

Funding Opportunity

First Application Deadline: October 17, 2020

Response, Innovation, and Student Equity (RISE) Education Fund

The State of Colorado will accept applications for a Response, Innovation, and Student Equity (RISE) Education Fund to address the learning challenges related to the economic, social, and health impacts of COVID-19. This \$32.7 million fund will support high-needs school districts, charter schools, and public institutions of higher education, to address the impacts of COVID-19 in a manner that creates sustainable innovations that improve student learning, close equity gaps, and enhance operational efficiency for pre-K-12 through higher education.

Contact Information:

All applications, reimbursement requests and questions should be emailed to GEER.Reimbursements@state.co.us or contact the following staff listed below.

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RISE Education Fund

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Introduction

The COVID-19 crisis has had an enormous impact operationally, educationally, and economically on our P-12 school districts, charter schools, and institutions of higher education, as well as students, parents and families. In particular, students who already faced challenges, including low-income students, minority students, English learners, students with disabilities, students experiencing food or housing insecurity, or system-involved students such as those in foster care risk falling further behind or dropping out entirely in the absence of targeted support. In addition, schools and institutions of higher education are facing significant budget cuts and must innovate to respond to these cuts, while maintaining or improving quality, filling learning gaps, and preparing for partial or full remote schooling in the fall.

In order to address these challenges and promote innovation, Colorado will accept applications for grants for a \$32.7 million RISE Education fund sponsored through federal Governor's Emergency Education Relief Funds to address the learning challenges related to the economic, social, and health impacts of COVID-19. Applicants can pursue awards between \$250,000 and \$4,000,000, depending on the size of the applicant, number of children served, and quality of the application.

Purpose

The purpose of this fund is to provide resources to high-needs school districts, charter schools, and public institutions of higher education, to address the impacts of COVID-19 in a manner that creates lasting innovations, improved student learning, and enhanced operational efficiency for pre-K-12 and higher education.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include:

1. School districts (on behalf of all schools or particular schools) or BOCES
2. Charter School Institute (CSI)
3. Charter schools
4. Public degree-granting institutions of higher education (or systems)
5. Federally-recognized Tribes
6. Early childhood councils
7. Consortia of such entities

Other organizations may partner with an eligible applicant, including:

1. Non-profit or community-based organizations
2. Early childhood providers
3. Local government entities
4. Employers or workforce partners

Priority Considerations

Priority will be given to proposals that:

- serve a rural community; or
- propose to serve schools or districts with priority improvement or turnaround plan types; and
- address significant academic gaps between students based on income, race or ethnic group, status as an English learner, or disability status.

Available Use of Funds

Funding may be utilized for a wide variety of expenses and activities designed to meet the purpose of this grant program. Grant recipients will be authorized to request reimbursements for eligible expenses. However, funding may not be utilized:

- To supplant or replace current public or private funding;
- To supplant ongoing or usual activities of any organization involved in the project, but can be used to grow, scale, or significantly alter an existing program or effort;
- To purchase or improve land, or to purchase, construct, or make permanent improvements to any building;
- To reimburse pre-award costs;
- To provide food for trainings;
- For fundraising, political education, or lobbying activities;
- For expenditure of dues and/or membership fees to any organization.

Key Dates and Duration of Grant

Funds are anticipated to be awarded in two rounds:

- 1st Grant Application Deadline: October 17, 2020 at 5pm MT / Award Notification Date: November 6, 2020
- 2nd Grant Application Deadline: December 19, 2020 at 5pm MT / Award Notification Date: January 22, 2021

Funds are available for use by September 30, 2022.

Program Requirements

The RISE Education Fund is intended to assist eligible applicants in addressing the learning challenges related to the economic, social, and health impacts of COVID-19. This fund will provide resources to high-needs school districts, charter schools, and public institutions of higher education, to address the impacts of COVID-19 in a manner that creates lasting innovations to improve student learning, and enhance operational efficiency for pre-K-12 and higher education.

In addition, this fund will:

- Support innovative, locally driven solutions;
- Address broad structural challenges and overcome barriers to learning that have the potential to be replicated in the future by other school districts and institutions;
- Advance equity by reaching students most likely to have been affected by the economic, social, and health impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, including by engaging or re-engaging students in school;
- Prioritize educator, family, and community input and support, and partnership in developing and implementing grant activities;
- Prioritize proposals that serve geographically diverse areas of the state including rural areas or propose to serve schools or school districts in priority improvement or turnaround status.

Reviewers will be looking at how applicants have addressed specific areas of focus:

1. Providing new student-focused models of learning for students, which may include whole school turnarounds or reimagining higher education.
2. Dramatically rethinking the student experience for higher education institutions to improve student persistence, retention, and graduation rates, including shorter time to degree and dual and concurrent enrollment.
3. Strengthening and formalizing linkages between P-12, higher education, and industry, which may include work-based learning, improving transitions, apprenticeships, early colleges, and preparing students for in-demand careers and sectors in their community.
4. Catalyzing innovations for pre-K and higher education that can drive long-term impact after the life of the grant, which may include partnerships to address student and family needs, leveraging economies of scale through partnerships, and cost savings for institutions, school districts, and students.

In addition, reviewers will be looking for how applicants address three project components integral to community response to COVID-19:

- 1. Connections:** How will the proposed project improve community connections, as well as student and family outreach in the learning process?
- 2. Engagement:** How will the proposed project increase student engagement and re-engagement, including by increasing interest in the learning process and ensuring students are engaged in school regardless of whether learning is remote or in-person?
- 3. Outcomes:** How will the proposed project improve student outcomes, including academic and social-emotional measures?

Please note that a school district applying on behalf of all schools as a sole recipient of funds (i.e. not in collaboration with another entity) will be subject to the “equitable services” requirement imposed by the federal government under section 18005 of the CARES Act. A school district applying on behalf of one or particular schools, or in collaboration with any other entity, is considered an “education-related entity” for the purpose of this requirement. Please see CARES Act GEER Q&A [here](#).

Performance and Financial Reporting Requirements

Applicants will be required to report to the state on a quarterly basis. Reports will include both data and narrative components. Applicants will be required to provide a final report at the close of the grant describing whether or not the applicant has met the intended outcomes.

At the end of each quarter, each applicant shall submit to the agency and the Committee a report that contains—

- (A) the amount of large covered funds received that were expended or obligated for each project or activity;
- (B) a detailed list of all projects or activities for which large covered funds were expended or obligated, including—
 - (i) the name of the project or activity;
 - (ii) a description of the project or activity; and
 - (iii) the estimated number of jobs created or retained by the project or activity, where applicable; and
- (C) detailed information on any level of subcontracts or subgrants awarded by the covered recipient or its subcontractors or subgrantees, to include the data elements required to comply with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (31 U.S.C. 6101 note) allowing aggregate reporting on awards below \$50,000 or to individuals, as prescribed by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Data Privacy

Applicants must provide an overview of how student and staff data will be collected and how the district will ensure all data is securely protected. Include a copy or provide a link to district data and privacy policies.

Submission, Review Process and Timeline

Grant applications are due on 10/17/2020 at 5pm MT. The application must be signed by all partners. Applicants should submit their applications online at GEER.Reimbursements@state.co.us.

Applications will be reviewed by a grant selection committee composed of parents, educators, students, education leaders, and other community members appointed by Governor Polis and chaired by Gary Community Investments President and CEO, Mike Johnston. Each application will be scored based on a rubric taking into account need, focus, sustainability, priority, sustainability, evaluation and innovation. Awards will be announced on 11/06/2020.

RISE Education Fund Grant Application

Applicant Information			
Applicant Name:			
Address:			
DUNS # or AID:			
Region			
(Indicate region of Colorado this program will directly impact)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Metro	<input type="checkbox"/> West Central	<input type="checkbox"/> Pikes Peak	
<input type="checkbox"/> Southwest	<input type="checkbox"/> North Central	<input type="checkbox"/> Southeast	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northwest	<input type="checkbox"/> Northeast		
Authorized Representative			
Name:		Title:	
Phone:		Email:	
Program Contact			
Name:		Title:	
Phone:		Email:	
Fiscal Manager			
Name:		Title:	
Phone:		Email:	

<p style="text-align: right; margin: 0;">TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED:</p> <p style="margin: 0;">(The amount requested must equal the grant budget amount from the last page)</p>	
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Program Assurances Form

The applicant's Authorized Representative and the Program Contact must complete and sign their approval of the assurances, contents of the application, and the receipt of program funds. Applicants will date and sign that they hereby apply for and, if awarded, accept the state funds requested in this application. In consideration of the receipt of these grant funds, the Board of the agency agrees that the General Assurances form for all funds and the terms therein are specifically incorporated by reference in this application. The Board also will certify that all program and pertinent administrative requirements will be met. Grant Recipients will be authorized to request reimbursements for eligible expenses. Grant Recipients will comply with the provisions of all applicable acts, regulations, and assurances; Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations(CFR), Part 200 as adopted at 2 CFR 3474, 3485, 34 CFR Part 76; the applicable parts of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) 34 CFR parts 75-77, 79, 81-82, 84, 97-99, Department of Education General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) requirement, and other titles of the CFR that govern the award and administration of this grant.

_____ hereby applies for, and if awarded, accepts the state funds as requested in this application. In compliance of these grant funds, the organization certifies that all program and pertinent administrative requirements will be met. In addition, the organization agrees to the following:

(initial next to each statement to indicate agreement)

_____ 1. The applicant will provide the following information:

- A. Progress Report Program Indicators
 - a. Major Activities and Accomplishments
 - b. Describe any deviation or departures from the original project plan
 - c. Significant observations
 - d. Organizational issues
 - e. Technical assistance and training needed
 - f. Activities planned for next reporting period
- B. Grant Evaluation and Data Collection
- C. Quarterly Performance and Financial Reports

_____ 2. Funded projects will maintain appropriate fiscal and program records and conduct fiscal audits of this program as a part of their regular audits. Fiscal and program records will be maintained according to grant requirements.

_____ 3. If any findings of misuse of these funds are discovered, project funds will be returned back to funding department

_____ 4. The grant recipient will maintain sole responsibility for the project even though subcontractors may be used to perform certain services.

_____ 5. The applicant will not discriminate against anyone regarding race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, color, disability, or age. Applicant must have a copy of their Equal Employer Opportunity Act documentation on hand at all times.

_____ 6. The work of personnel supported through this grant, directly supports the accomplishment of the program goals.

_____ 7. The applicant will ensure that each program covered by this application will be administered in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and requirements delineated in this application.

_____ 8. For supporting documentation, districts must follow the same processes as ESEA funds, applying Uniform Admin Req's, Cost Principles, and GAAP and Audit Requirements in the Uniform Guidance.

_____ 9. Project modifications and changes in the approved budget must be requested in writing and be approved in writing by **before** modifications are made to the expenditures.

_____ 10. Grant Recipients will sign and return the Certification of Agreement and Risk Assessment forms of the Notice of Grant Award

Program Evaluation

The state of Colorado is pursuing research funds to help understand the impact of this program, particularly for high-needs students. While not every applicant will be evaluated, the state will select a certain number of applicants that do agree to be evaluated via a rigorous evaluation process. Applicants agreeing to be evaluated must agree to the following conditions:

- Applicant understands and acknowledges that the Evaluator will submit a request to the relevant state level agency (Colorado Department of Education, Colorado Department of Higher Education, Colorado Workforce Development Council, etc) for relevant student-level information from the Applicant district or higher education institution that is in the state’s purview. Such information could include assessment scores (CMAS, SAT scores and/or other outcome data, grade, persistence and graduation rate data, and demographic data (such as race/ethnicity, gender, Special Education status, Free and Reduced Lunch status, and English Language Learner status), as well as attendance or discipline-related data.
- Applicant understands, acknowledges and agrees to develop a Data Sharing Agreement with the applicable state agency for evaluation purposes.
- The Evaluator may administer a survey on implementation and outcomes to teachers, faculty, students and administrators in the applicant service area. Applicant agrees to provide the Evaluator with contact information for relevant parties and any other necessary support to facilitate the implementation of the survey.
- The applicant also agrees to provide the Evaluator non-PII information on implementation timelines and data on services - including the dates, types and contents of services - which were received by schools/students/teachers within the applicant service area.

Applicant agrees to be contacted by a research partner to discuss participation in a rigorous evaluation

Applicant does not agree to participate in rigorous evaluation

Please note that a school district applying on behalf of all schools as a sole recipient of funds (i.e. not in collaboration with another entity) will be subject to the “equitable services” requirement imposed by the federal government under section 18005 of the CARES Act. A school district applying on behalf of one or particular schools, or in collaboration with any other entity, is considered an “education-related entity” for the purpose of this requirement. Please see CARES Act GEER Q&A [here](#).

Please check this box if you are applying as a school district for all schools and will be subject to the equitable services requirement.

_____ Name of Authorized Representative	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Name of Program Contact	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Name of Board President	_____ Signature	_____ Date

Statement of Work

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

Community Needs

Provide a description of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on your community, including how COVID-19 has disproportionately affected certain students in your community or your campus.

Response to Needs

Provide a description of how your proposed project plan addresses the community needs identified above, including how you conducted outreach to parents, educators, students, and your community in developing your application.

Project Plan

Provide a description of your proposed project plan, including how such plan addresses the identified areas of focus, why this project is effective and necessary, any evidence to support this project plan, and how the project will improve student and family outreach and engagement in the learning process.

Partners

Identify partners involved in drafting and implementing your project plan, including roles of such partners.

Sustainability

Describe how your project plan will be sustainable after the grant period, including any in-kind or other donations provided.

Evaluation

Describe how the applicant proposes to measure progress, both utilizing shorter and longer term indicators of progress. Describe the intended outcomes of the project.

Priority

Please identify if your project plan fits any of the priority areas:

1. My project serves a rural area as defined by CDE, or defined by the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) as a rural institution OR my project serves students attending at least one school or district with a priority improvement or turnaround plan.
2. My proposal addresses significant academic gaps between students based on income, race or ethnic group, status as an English learner, or disability status.

