



Innovation Zone Initiative
SY2022-23
Requests for Applications
(RfA)
College and Career Readiness Bureau

The *Innovation Zone* Initiative

New Mexico's Public Education Department (PED) is requesting proposals for designation and funding as a New Mexico Innovation Zone. Eligibility to apply includes public school districts, district charter schools, state directed charter schools, Regional Education Cooperatives (RECs), and educational consortia whose membership includes Local Educational Agencies of one or more of the types mentioned herein and collectively referred to below as LEA.

The New Mexico Public Education Department seeks to support tribal nations, communities, districts, and schools by reimagining high schools as places that prepare students to feel successful, secure in who they are, and ready for whatever path they choose, in order to increase the well-being of students and their communities. PED challenges districts and schools to reimagine and replace prior traditional models and become beacons for system-wide transformation. Such transformation requires a multifaceted set of actions that will need to be integrated.

At the heart of this transformation is a shared community vision for education, culminating with a written document spelling out the community's expectations, called the local *Profile of a Graduate*. Aligning all of the experiences of high school with this Profile is the key work that will be supported through the *Innovation Zone* initiative. Funding will be awarded to support schools in their efforts to transform and align education throughout the high school. Funding for this initiative is from 2022 House Bill 2, and is titled "CTE Initiatives and Equipment."

PED will identify 12 sites as high school transformation *Innovation Zones*. Each Innovation Zone will receive funding to support launching or continuing site-based transformation that aligns educational experiences with the community's expectations. Expected awards range from \$150,000 to \$750,000 and will be evaluated in terms of 1) the LEA's ability to perform the transformation work as proposed and 2) the rate of return for the number of students served. The PED intends to support Innovation Zones throughout the state and will prioritize regional and cultural diversity in making award determinations. Consideration will be given to consortia that apply as a partnership, with one LEA identified as a fiscal agent.

The PED has identified seven core elements to be addressed at each Innovation Zone location:

- 1) Leadership and Pathway Teams
- 2) Alignment of CTE with Core Academics
- 3) Work-Based and Experiential Learning
- 4) Capstone Courses
- 5) Post-secondary Alignment
- 6) Robust Personalized Supports
- 7) Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Successful *Innovation Zone* applications will address all seven core elements and explain how funding will support a significant transformation of the high school experience within that community. Awardees will be provided with intensive professional development, guidance, and technical assistance on leveraging best practices based on research as well as promising practices,

and will be members of a statewide Community of Practice facilitated by the PED. Note that a focus on well-documented and research-supported Best Practices (such as practices included in the What Works Clearinghouse) can mean that the *innovation* is actually a *reconceptualization and return* to something that has done successfully in the past or can be a *reimagining* of something that has been done successfully in other places.

Application Timeline

Release of Application.....	May 13, 2022
Rolling Deadline to Submit Application.....	June 15, 2022, then semi-monthly thereafter until all funds are committed.
Award Notification.....	Rolling
Annual Report Submission Due.....	June 30, 2023

Application Instructions

The Innovation Zone funding provided by this application is intended to **increase high school graduation rates** by transforming the nature and quality of educational experiences offered to students.

Each applicant must complete the following items:

1. Contact information
 2. Application Narrative
 3. Budget
 4. Assurances
 6. Submission – when complete, email the application to Marc.Duske@state.nm.us
-

Application for Innovation Zone Funding

SY 2022-23

Contact information:

High School (s)	
District (s)	
Point of Contact Name	
Contact Phone Number	
Contact Email Address	
If more than one school, name of Fiscal Agent	
Mailing Address of Fiscal Agent	

Application

Instructions: Please answer the following questions as they pertain to your Innovation Zone plan. Describe the LEA's comprehensive plan for transforming the High School into an Innovation Zone. Please include commentary about transformative work that is already in process and any innovations that you wish to pursue, regardless of whether they are specifically mentioned in this RfA.

- A. Leadership and Pathway Teams
- B. Alignment of CTE with Core Academics
- C. Work-Based and Experiential Learning
- D. Capstone Course
- E. Post-secondary Alignment
- F. Robust Personalized Supports
- G. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

A. Leadership:

Explain how you will establish a district leadership team and a school-based pathways team. The team will be responsible for leading the development (or advancing the work) of a local Profile of a Graduate. The Profile will serve to guide comprehensive college and career pathways planning, implementation, improvement, and sustainability. A strong team to support the site principal should have significant community representation and be comprised of:

- a school counselor.
- a teacher.
- a higher education representative.
- one or more local business representatives.
- one or more parents or guardians.
- one or more students.

List potential and/or existing business/industry partners who will support the Innovation Zone plan including through providing internships, as guest speakers, job shadowing

and/or externships for teachers. Attach letters of support with the completed application.

B. Alignment:

Explain how the local Profile of a Graduate will be used to develop alignment of CTE and Core Academics so that curriculum and instruction are simultaneously rigorous and relevant. If necessary, explain how you will develop a Graduate Profile that identifies attributes, skills, and knowledge for student success and career readiness. Be sure to address equitable access and outcomes.

Explain how CTE programs and Core Academics reflect with the needs of the community. Describe the LEA's plan for stakeholder engagement, including tribal groups, community members, students, parents, and workforce and industry. Indicate how the LEA will sustain ongoing stakeholder engagement throughout the initiative. Discuss competency-based approaches in instruction and grading. How will the program be differentiated and sequenced for grades 9-12?

Describe the key actions that school and district leadership will take to implement and align your existing Ed Plan or any other schoolwide improvement plan with the Profile of a Graduate and the Innovation Zone plan. Describe any waivers that will be required. Consider the use of Pathway2Careers.com, New Mexico's free Math and Career Exploration sequence for grade 8 - 12.

C. Experiential Learning:

A culminating paid work experience is an essential element of learning for some students. Identify and develop a suite of project-based learning approaches within course sequences. Approaches may include job shadowing, internships, mentorship, virtual experiences, and /or school-based enterprises. What types of learning activities will be implemented? Discuss the continuum of work-based learning experiences that students will experience, including career fairs, job shadowing, guest speakers, internships, and apprenticeships. Explain how students will move through this continuum and the target group for each activity. Which activities will be whole-school and which will be for a targeted group of students? Describe how paid work experiences will be coordinated and how students will be selected. Indicate whether grant funds will be used to fund an adult Work-Based Learning coordinator.

D. Capstones:

Explain how you will implement a holistic assessment of skills, attributes, and knowledge to demonstrate to stakeholders that students have met the expectations put forth in the Profile of a Graduate for your community. How will students demonstrate competency for graduation? How will students participating in capstones be supported? Describe the plan for supporting students during a structured class or advisory period. If you will waive standardized assessments (such as the SAT) how will you ensure that students are prepared for life after high school?

E. Post-secondary Alignment

Over 60 percent of careers require at least some education after high school. Describe how your programs will align with two- and four-year postsecondary education. What supports and

opportunities will students have to earn a postsecondary credential while in high school? Include descriptions of the training experiences (classroom or on the job) and what industry-recognized certificates students will earn prior to graduation. Explain the dual credit opportunities you will offer. What courses are focused on core academics and what career technical education opportunities are available? Describe how advising will support these goals. List postsecondary institutions that will partner with the LEA and what their roles and responsibilities will be in support of the Innovation Zone. Include letters of support or MOUs with the application.

F. Robust Personalized Supports

Research evidence clearly indicates that an equity-focused suite of supports improves outcomes for all students. Consider how the equity council and other existing advisory groups can support the plan. Describe how you will implement a learning environment that includes personalized supports focused on both social emotional learning and college and career planning. What is the goal for student impact, and how will you ensure students are developing lifelong social, emotional, and employability skills? How will you address traditionally underserved populations? Include specifics about the changes in school culture and/or adult behavior that you expect to see as a result of implementing the plan.

G. Program Evaluation

True transformation takes well more than one year. How will you know if the changes funded by this grant are making a difference? Describe metrics that you believe can be collected, analyzed and reported within the 12-month grant cycle that assess progress. What data can the leadership team use to guide adaptation and continuous improvement? What baseline measures do you have now that you expect to see change in one year? Describe your plan for how braided funding might be used to ensure sustainability and maximum impact. What additional support from workforce, community, and the local LEA can be used to continue Innovation Zone work in subsequent years?

Provide the following Baseline measures (as of 180-day SY22):

- Number of students in grades 8 -12
- Course name, course number, and current enrollment for all CTE courses
- Course name, course number, and current enrollment for any WBL courses not in CTE
- Credentials held by current CTE teachers
- Current membership in student organizations
- Number of 2022 Seniors who used portfolios or CTE pathways to demonstrate competency toward graduation

H. Program Budget

Please use the [budget template](#) to complete the budget portion of the application, The template includes seven sections as described above. In each section, provide sufficient detail so that application reviewers can understand the nature of the budget request. Potential budget items are outlines below. Note that PED will consider other innovative approaches and wants to know what you are considering.

Application Section	Potential Budget Items
A. Leadership	stipends for off-contract teacher time administrative support for organizing meetings facilitator for community engagement
B. Alignment of CTE with Core Academics	stipends for off-contract teacher time attendance costs for workshops or PD adoption costs cost for improved teacher credentials
C. Work-Based and Experiential Learning	adult coordinator salary and training student wages (calculator provided in template) Internship management software
D. Capstone Course	stipends for off-contract teacher time facilitator for community engagement attendance costs for workshops or PD
E. Postsecondary Alignment	student transportation costs for improved teacher credentials advisor salary and training
F. Robust Personalized Supports	attendance costs for workshops or PD advisor salary and training
G. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement	stipends for off-contract administrator time survey or other evaluation costs