

Request for Grant Application Guidelines

Statewide Distance Learning Project Direct Service (064)

For services offered with the following funding:
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title II, Section 231 (Federal Adult Education and
Family Literacy Act)

February 2018



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
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Statewide Distance Learning Project Direct Service Grant (064)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides funds to be awarded through the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Bureau of Postsecondary and Higher Education, Division of Adult Education (division) to provide adult basic education services throughout the state. PDE is making available up to \$400,000 of these funds to support one distance learning direct service program to provide adult basic education services at a distance to Pennsylvania residents as directed by the division.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

Program Purpose

The *Technical Assistance Guide for Performance Accountability under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* defines distance education as a “formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for the majority of the instructional period. Distance learning materials are delivered through a variety of media including, but not limited to, print, audio recording, videotape, broadcasts, computer software, web-based programs, and other online technology. Teachers support distance learners through communication via mail, telephone, e-mail or online technologies and software.”

PDE has elected to support a program dedicated to providing adult basic education at a distance to meet the needs of residents who are unable to access face-to-face instruction in their areas of need.

Minimum Program Requirements

The successful applicant for the grant funding opportunity must provide all of the following services at a distance through a variety of media:

- Adult basic education (ABE), adult secondary education (ASE), and high school equivalency (HSE) test preparation instruction to individuals who are unable to attend face-to-face instruction at a local program;
- English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instruction to individuals who are unable to attend face-to-face instruction at a local program;
- High school level math instruction (algebra, geometry) to supplement math instruction at local programs;
- Support services to help students persist in distance education;
- Support services to help students identify education and career goals, develop employability skills, and successfully transition to postsecondary education/training and/or employment, as appropriate; and
- Integration of workforce preparation activities into instruction and support services.

The successful applicant for the distance learning grant will not be required to serve as a partner in a local PA CareerLink® site. However, it should ensure that it is providing career services to program participants.

Eligible Applicants

As defined in WIOA, an eligible provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities that may include:

1. A local education agency;
2. A community-based organization or faith-based organization;
3. A volunteer literacy organization;
4. An institution of higher education;
5. A public or private non-profit agency;
6. A library;
7. A public housing authority;
8. A non-profit institution that is not described in any of the above and has the ability to provide adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals;
9. A consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and
10. A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

For the purposes of determining demonstrated effectiveness to qualify as an eligible provider, PDE will require applicants to provide hard data for the immediate preceding three program years. The data must demonstrate the applicant's success in helping students achieve the following outcomes:

1. Improve skills in mathematics, reading, writing, and/or English language proficiency;
2. Earn a high school equivalency credential;
3. Get a job;
4. Retain a job; and
5. Enter postsecondary education or training.

The data must include the numbers in the numerator, denominator, and percentage. Applicants will also have to provide an explanation of how the data were collected and outcomes determined.

Entities that are not able to provide the data needed for demonstrated effectiveness are not eligible providers and will not be able to receive grant funds.

For the purposes of the competition in Pennsylvania, a consortium or coalition of agencies will be defined as a main grantee with one or more subgrantees. The main grantee will serve as both the fiscal agent for the grant and a provider of some of the services proposed in the grant application. The main grantee is responsible for ensuring that all activities provided are completed as proposed and is responsible for monitoring and compliance of the subgrantees. Answers in the grant application should reflect the work the consortium/coalition as a whole rather than treat each entity separately. Applicants cannot subcontract with another applicant for a portion of the proposed services. Agencies can only be a main grantee or a subgrantee.

Eligible Program Participants

An eligible individual is defined by WIOA as an individual:

1. Who has attained 16 years of age;
2. Who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law and;
3. Who is:
 - a. Basic skills deficient;

- b. Does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
- c. Is an English language learner.

Funding Priorities

In awarding funds, PDE will prioritize funding, through the review and rating process, grant applications that demonstrate:

- A thorough and detailed plan for providing the required services;
- Evidence of the applicant's organizational capacity to meet all of the programmatic, reporting, administrative, and fiscal requirements of the grant;
- A variety of instructional options to meet the needs of students;
- High quality instruction that is based on best practices and the *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education* and is of sufficient intensity to lead to student outcomes;
- High-quality student support services that help students to persist and succeed in adult basic education services and meet their personal, educational, and career goals; and
- Services that align with the strategies and goals of the Pennsylvania WIOA Combined State Plan.

Federal WIOA Title II Requirements

WIOA Title II establishes requirements for the grant competition process, including items that must be addressed in the grant applications and items that PDE must take into consideration when awarding grants. In addition, section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act requires applicants to describe the steps they will take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, the grant-funded program. This RGA and the questions in the grant narrative are designed to ensure that all necessary information is included. The Division of Adult Education strongly encourages applicants to refer to [Programs and Activities Authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act \(Title II of the WIOA\) — Final Rule §463.20](#) and [§463.22](#) when completing the grant application.

Past Performance as a Portion of Scoring

PDE takes past performance into consideration when awarding grants.

Applicants will be reviewed on past performance based on data provided in the grant application for the immediate preceding three program years. The data must demonstrate the applicant's success in helping students achieve the following outcomes:

1. Improve skills in mathematics, reading, writing, and/or English language proficiency;
2. Earn a high school equivalency credential;
3. Get a job;
4. Retain a job; and
5. Enter postsecondary education or training.

The data must include the numbers in the numerator, denominator, and percentage. Applicants will also have to provide an explanation of how the data were collected and outcomes determined.

Grant Terms and Conditions

Multi-Year Contracts

The successful applicant will be approved for a four-year grant cycle. Grant funds will be awarded through annual one year notifications of funding contingent on the availability of funds. Each year, the grantee will be required to submit a budget and program year specific information via the eGrants system in order to receive funding. Each year's renewal option and grant amounts will be based on the following criteria:

1. Contract compliance, including success in meeting contracted enrollment and providing the contracted services;
2. Evidence of sufficient progress in meeting the state imposed performance standards;
3. Evidence of continuous program improvement;
4. Compliance with fiscal and programmatic policies and guidelines; and
5. The amount of the federal appropriation.

Programs that fail to sufficiently address the above criteria may be terminated prior to the end of the grant cycle.

PDE reserves the right to shorten or extend the four-year grant cycle as the situation warrants.

Program Funding Requests

Applicants may apply for up to \$400,000. Applicants should only apply for those funds necessary to provide the required services to the number of students it proposes to serve based on need and interest. The maximum allowable cost per contracted student is \$2,000.

Grant Application Components

The Distance Learning Project Direct Service 064 grant application consists of three sections, Narrative, Applicant Information, and Budget. Guides will be provided that review how applicants create and complete a grant application.

Narrative

The narrative provides evidence of past effectiveness, analysis of need, details of program delivery, and other information relating to coordination, collaboration, and program improvement. The narrative is the basis for analysis of the applicant's ability to provide the required education services. Online contextual help is available for each question in the application narrative by clicking on the **Help icons** in eGrants.

Applicant information

The Applicant Information section provides detailed information regarding staff qualifications, proposed contracted enrollment and participation, program contact information, and assurances. The information provided in this section will be rated for its alignment with and support of the information provided in the narrative. Online contextual help is available by clicking on the **Help icons** in eGrants.

Budget

The budget demonstrates fiscally sound allocation of funds to successfully provide education services. Online contextual help is available by clicking on the **Help icons** in eGrants. The information in the budget will be rated for its alignment with and support of the information provided in the narrative and applicant information sections. It will also be rated for accuracy against the budget information in the guidelines.

When completing the budget, refer to the *Adult Education and Family Literacy Guidelines* Section 600 for fiscal guidance and information on grant limitations and cost functions and object codes.

Application Review

All Distance Learning Project Direct Service 064 applications will be reviewed except those disqualified for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Entity submitting the application does not meet the definition of Eligible Applicant because it does not have three complete years of program data necessary to meet the requirement of “demonstrated effectiveness.”
2. Application is incomplete.
3. Applications not completed by the application deadline. Completion will be determined by the time the eGrants system records that the program completed the application by marking all sections complete and clicking the “Complete” button.

Grant applications will be reviewed and scored by teams of no fewer than three individuals comprised of staff from PDE, other commonwealth agencies, and/or peer reviewers. Peer reviewers will be non-applicants who have experience in related activities. Reviewers will be screened for conflict of interests and will not benefit financially from grant awards. In addition, after receiving the grant applications through eGrants, PDE will submit all applications to the Pennsylvania Workforce Board to review for consistency with the Pennsylvania WIOA Combined State Plan. PDE will take the results of the review and any recommendations to promote alignment into consideration when making grant awards. This process ensures compliance with WIOA regulations §463.21.

Depending on the number of applications, either a weighted method or a Z-scoring method will be used. In the weighted scoring method a single team reviews and rates all applications. In the Z-scoring method, applicants are distributed to several teams for review and rating. Scores are then calculated using a standard deviation formula which evens out high and low raters.

Grant Award Selection and Notification Process

Award Selection: Reviewers will use an application review guide to review and score applications. The grant will be awarded to the highest scoring applicant based on

1. A minimum score of 88, and
2. Availability of funds.

The selected application under consideration for acceptance may require revisions or submission of additional information prior to approval.

Notification Process: The Division of Adult Education will notify each applicant of the outcome of the review process and whether its application will be funded.

3. GRANT REQUIREMENTS

1. Grant applications must be submitted through the [eGrants](#) system. No paper applications will be accepted.
2. For access to the eGrants system and the related grant opportunities, prospective applicants should send an email to ra-able@pa.gov with the subject line “Division of Adult Education grant competition.” In the body of the email, prospective applicants should state

the agency name and identify which Division of Adult Education grants the agency plans to apply for. Prior to sending the email, the applicant should search for the agency record in the PDE Education Names and Addresses ([EdNA](#)) database.

- a. Agencies found in EdNA should include in their email their Administrative Unit Number (AUN) and contact information for the individual at the agency who will create and complete the grant application.
 - b. Agencies not listed in EdNA should indicate in the email that they are not in the state database and provide contact information for the agency administrator who will work with division staff to establish a listing and be assigned an AUN.
 - c. Under extraordinary circumstances affecting an agency's access to the eGrants system, the requirement to submit the grant application via eGrants may be waived. Eligible applicants who believe they have such circumstances should contact the Division of Adult Education at ra-able@pa.gov prior to the application due date to discuss an alternative submission process. Please note that the application deadline in bullet 5 below applies to any alternative submission process.
3. For the purpose of planning, writing, and submitting applications, this document should be used in conjunction with information presented during the grant bidders' webinar. Applicants should also review this information in conjunction with the division guidelines and policies and the eGrants application to develop a complete understanding of the intent and requirements of the application process.
 4. Questions regarding the Distance Learning Project Direct Service (064) grant application process must be sent to ra-able@pa.gov. Division of Adult Education staff will periodically post responses to submitted questions on the PDE website for all applicants to review.
 5. Application Deadline: Eligible applicants must submit their proposal to PDE by April 3, 2018, 2:00 PM. All sections must be marked complete (evidenced by a green check mark next to each section) and the complete button must be chosen.

4. GRANT TIMELINE

Dates	Activity
February 23, 2018	Grant Application Guidelines Available
February 27, 2018	Grant Bidders Webinar
February 28, 2018	Distance Learning Grant Applications Available (open)
April 3, 2018, 2:00 PM	Distance Learning Grant Completion Deadline (close)

5. AWARD WINNER

To complete the grant award process, applicants under consideration for acceptance are required to provide proper signatures to the grant agreement and complete the Funding Accountability and Transparency form located in the grant in eGrants.

All contract components are produced by eGrants. Each will be accessed at the [eGrants website](#) and will consist of the following:

1. Grant Agreement Signature Page;
2. Appendix A – Special Program Terms;
3. Appendix B – Grantee's Program Narrative(s) and Budget(s); and
4. Appendix C – Payment Terms, Responsibilities and Contact Information

Grant Agreement

1. The Grant Agreement is a binding agreement between PDE and the eligible grant award recipient. The beginning and ending date of the project, total amount of funds, and project number will appear on the grant agreement.
2. There must be an electronic signature or a manual signature in blue ink on the original copy of the Grant Agreement. Stamped signatures are not acceptable on the original copy.
3. Agencies approved for eSignature can electronically sign the Grant Agreement. The authorized signatory must be in the eGrants system in order to electronically sign contracts.
4. Agencies not approved for electronic signatures must print the first page of the grant agreement from eGrants, have it signed in blue ink by the authorized representative(s) and mail it to the division. The signature page should arrive no later than ten business days after the grant is submitted. All manually signed grant agreement signature pages should be mailed to:

Pennsylvania Department of Education
 Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education
 Division of Adult Education
 333 Market Street, 12th Floor
 Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

5. The authorized signer(s) must be (an) authorized representative(s) of the agency as described below:

Agency	One Authorized Representative	Two Authorized Representatives
School District	Superintendent	
Intermediate Unit	Executive Director	
Career & Technical School	Director	
Charter School	Chief Executive Officer	
University, College or Community College	President	
Public Library	Director	
Community-Based Organizations and Corporations		President or Vice-President AND Secretary or Treasurer

6. Changes to the grant agreement language will require review and approval by PDE, Office of Chief Counsel, the Office of General Counsel, and the Attorney General's office and will cause delays in approving the agreement.
7. Per Management Directive 215.9, amended October 15, 2015, staff of the division will determine whether the applicant has delinquent tax debt or other conditions as specified in the State Contractor Responsibility Program. Any related issues must be resolved before the grant agreement will be reviewed and approved.
8. Applications recommended by division staff for approval are then reviewed by the Deputy Secretary, the Office of Chief Counsel, and the Comptroller's Office. Upon approval from the Comptroller's Office, the contract is considered fully executed. The fully executed contract with supporting documentation is uploaded to the Treasury website and to the final reporting section of the grant in eGrants. The status of an application can be verified in the eGrants system. The status will change to "Completed" once the grant is fully executed.
9. After complete review and approval by PDE and the Comptroller's Office, an approved and fully executed grant agreement will be available in eGrants.

Funding Accountability and Transparency

Grantees must complete the Funding Accountability and Transparency form located in eGrants.

- Grantees must maintain current registration in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) at all times during which they have active federal awards funded pursuant to this agreement. A [Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System \(DUNS\)](#) number is required for registration in SAM.
- The applicant must complete the FAAT form that is located in eGrants.
- The following information is required on the FAAT form: (1) DUNS number or DUNS number + 4 if applicable; (2) city, state and zip code +4 digit extension of the primary location, and (3) compensation of officers is necessary if grantee received more than 80 percent of federal funds in the preceding fiscal year.
- The commonwealth will not process a grant until the grantee provides this information.

General Program and Fiscal Requirements

Award winners are subject to all applicable state and federal administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements, which are incorporated into each grant award by reference.

Such requirements include, but are not limited to:

- [Adult Education and Family Literacy Guidelines](#)
- All Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education, Division of Adult Education policies
- eData Manual and Glossary
- PDE Master Standard Terms and Conditions
- [Education Department General Administrative Regulations \(EDGAR\) 34 Code of Federal Regulation \(CFR\) Parts 75, 76, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99 as amended on December 19, 2014](#)
- [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#)

APPENDIX A

Scoring Summary

Section	Maximum Score
Description of Need	4
Agency Structure and Capacity	16
Program Improvement and Data	14
Instruction	20
Student Identification and Support	18
Technology	6
Alignment with Workforce	8
Past Effectiveness	6
Agency Information	6
Budget	20
Total	118

Minimum acceptable score = 88/118