NEW MEXICO

Public Education Department

Request for Applications (RFA) # 22-92400-00004

Providing Statewide Access to Courses in the Virtual Environment to Support Students, Families, and Local Education Agencies

RFA Release Date: July 15, 2021
Final Submission Date: July 26, 2021, by 4:00 PM MT
Applications received after the final date will not be considered for funding.

This is a Request for Application (RFA) and does not constitute an award. This RFA is designed to promote availability and access to virtual courses for open enrollment between local education agencies (LEAs) to support New Mexico students and families. The PED is making available up to $2,500,000.00 to fund this initiative. The funding source is the Education Stabilization Fund through the Coronavirus Aid Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund).

Application Checklist
Please complete the checklist below to ensure that all required information and actions have been completed:

_____ **Project Narrative (Section 7)**
_____ **Requested Budget (Section 8)**
_____ **Letters of Support (Section 7)/Commitment/Assurance**
_____ **Submit Application**

All applications must be completed and submitted via email to Lynn.Vasquez@state.nm.us by July 26, 2021, at 4 pm.

Gwen Perea Warniment, PhD
Deputy Secretary, Teaching, Learning, & Assessment

Issued by: Lynn Vasquez
Division Director of Assessment & LMS

1.0 PURPOSE OF THIS REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)

During stakeholder meetings with district and charter leaders, local agency leaders expressed the need for PED to support access to supplemental virtual course offerings for districts to meet student's academic needs and to provide families with flexible options for attendance.

To address these needs, PED will make an appropriation of up to $2,500,000.00 available across two years for any New Mexico district or charter school that can develop and provide **supplemental open enrollment** (not full school/diploma program) for courses identified, but not limited to, those included in **Appendix A. For purposes of this RFA, a supplemental open enrollment would allow a student who is enrolled full-time in their home LEA to take supplemental coursework online from another providing LEA. The provider may or may not charge a fee to the home LEA for services provided.**

This appropriation may be awarded to a single district or charter school, or it may be divided across multiple districts and/or charter schools. PED will make this determination upon review of the applications received.

2.0 ELIGIBLE ENTITIES AS PROVIDERS

New Mexico Public School Districts and New Mexico Public Charter Schools are eligible local education agencies allowed to apply for this RFA. The award may be granted to one applicant or a combination of multiple applicants. This RFA is open to providers at all grade levels (e.g., K-12; K-6; K-8; 8-12, 9-12).

3.0 RFA GOALS

The primary goal of this RFA is to provide access to open enrollment courses as a supplemental school offering to New Mexico students and families. To meet this goal, the allotment of funding provided by PED is intended to support programs that support one or more of the following aims:

- Provide all students with equitable learning opportunities through the use of online learning options.
- Remove barriers, such as seat time; utilize competency-based outcomes.
- Expand educational opportunities by reducing geographic, hiring, and fiscal barriers for LEAs, students, and families.
- Support student and family expectations to achieve college and career readiness through supplemental individualized learning plans.
- Collaborate with New Mexico schools in providing equitable access to expanded and high-quality curricula taught by New Mexico-certified teachers.
- Support credit recovery needs.

- Support brick & mortar schools by providing online Honors, Remedial, Dual Credit, Credit Recovery, and expanded elective and CTE curricula that are not readily accessible across all schools.
- Create accelerated pathways for middle school students to earn high school credits.
- Increase opportunities for applying new technology literacies.
- Promote cross-LEA, PED, and HED collaboration.
- Promote statewide sharing of educational resources (e.g., hard-to-staff positions, high-quality course content)

4.0   LENGTH OF FUNDING

This RFA will provide awardees PED funding for the 2021-22 school year with an option to extend to the 2022-23 school year upon mutual agreement and satisfactory completion of the initial year. Awardees should submit a plan and budget for up to two years.

5.0   PROGRAM OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

Program oversight and management are assigned to:
Lynn Vasquez, Division Director, Assessment & Learning Management Systems

6.0   PROGRAM CRITERIA AND QUALITY

6.1   *Course & Curriculum*
All courses submitted by the Provider(s) in response to this RFA must:
   a. Align with state-adopted curriculum standards (e.g., CCSS, New Mexico STEM Ready! Standards)
   b. Demonstrate the use of high-quality instructional materials or high-quality open educational resources
   c. Provide a mixture of online and offline activities; incorporate 21st- century learning skills; feature a high degree of interactivity and multimedia
   d. Utilize various assessment strategies as a means for students to demonstrate mastery of concepts and skills
   e. Provide all ancillary materials such as workbooks, texts, lab equipment, and supplies to the student as part of the course enrollment fee and at no additional cost

6.2   *Highly Qualified Teachers*
All online teachers employed by the Provider(s) shall:
   a. Hold a valid New Mexico Teaching License.
   b. Be state certified within their field of instruction. Teachers cannot be alternatively licensed

    c. Be appropriately trained to teach effectively in the online environment, and be proficient in interacting with students and parents using both synchronous and asynchronous technologies

    d. Be subject to Elevate NM, PED's educator evaluation system

    e. Be subject to employment requirements such as, but not limited to, a background check, as required by the New Mexico PED and the LEA.

6.3 *Learning Management System*

The LMS utilized by the Provider(s) shall manage the content supplied to the student and must:

    a. Be appropriate for use for each grade level.
    b. Be compatible with both Mac and PC devices.
    c. Provide accommodations and accessibility supports.
    d. Ensure compatibility with mobile applications.

6.4 *Student Data and Reporting*

The Provider(s) shall securely maintain all student data as required by PED and meet state reporting requirements, including but not limited to:

    a. Security of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) such as the state student ID (SSID) number, demographic, and enrollment information.

    b. Maintenance of course grades, including course assessment results.

    c. Monitoring of student progress, attendance/time spent online, and progress status.

    d. Reports of student grades made accessible to parents, students, and district personnel.

    e. Provider(s) are subject to sharing all relevant data with PED. PED will work with the awardee to establish a reporting schedule focused on LEAs' progress towards the goals identified in the narrative of this RFA.

6.5 *Technology and Tech Support*

The Provider(s) is responsible for all technical support required for students to be successful in a virtual environment. Support shall include, but is not limited to:

    a. Technical support to students, parents/guardians, instructors, and appropriate PED staff.

    b. Online registration processes for students by counselors or homeschool parents/guardians.

    c. Delivery and collection of all online course materials

7.0   APPLICANT NARRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The project narrative for this RFA must address the following questions in the order they are presented and should address the specific questions posed under each section. Please be as informative, but concise as possible.

7.1   *Course and Curriculum*
   a. Provide evidence that courses are aligned to the state content standards. Provide evidence of alignment to Quality Matters standards and/or other peer review processes.
   b. Identify the curriculum being used. Explain how the curricular content is updated, addressing the frequency and process. How is the content reviewed for cultural and linguistic responsiveness?
   c. Explain how the curriculum addresses universal core instruction and addresses curricular needs of gifted and struggling students. What plans are being made for accelerated learning?
   d. To what extent do the courses include project-based learning opportunities that require students to research, solve problems, collaborate and/or communicate to create, and present a product of their learning?
   e. Describe the process for ensuring students participate in summative state assessments as required federally or other standardized assessments to be administered by the student's home LEA.
   f. Provide a list of open enrollment courses by grade levels and/or subjects.

7.2   *Highly Qualified Teachers*
   a. Do instructors possess a valid New Mexico state-issued teaching license, and are instructors highly qualified in the subject area assigned?
   b. Please explain employment requirements such as, but not limited to, a background check, as required by the New Mexico PED and LEAs.
   c. Briefly describe the training provided to online teachers, and how instructional practice and overall effectiveness is monitored and evaluated.
   d. Describe the performance expectations of online teachers, how they are evaluated, how often, and support(s) available to teachers.
   e. Describe the minimum requirements for online educator employment. Include the total number of teachers and the average number of years of teaching experience for online staff.
   f. Explain the use of Elevate NM, PED's educator evaluation system, with online teachers?

7.3 *Learning Management System*
   a. What Learning Management System is used in the delivery and instruction of online courses? More than one can be identified, if applicable.
   b. How are courses being designated for appropriate grade levels?
   c. Describe how accommodations and accessibility supports are being offered.

7.4 *Student Data and Reporting*
 a. Is information such as Personally Identifiable Information (PII) such as the state student ID (SSID) number, demographic, and enrollment information, stored securely? Please give a short description.
 b. Describe how the following will be maintained: course grades, including course assessment results.
 c. How will the monitoring of student progress, attendance/time spent online, and progress status be reported?
 d. Are reports of student grades made accessible to parents, students, and district personnel, following FERPA guidelines?
 e. Provider(s) are subject to sharing all relevant data with PED. PED will work with the awardee to establish a reporting schedule focused on LEAs' progress towards the goals identified in the narrative of this RFA.

7.5 *Technology and Tech Support*
 a. How is technical support provided to students/parents?
 b. How are parents introduced to virtual learning and counseled concerning the appropriateness of virtual schooling for their family/child?
 c. How is registration managed?

7.6 *Deliverables, Timeframes and Letters of Support*
 a. Identify any important information that the RFA review team will need to consider regarding how quickly the organization would be able to implement a virtual environment and how it would support open enrollment across the state of New Mexico.
 b. Include a typical implementation timeline in providing services.
 c. Describe available dual credit or higher education partnerships, if applicable. Include letters of support from these institutions and any other partnerships describing collaboration and how it supports virtual learning.

8.0   Budget

Applicants must submit a budget that includes the following:

1. Please provide a projected two-year budget including the projected number of student enrollments supported.
2. Indicate the $375 per-student, per-course fee to be paid by the local district of the student.
3. Identify any ancillary course materials (such as print or online textbooks) or other subscription fees that may not be included in the cost identified above.
4. Identify all fees associated with the training of staff to implement and/or facilitate the online courses.
5. Identify any other costs (e.g., equipment, programs, promotion) that will incur should the program be selected by PED to provide supplemental virtual courses.

9.0   RFA TIMELINE

Date	Responsible Party	Description
July 15, 2021	PED	RFA Release Date
July 23, 2021	PED/Applicant	Deadline for questions to be received.
July 26, 2021	PED/VMS	PED RFA submission deadline 4.00 pm.
August 1-2, 2021	PED	Review of Applications
August 6, 2021	PED/Grantee(s)	Awards Announced

10.0   EXPLANATION OF EVENT

10.1   *Issuance of RFA*
This RFA is being issued on behalf of the New Mexico Public Education Department on the date specified in the above timeline.

10.2   *Deadline to Submit Questions*
Potential grantees may submit questions to Lynn Vasquez Lynn.Vasquez@state.nm.us to the intent or clarity of the RFA until 4:00 pm MST on July 23, 2021, as indicated in the timeline above. Questions shall be clearly labeled and shall cite the relevant sections of the RFA or any other attending document.

10.3   *Response to Questions*
Responses to questions will be distributed as indicated in the timeline above and according to order in which the questions were received. All applicants will receive a comprehensive list of each question received and the reply provided by the appropriate PED member.

10.4   *Submission of Application*
Applications must be completed and submitted via email to Lynn Vasquez at Lynn.Vasquez@state.nm.us **no later than** July 26, 2021, at 4.00 PM. **Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for funding.**

10.5   *Evaluation of Applications*
The Evaluation Committee will perform the evaluation of applications. The process will take place as indicated in the timeline above depending on the number of applications received. During this time, PED may initiate discussions with Applicants who submit applications requiring clarification. Discussions may not be initiated by Applicants.

10.6   *Selection of Awardees*
The Evaluation Committee will notify all Applicants of the decision on their application by August 6, 2021 or earlier. Feedback and final application score will be distributed to Applicants not selected for funding. Each application will be scored by the panelists individually and then discussed at a meeting of the entire panel in order to arrive at final scores for each component. For more detail on the scoring guidelines, see "Scoring Guidelines" section below.

10.7   *Finalize Agreements*
During the window of time stipulated in the timeline above, PED will work directly with successful grantees to establish terms for the award. All awards will result in an IGA.

10.8   *Awards Announced*
After review of the Evaluation Committee Report and the signed contractual agreement, the Agency will award as per the schedule in the timeline above. This date is subject to change at the discretion of the PED. Awards will be made to the Applicants whose proposals are most advantageous to the State of New Mexico and the Public Education Department, taking into consideration the evaluation factors set forth in this RFA.

11.0   SCORING GUIDELINES

Should the evaluation committee make the determination that this appropriation be awarded across multiple districts or charter schools

To view the scoring rubric, click here.   SCORING RUBRIC

12.0   EVALUATION COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The committee tasked with the evaluation of applications has a broad level of experience with virtual school programming collectively, representing a variety of perspectives and seniority in the field.

Appendix A

These courses are identified as preferred by the PED. Although courses should not be limited to Middle School and High School. Pre-K through 5th Grade applications will be considered.		
Subject Area	**Courses**	
	Middle School	**High School**
Math	Grades 6th, 7th, 8th	Algebra I, Algebra II Geometry, Precalculus
ELA	Grades 6th, 7th, 8th	ELA I - 9th, ELA II - 10th, ELA III - 11th, ELA IV - 12th
Science	Biology 6th, 7th, 8th	Physical Science, Biology, Earth Science
Social Studies	US History - 6th, NM History - 7th World History - 8th	NM History - 9th, World History - 10th Government & Economics - 11th
Additional courses such as those listed below can be proposed		
Visual & Performing Arts		
World Languages		
Physical Education		
Career and Technical Education		
Health Education		
Computer Science		
AP & Dual Credit		
Electives		

Assessment and Learning Management Systems

Administrative Assurances

Date Submitted:

Name of District or Charter:

Name of Individual Submitting:

Title of Individual Submitting:

Email of Individual Submitting:

> **By signing below, I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the information contained in the submitted application is complete and correct and that I am duly authorized to submit this application on behalf of the institute or district named above.**

_____- Signature line