the categories listed below. Provide a list of expenditures that the project expects to incur throughout the duration of the funding period. Provide information of any matching of funds or services that will be provided in support of the tutoring program objectives.
 - i. Staffing
 - ii. Materials
 - iii. Training
 - iv. Instruction
 - v. Transportation
 - vi. Ongoing tutor support
8. Budget Worksheet
 - a. Complete a [budget worksheet](#) identifying budget amounts for each of the categories listed in the above budget narrative. This is included in the [application template](#).
9. Certify Grant Assurances
10. Partnership and Co-Design
 - a. Include a letter identifying potential district(s) and/or school(s) partners documenting the outlined agreement, activities, and each partner's commitment to implementing the tutoring program. The letter should include if this partnership is new or existing.

Application Appendices:

Appendices 1-4 are required for all applicants. They are not included in the narrative's eight-page limit.

Instructions for developing each appendix are provided below. Appendices include:

1. Project Timeline
2. Budget Narrative and Worksheet
3. Grant Assurances
4. Partnership Letters of Support
5. Evidence of Prior Effectiveness (if applicable)

Appendix A: Checklist for Quality Elements of Application Components Design Requirements

Curriculum and Instruction:

- Maximize the number of K-12 students served in the program based on data-driven decision-making (e.g., Who is considered most at-risk?). Provide an estimate of the number of students you will serve, including subject area and grade level.
- Collaborate with classroom teachers for alignment to Tier I core instruction.
- Concentrate on mathematics and/or literacy tutoring servicing students in grades K-12.
- Provide tutoring aligned to Ohio's Learning Standards for Mathematics and/or English Language Arts.
- Use evidence-based, high-quality instructional materials in mathematics and literacy.

Math tutoring programs should include:

- Tutoring instruction and materials aligned to the [Ohio Learning Standards for Mathematics](#).
- Tutoring instruction aligned to [Standards for Mathematical Practices](#).

Language and Literacy tutoring programs should include:

- Use of evidence-based instruction and materials aligned to the [Ohio Learning Standards for English Language Arts](#) and key instructional shifts. Dependent on needs identified by student data, this may include instruction on reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language.
- Tutoring instruction focused on the five components of reading as outlined in the [National Reading Panel](#) report: phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension.
- Tutoring instruction aligned to the Language and Literacy Development Continuum outlined in [Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement](#). These include strategies aligned to grade levels and skill development: Emergent Language and Literacy, Early Language and Literacy, Conventional Language and Literacy, Adolescent Language and Literacy.

Collaboration:

- Create programs that are mutually beneficial to the IHE and school districts (consider clinical/field experiences aligned with core reading and mathematics courses), volunteer hour opportunities, stipends and incentives for tutors including course credit, loan forgiveness or other benefits.
- Develop authentic partnerships with schools and districts that benefit the IHE, teacher education candidates, the partner school and district personnel and the children.
- Focus on assessment data to drive individualized instruction to meet student needs. (e.g., achievement data, decline in performance index, school or district status based on ODE's differentiated accountability and identification system, attendance data).
- Support schools and districts in the process of identifying children to be tutored and grade levels involved in the program. IHE should have a process to identify tutors who best meet the needs of identified children (content / grade level experience)
- Focus on high-dosage tutoring which prioritizes one-on-one tutoring or small group ratios three times a week in person or virtually as determined by the partnership agreement and needs of the school or district.

Support for Tutors:

- Develop and provide training modules or procure training services in the following areas:
 - Effective math teaching practices
 - Evidence-based literacy strategies
 - Tutor expectations
 - Tutor-student relationships
 - Content proficiency
 - Facilitation
 - Data collection and progress monitoring
 - Supporting student and learning differences
 - Strategies for learning and behavior management
 - Other topics as prioritized as determined by the partnership agreement

Logistics:

- Hiring:
 - Ensure all tutors have [background checks](#).
 - Tutors appropriately trained in effective pedagogy and demonstrated content knowledge should be given priority; however, tutors from other areas of study beyond teacher preparation should also be considered.
- Schedule:
 - Establish an anticipated schedule delineating the number of children tutored; the frequency, duration, and location of the tutoring sessions; and the plan for providing tutoring during non-academic periods to minimize the amount of time children are removed from strong core instruction. The plan should include elements of high-dosage tutoring.
 - Develop a staffing plan and designate roles of key personnel, which may include an IHE coordinator, school or district liaison, and/or graduate assistants
 - Outline a process or use funds to ensure transportation of tutors to and from the schools where necessary.
- Communication:
 - Create a process for ensuring regular two-way communication between the IHE and partner school(s) and district(s).
 - Establish a process for IHE and the school or district to communicate progress to grade-level teachers and parents or guardians.

Evaluation and sustainability:

- The IHE and partner school(s) and district(s) should work together to identify what elements of the tutoring program they may be able to sustain after the grant.
- In collaboration with ODE, the IHE and partner school(s) and district(s) should develop a monitoring system to evaluate effectiveness and gauge success of the program. Grantees will be required to submit interim and final grant activities reports to the program office. ODE reserves the right to request revisions for clarity or ask for additional information as necessary.
- Evaluate the tutoring program based on student outcomes in mathematics and/or literacy.
- Grantees will be required to participate in state evaluation activities.