



Career
Exploration
and
Mentoring
Program for
Blind and
Visually
Impaired
Students

Request for
Proposals

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Rehabilitation Services

2301 Argonne Drive Baltimore, MD
21218

Deadline
Monday, June 25, 2018
No later than 3:00 p.m.

This document is available in alternate
formats.

NAME OF GRANT PROGRAM:

Career Exploration and Mentoring for Blind and Visually Impaired Students

AUTHORIZATION:

Formula Grant Funds/Maryland Rehabilitation Services (DORS) under the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 733).

DISSEMINATION:

Thursday, April 19, 2018

DEADLINE:

Monday, June 25, 2018

No later than 3:00 p.m.

Last delivery will be accepted at the security desk, main entrance of 2301 Argonne Drive, Baltimore Maryland 21218 no later than 3:00 p.m. Call extension 410-554-9277 for pick-up and receipt. If mailed, the package must be post-marked no later than June 25, 2018. The emailed copy of the proposal MUST be received no later than 3:00 p.m. Due to size of proposal, it may be sent in parts. It is up to the proposer to ensure sufficient time for emailing. NOTE: Both a hard copy and an electronic copy are required.

PURPOSE:

To provide funding to qualified entities for the provision of statewide mentoring services through Pre-Employment Training Services for up to 15 students who are blind or visually impaired, to assist those students transitioning to employment and/or post-secondary education and to increase their work readiness.

REQUIRED COMPONENTS:

The applicant shall provide Pre Employment Transitioning Services (Pre-ETS), as defined herein, through a mentoring model of service provision. Services shall be provided in combination of in-person and virtual contacts between students and mentors. Students must be determined eligible for DORS VR services or meet qualification requirements for Pre-ETS as follows:

1. Be at least 14 years of age but no more than 21 years of age (has not reached 22nd birthday);
2. Have a documented disability. Disability may be documented by submission of qualifying medical documentation signed by a medical provider, a copy of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), or Section 504 Plan; and
3. Be currently enrolled as a student in a secondary or post-secondary education program.

Services shall include, but are necessarily limited to:

- A. **Instruction in Self-Advocacy:** Training to develop self-knowledge may include but not limited to:
 - 1) Learning about rights and responsibilities;
 - 2) Understanding one's own disability, identifying independence goals, and self-awareness;
 - 3) Learning how to request and utilize accommodations, services or supports;
 - 4) Participating in youth leadership activities offered in educational or community settings; and
 - 5) Decision making, problem solving, setting goals, and listening skills.

- B. Workplace Readiness Training:** Training to develop social skills and independent living skills necessary for employment may include, but is not limited to:
- 1) Learning communication and interpersonal skills;
 - 2) Financial literacy, including benefits planning services;
 - 3) Orientation and mobility skills to access workplace readiness training or to learn to travel independently, travel planning;
 - 4) Job-seeking skills;
 - 5) Understanding employer expectations for punctuality and performance, as well as other “soft” skills necessary for employment; and
 - 6) On-site workplace readiness training such as business tours and informational interviews.
- C. Job Exploration Counseling:** Skills and training to help with career related issues and may include, but not limited to:
- 1) Review of information regarding in-demand industry sectors and occupations, as well as nontraditional employment;
 - 2) Administration of vocational interest inventories and provision of local labor market information that applies to the student’s particular interests; and
 - 3) Identification of career pathways of interest to the students.
- D. Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Post-Secondary Education Program:** Skills and training may include, but not limited to:
- 1) Exploring the types of academic and occupational training needed to succeed in the workplace;
 - 2) Postsecondary opportunities associated with career fields or pathways;
 - 3) Self-advocacy skills for the purpose of identifying accommodations and services in an educational program as well as providing resources that may be used to support individual student success in education and training (i.e., disability support services);
 - 4) Advising students and parents or representatives on academic curricula and course offerings;
 - 5) Providing information about college application and admissions processes; and
 - 6) Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- E. Work-Based Learning Experiences:** Work-Based Learning Experiences may include opportunities that are available in school, after school, or outside the traditional school setting; however, services must be provided in an integrated setting in the community to the maximum extent possible. DORS and community partners should seek every opportunity to provide work-based learning experiences in integrated settings before providing these services in non-integrated settings. Services may include, but not limited to:
- 1) Coordinating a program of job training and informational interviews to research employers;
 - 2) Work-site tours to learn about necessary job skills;
 - 3) Job shadowing;
 - 4) Mentoring opportunities; and
 - 5) On-site work-based experiences, paid or unpaid (i.e., Internships, volunteering, practicums, or service learning opportunities).

F. Description of what will be provided within the proposed services that includes at a minimum:

- 1) When the program will be offered (evenings, weekends, after school, or in school). A minimum of one in-person contact is required monthly; other contact may be by phone or web-based;
- 2) Where the program will be offered;
- 3) The length of service – number of days, weeks, hours per session, per day;
- 4) A curriculum outline for the days or sessions the program will be offered describing the information or activities to be provided each session; and
- 5) The referral process for a student interested in participating in the program.

Examples of other services include:

- a. Reader and sighted guide;
- b. Referral to DORS;
- c. Referral to other agencies;
- d. Peer or facilitated support group;
- e. Community integration; and
- f. Other individual services.

BUDGET AND COST JUSTIFICATION:

Proposed cost of the program, per student, per week, per session, per quarter and per year; and information to support the actual cost to provide the program (number of staff, number of consumers, staff rate of pay, and other costs associated with the program).

APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS:

1. Established non-profit or education program or organization with extensive experience and expertise in the provision of Pre-ETS services to the blind and visually impaired. A list of agencies for which similar work has been done shall be provided.
2. Demonstrate that the organization has the personnel, resources and the time to conduct proposed services and projects.
3. Certify that it and its principals are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by a federal department or agency; as per Executive Orders 12549 and 12689, Debarment and Suspension, and implemented at 2 CFR 200.213, and 2 CFR Part 180.
4. Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that delineates roles and responsibilities, particularly receipt of payments for services. Payment will be made on a cost reimbursement basis and will be delivered on a cost per student basis, per quarter, per year. (Sample MOU attached).
5. If proposer is an out-of- state entity, a certificate of authority to do business in Maryland must be submitted.
6. Certify that all employees, agents, volunteers, and contractors, who have contact with students receiving Pre-ETS through this grant are fingerprinted and have a background check in compliance with Family Law Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 5-550 through 5-557.
7. Certify that no employees, agents, volunteers, and/or contractors, who have contact with students receiving Pre-ETS through this grant are a registered sex offender, defined in Criminal Procedure Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 11-701, who are prohibited from entering school property or property where formal or informal child care is provided under the Criminal Procedure Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, Section 11-722.

DELIVERABLES:

1. Submit quarterly progress reports and an annual report by the established due date. All reports should be submitted electronically in word and pdf format to berenda.riedl@maryland.gov and elmuttasim.fadl@maryland.gov. If unable to submit the required reports electronically, mail the report not later than the established due date separately to: Berenda Riedl, MSDE/DORS, 2301 Argonne Drive, Baltimore, Maryland and to Elmuttasim Fadl, DORS/OBVS, 2301 Argonne Drive, Baltimore, Maryland 21218.
2. Keep and maintain adequate, legible, genuine, current and complete records of services rendered under the terms of the grant and shall make available all such records to DORS, or its designated representatives, for a period of five (5) calendar years following contract expiration. Failure to comply with this provision, including a failure that occurs after the grant expires or is canceled, shall be deemed a material breach of the contract and to repay to the DORS all amounts received for any services which are not adequately verified and fully documented by contractor's records.
3. Provide copies of any brochures/materials developed by the project.
4. Verify all consumers referred to DORS. Establish a referral form to be used by DORS staff to make referrals to the Career Exploration and Mentoring Program and distribute to DORS staff. Establish a standard acceptance letter to be sent to the consumer and the DORS counselor that documents acceptance into the Program and start of services.
5. The grantee shall maintain records and documents relating to the performance of the MOU and shall keep all such records and documents for five (5) years after the completion of the MOU, and shall make such records available for inspection and audit by authorized representatives of DORS and the State of Maryland. (See Recipient Assurance 4).

PRIORITIES:

Priority will be given to projects that show a productive history of providing work-based learning experiences in integrated settings.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA:

- A. Need (20 points)
 1. The needs addressed by the project;
 2. How those needs were identified;
 3. How the project will meet those needs; and
 4. The benefits to be gained by meeting those needs.
- B. Plan of Operation (25 points)
 1. The quality of the plan of operation;
 2. How well the objectives relate to the purpose of the project;
 3. The effectiveness of the management plan to ensure proper administration of the project;
 4. Identification of key individuals responsible for implementation of the project's objectives;
 5. Use of the applicant's resources and personnel to achieve the objectives;
 6. Scope of Pre-Employment Services and projected number of persons to be served;
 7. How the applicant will ensure that project participants who are otherwise eligible to participate are selected without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age (14 to 21), or disability; and
 8. How the applicant will communicate with the local OBVS staff to encourage cross-referrals, information and resource sharing. How will this information be tracked?
- C. Key Personnel (10 points)
 1. Qualifications of project director;
 2. Qualifications of key personnel;
 3. Time that each person will commit to the project;
 4. Experience and training in fields related to the objectives of the project; and
 5. How the applicant will ensure that its personnel are selected without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, or handicapping condition.

- D. Applicant Experience and Resources (20 points)
 - 1. Extent of knowledge and background in the field of blindness;
 - 2. Previous experience in operating rehabilitation programs and/or providing Pre-ETS services or services to transition age students;
 - 3. Adequacy of resources that the applicant plans to devote to the project including personnel, facilities, equipment and supplies, etc.; and
 - 4. Previous performance on DORS contracts/grants, if applicable.
- E. Budget and Cost Effectiveness (20 points)
 - 1. Costs are reasonable and adequate to carry out the objectives of the project;
 - 2. Administrative cost is low; and
 - 3. Services are cost-effective.
- F. Evaluation (5 points)

Consideration is given to the quality of the evaluation plan, including the extent to which the evaluation methods are appropriate to the project, are objective, and are quantifiable. The evaluations should include quality assurance, consumer input/satisfaction and budgetary oversight. A copy of all evaluation forms to be utilized should be included in the proposal.

PROPOSAL REVIEW:

The review of proposals will be a three-part process.

- 1. Written applications will be pre-screened for submission requirements and inclusion of all required sections. Applicants not meeting all prescreen requirements will not be read.
- 2. A review committee established by DORS will evaluate the applications. The committee will be composed of representatives from outside agencies and DORS. Reviewers will comment upon the proposals and assign numerical scores.
- 3. The review committee will determine final approval for awards.

DORS reserves the right to take into consideration geographic distribution when making awards.

AWARD NOTIFICATION:

Notification of awards will be sent via email on June 29, 2018.

TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE:

Up to 100,000 dollars

LENGTH OF GRANTS:

July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019 with an optional one-year renewal, based on full compliance and continued appropriations.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF GRANTS:

1

ESTIMATED AVERAGE GRANT AMOUNT:

Up to 100,000

FUND USE:

Cost(s) incurred prior to the approval of the grant may not be funded through the award.

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES, 20 U.S.C. §1228a:

Each application must develop and describe the steps such applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the project or activity to be conducted with such assistance, by addressing the special needs of students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries in order to overcome barriers to equitable participation.

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- A. The program narrative must not exceed 25 pages.
- B. The abstract must not exceed one (1) page – double spaced.
- C. The original proposal cover sheet must be signed in blue ink.
- D. All pages of the project narrative must use one-inch margins, pages numbered, with a font size of 12 point.
- E. Charts, worksheets, and tables, if applicable, may be single spaced with a 10-point type font.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS (in the following order):

- A. Proposal Cover Sheet (see attached)
- B. Abstract
- C. MSDE Assurances (signed)
- D. Proposal Narrative:
 - 1. Extent of Need
 - 2. Goals and objectives
 - 3. Plan of Operation – Strategies and Activities
 - 4. Evaluation and Dissemination
 - 5. Management Plan/Key Personnel
 - 6. Experiences and Resources
 - 7. Coordination and Collaboration
- E. Budget narrative and justification
- F. Appendices (do not count as pages)
 - 1. Organizational Chart
 - 2. Board of Directors
 - 3. Resumes of key personnel who will work on the grant
 - 4. Job Descriptions of personnel who will work on the grant

SUBMIT PROPOSAL AS FOLLOWS:

1 hard copy to:

Division of Rehabilitation Services
Attention: Elmuttasim A. Fadl, M.ED., CRC
2301 Argonne Drive
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

1 electronic copy to:

Elmuttasim Fadl: Elmuttasim.Fadl@maryland.gov

DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry/national origin, color, disability, gender identity/expression, marital status, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. For inquiries related to Department policy, please contact:

Equity Assurance and Compliance Office
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent for Finance and Administration
Maryland State Department of Education
200 W. Baltimore Street - 6th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2595
410-767-0426 - voice
410-767-0431 - fax
410-333-6442 - TTY/TDD

RECIPIENT ASSURANCES

By receiving funds under this grant award, I hereby agree, as grantee, to comply with the following terms and conditions:

1. Programs and projects funded in total or in part through this grant shall operate in compliance with State and federal statutes and regulations, including but not limited to the 1964 Civil Rights Act and amendments, the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 34, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Vendors, sub grantees, and/or consultants; including officers and employees shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act at all times (20 U.S.C. §1232g).
2. Grantee shall assure that its facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities as required by the ADA and applicable regulations. The grantee shall not discriminate against individuals with disabilities in the provision of its services and programs unless to do so would be an undue burden or result in fundamental alteration in the program as those terms are used in the ADA and its implementing regulation. The State reserves the right to inspect the grantee's facilities at any time to determine if the grantee is in compliance with ADA. The grantee shall bear sole responsibility for assuring that its programs conforms for the section 501c. of the ADA (42 USC 12201) as a bona fide benefit plan. The grantee shall indemnify and hold the State harmless in any administrative proceeding or action brought pursuant to the ADA for all damages, attorneys' fees, litigation expenses and costs, if such action or proceeding arises from the acts of grantee, grantee's employees, agents or sub grantees.
3. By accepting federal funds, the recipients certify that they have complied with Federal Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension set forth in 2 CFR §180, and that, a signed Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion form has been filed with Maryland State Department of Education Project Monitor.
4. Grantee shall establish and maintain fiscal control, fund accounting procedures by fund, as set forth in 2 CFR §200 and in applicable statute and regulation. By accepting federal funds, the recipient agrees that the amount of the grant award is contingent upon the receipt of federal funds. Grantee shall retain all records of its financial transactions and accounts relating to this grant for a period of five years, or longer if required by federal regulation. Such records shall be made available for inspection and audit by authorized representatives of MSDE.
5. Entities expending federal funds of \$750,000 or more in a single fiscal year, must have an annual financial and compliance audit in accordance with 2 CFR Subpart F 200.500 et. seq.
6. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) may, as it deems necessary, supervise, evaluate and provide guidance and direction to grantee in the conduct of activities performed under this grant. However, MSDE's failure to supervise, evaluate or provide guidance and direction shall not relieve grantee of any liability for failure to comply with the terms of the grant award.
7. Grantee shall adhere to MSDE reporting requirements, including the submission of all required reports. Failure to submit complete, accurate, and timely progress and final reports may result in the withholding of subsequent grant payments until such time as the reports are filed.
8. Grantee must receive prior written approval from the MSDE Program Monitor before implementing any programmatic changes with respect to the purposes for which the grant was awarded. Unless a division implements a stricter policy, grantee must receive prior written approval from the MSDE Program Monitor for any budgetary realignment of \$1,000 or 15% of total object, program or category of expenditure, *whichever is greater*. Grantee must support the request with the reason for the requested change. Budget realignments must be submitted at least 45 days prior to the end of the grant period.
9. Requests for grant extension, when allowed, must be submitted at least 45 days prior to the end of the grant period.
10. Grantee shall insure that programs and projects that offer web-based or technology based instructional products or programs which are funded in total or in part through this grant will operate in compliance with Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and Section 7-910 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland.
11. Grantee shall repay any funds that have been determined through the federal or State audit process to have been misspent, misapplied, or otherwise not properly accounted for, and further agrees to pay any collection fees that may subsequently be imposed by the federal and/or State government. The repayment may be made by an offset to funds that are otherwise due the grantee.

I further certify that all of the facts, figures and representations made with respect to the grant application and grant award, including exhibits and attachments, are true and correct to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

Superintendent of Schools/Head of Grantee Agency

Date

Proposal Cover Sheet

Career Exploration and Mentoring Program for Blind and Visually Impaired Students

Name of Organization:

Federal ID:

DUNS#:

Mailing Address (including 9 digit zip code):

Executive Director/CEO:

Address (if different from above:

Telephone Number

Contact Email Address:

Fax Number:

Project Director (Name and Title):

Address (if different from above:

Telephone Number

Contact Email Address:

Fax Number:

Total Funding Request:

Signed:

Executive Director/CEO

Date

Board President

Date

Abstract

Career Exploration and Mentoring Program for Blind and Visually Impaired Students