Ohio | Department of Education

Learn & Serve America Purpose

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Key Words: Learn & Serve Grant
Summary: This document answers questions about the requirements and how to apply for funding for the Learn and Serve America Program

What is the purpose of Learn and Serve America?

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) announces funding is available for school-based service learning sub-grants to local education agency (LEA) partnerships. Funding is intended to support the implementation, operation or expansion of programs that advance service learning as a teaching, learning, and youth development strategy.

Learn and Serve America is a program for school-age youth administered by the Corporation for National Service and created by the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.).

The Corporation's mission is to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service through a range of national and community service programs. This service addresses the nation's education, public safety, human and environmental needs, and achieves direct and demonstrable results. In doing so, programs foster civic responsibility, strengthen the ties that bind us together as a people, and provide educational opportunities and learning experiences for those who make a substantial commitment to serve.

What is the purpose of Learn and Serve Ohio?

The purpose is to support service-learning programs that provide youth with opportunities to learn and develop by bringing together classroom instruction and community service. Grants are awarded to LEAs that engage students, kindergarten through twelfth grade, in opportunities to help communities address education, public safety, human and environmental needs. Funds are used to create new programs, replicate existing programs and provide training and development to staff, students and volunteers.

What are the K-12 Service-learning Standards for Quality Practice?

Service-learning involves active participation in thoughtfully organized service activities that:

- ☐ Actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities;
- ☐ Is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards;
- ☐ Provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults;

- ☐ Develops partnerships that are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs;
- ☐ Incorporates multiple challenging refection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society;
- ☐ Promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.
- ☐ Engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability;
- ☐ Provide sufficient time/duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.

What makes an effective and sustained service-learning program?

An effective and sustained program:

- ☐ Articulates clear goals for continuous improvement;
- ☐ Includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition and evaluation-based data analysis;
- ☐ Identifies real and appropriate needs;
- ☐ Clarifies customer, stakeholder, worker and others' responsibilities;
- ☐ Expects genuine, active and sustained system-wide commitments;
- ☐ Ensures the participation of diverse stakeholders and customers.

What makes districts eligible to receive funding?

ODE has not received formal award notification for the fiscal year from the Corporation for National Service. Therefore, **awards will be contingent on the availability of federal funds**.

ODE will award funding to LEAs for activities specifically aimed at advancing school-based service-learning. **LEAs are the only entities eligible to apply for grants**. The fiscal agent must be a public education system.

The decision to award new Development, Implementation and Model Grantees will be on a competitive basis by a review committee of selected experts. All applicants are required to have at least one person participate in the grant review process held in May.

The deadline for submitting a Learn and Serve Application to the Ohio Department of Education is 5:00 p.m. on the last Friday of April.

What types of grants are available?

Ohio's service-learning funding model is based on five guiding principles:

- ☐ Developing a solid foundation of school and community support through the planning process;
- ☐ Fostering the development of high-quality programming by encouraging ongoing training, continuous improvement and expansion each year;
- ☐ Encouraging sustainability through the integration of service-learning into academic curriculum;
- ☐ Connecting service-learning to school improvement efforts and building strong partnerships through equal participation of schools and communities;
- ☐ Utilizing the expertise of service-learning practitioners to build statewide capacity.

School districts can apply for three different types of grants:

Development Grants: The purpose of this grant is to bring together representatives of the school and community (including students and parents) to develop a plan and to initiate a service-learning program. Activities will focus on interagency stakeholder planning and involvement.

- ☐ LEAs that have not received previous Learn and Serve funding need to apply for this grant.
- ☐ Development grant proposals will be evaluated by a review committee comprised of ODE staff and other knowledgeable service-learning practitioners.

Implementation Grants will be awarded to schools that apply and have successfully completed a Development Grant process. The purpose of this grant program is to implement a school-based service-learning program in communities that have developed strong partnerships and interagency collaborations.

Applicants are required to submit a plan that documents: (1) how the district will implement the K-12 Service-learning Standards for Quality Practice; (2) the districts capacity to successfully implement this grant; and (3) how the program will prepare for the transition to local support.

Applicants must designate a public or private non-profit organization that has demonstrated expertise in meeting human, educational, environmental or public safety needs. In addition, that non-profit partner-organization must have been in existence for at least one year. The partnership may include a private for-profit business or a private school.

- ☐ LEAs that have successfully completed a Development Grant process need to apply for this grant.

Model Grant: In an effort to build statewide capacity and to develop a comprehensive training and technical assistance delivery system, Ohio will award new grants (depending on the level of funding from the corporation and the quality of the proposal) to LEAs to help them: (1) expand their exemplary local Learn and Serve programs and (2) provide service-learning training and

technical assistance to a regional/statewide system. Each applicant will be required to submit a plan that documents how the LEA's current school-based service-learning program will be expanded.

- ☐ Preference will be given to those applicants with the capacity to successfully meet model criteria and become a high-performing model program.
- ☐ Model programs must be broad-based, e.g., infused throughout many levels of the school's curriculum and involve a substantial percentage of the students. A single class incorporating service-learning that only involves a small number of the school's students and teachers would not qualify.
- ☐ Program directors must be able to provide faculty and staff training/technical assistance on a statewide basis upon request and attend state-level meetings.
- ☐ Applicants must designate a public or private non-profit partner organization that has demonstrated expertise in meeting human, educational, environmental or public safety needs. In addition, the non-profit partner-organization must have been in existence for at least one year.
- ☐ The partnership may include a private for-profit business or private school.

What is the number of applications a district can submit?

Each school district/consortium may apply for and receive a maximum of one grant award.

What are the funding levels for each type of grant?

Contingent upon available federal funding**:**

- ☐ Development Grants will receive $3,000 and approximately 10 programs may be funded.
- ☐ Implementation Grants will receive $15,000 and approximately 20 programs may be funded.
- ☐ Model Grants will receive $30,000 and approximately six programs may be funded.

What are the match requirements?

A 100 percent or dollars-for-dollar match of cash, or in-kind is required.

What are the effective dates of the grant?

July 1 – June 30

What is the grant period?

The grant period is a one-year grant award. Applications must include proposed activities and a detailed budget for each year funded.

What can funds be used for?

- ☐ Plan, implement or expand school-based service-learning programs, including costs for planning, recruitment, training, expansion and evaluation;
- ☐ Implement, operate and expand school-based service-learning programs that include the participation of adult volunteers;
- ☐ Interagency planning and meeting costs;
- ☐ Instruction and supervision of participating students;
- ☐ Reasonable transportation costs;
- ☐ Supplies and other reasonable expenses.

What funds can not be used for?

- ☐ To pay any stipend, allowance or other financial support to any participants except reimbursement for transportation, meals and other reasonable out-of-pocket expenses directly related to participation;
- ☐ To supplant state and local public funds expended for services of the type assisted under this grant in the previous fiscal year;
- ☐ To finance secretarial, administrative and fiscal costs;
- ☐ To provide religious instruction, conduct worship services or engage in any form of proselytization;
- ☐ To assist, promote or deter union organizing;
- ☐ To finance, directly or indirectly, any activity designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- ☐ To impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements.

What are the training requirements?

Development grantees must attend a fall orientation. All grantees must attend the required annual meeting that is held during the *Forging New Links* Conference. All other trainings are optional but can be paid out of the Learn and Serve grant.

1. Required Orientation (Fall each year - Development Grantees only)

2. Learn and Serve Challenge (October each year – Optional)

3. Statewide *Forging New Links* Conference, Columbus, Ohio (March each year - Required)

4. Statewide technical assistance meetings held to improve service-learning implementation and practice (February) (Optional)

5. National Service-Learning Conference (March – April) (Optional)

What are the reporting requirements?
Applicants must agree to comply with all state and federal reporting requirements.

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What is the legislative compliance?

On April 3, 1992, Am. H.B. 396 was signed into law. Accordingly, any school Board implementing Community Service Education, shall

"Establish a community service advisory committee. This committee shall provide recommendations to the school board regarding a community service plan for students in all grades of the schools under control of the board and shall oversee and assist in the implementation of a community service plan adopted by the board. Each board shall determine the membership and organization of its advisory committee and may designate an existing committee established for another purpose to serve as the district's community service advisory committee; however, each such committee shall include two or more students and shall include or consult with at least one person employed in the field of volunteer management who devotes at least 50% of his/her hours of employment to coordinating volunteerism among organizations. The committee members may include representatives of parents, teachers, administrators, other educational institutions, business, government, nonprofit organizations, veteran's organizations, social service agencies, religious organizations and philanthropies."

What are the funding priorities?

The state is looking for high-performing service learning programs that are innovative, develop new knowledge about the academic, social and personal benefits of service-learning, and can be sustained with other federal, state and local funds when the Learn and Serve grant ends.

Funding priority will be given to Learn and Serve programs that:

- ☐ Plan shows evidence of implementation of the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice;
- ☐ Integrate service learning into the academic curriculum by connecting program instruction and activities to state content Standards for Ohio's Schools;
- ☐ Link with state and/or local education improvement initiatives such as Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Planning:
- ☐ Use service learning to address a school district's needs to improve student achievement, student attendance and to reduce drop-out rates;
- ☐ Use service learning to reduce violent, disruptive behavior to make schools a safe and inviting environment;
- ☐ Foster the development of participants' civic responsibility, leadership skills and competencies;
- ☐ Demonstrate a commitment to transitioning over time to local support;
- ☐ Link with other streams of service such as Senior Corp., AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America Higher Education. [For information, contact the Governor's Community Service Council at (614) 728-2916 or the Corporation for National Service (Ohio Office) at (614) 469-7441.];