COMMUNITY CONNECTORS
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Community Connectors Grant Guidelines FY 19

Goal of the grant

Community Connectors is one of the key education reforms signed into law by Gov. John R. Kasich in June 2014. The program awards competitive matching grants to provide funding for local networks of parents, volunteers, faith based organizations (as defined below) and community organizations to sponsor career advising and mentoring for students in eligible school districts. The grants are designed to support 1:1 mentoring programs that will provide Ohio students access to role models who can help motivate and inspire them. As importantly, they will help students develop skills that lead to success in school and the workplace, to include but not limited to, financial literacy, career exploration, and college readiness activities.

For FY19, priority will be given to grant applicants that deliver volunteer-based mentorship programs in grades K-12 that foster financial literacy, career readiness, and entrepreneurship skills through experiential learning opportunities in classroom settings as part of their overall project plan. A grant may serve students in one or more grade levels.

Community Connectors will provide $8 million in lottery profits in 3-to-1 matching grants. The maximum amount that may be requested per application is $150,000. Applicants must demonstrate their capacity and detailed plan for securing the required matching funds as part of their application and, if awarded, will report this community support throughout the grant period.

Community Connector grantees must demonstrate how they will carry out these five core principles as part of their overall program plan:

1. Setting Goals to be Prepared for the 21st Century Careers
2. Building Character
3. Developing Pathways to Achievement
4. Building a Sense of Resiliency
5. Believing in a Positive Future

Who can apply for a grant?

The Community Connectors program awards competitive matching grants for local networks of parents, volunteers, faith based organizations (as defined below) and community organizations to sponsor career advising and mentoring for students in eligible school districts. Non-profit entities, faith-based organizations, community non-profits and non-profit entities associated with for-profit businesses are eligible to be lead applicants on behalf of the partnership.

For the Community Connectors grant, what types of organizations fulfill the "faith-based" requirement?

A faith-based organization is defined as any organization whose mission is based on the belief that every child's life has a purpose and that instilling values such as hard work, discipline and personal responsibility are necessary for ensuring that purpose is fulfilled. While faith or religion may be the basis for this belief, a group does not have to be affiliated with an organized religion or faith tradition to be considered a faith-based partner. Secular, non-religious, values-driven organizations also qualify. What is most important, and necessary to meet the faith-based organization requirement, is a dedication to children that is focused on finding the worth of each child, ensuring the child understands and absorbs that worth, and harnessing the understanding to achieve a fulfilling life. Both faith-based and values-driven organizations that are not religiously affiliated may

use the signed Nature of Partnership Agreement to explain how their missions are based on finding and developing a purpose for each child's life.

Applicant Eligibility and Qualifications

Community Connectors programs will reflect broad and deep collaborations in the community. Lead applicants will be responsible for building those collaborations among faith-based organizations, community nonprofits, or the business community in support of eligible school districts.

Lead applicants must meet all of these criteria to be eligible:

- Non-profit organizations from the faith-based, business or civic communities are eligible **to lead** projects.

- Collaboration must include members of the business community, civic organizations, or the faith-based community to provide sustainable career advising and mentoring services. Lead non-profit organizations affiliated with for-profit companies may partner with those companies.

- The lead applicant **must** partner with an eligible school district in which at least 40 percent of the student population is economically disadvantaged and/or has a graduation rate below 92 percent. The partnership must include a school district. However, programs can target one building within a district. Non-profit organizations may partner with multiple eligible school districts.

- The lead applicant must be in good standing with the Ohio Secretary of State and registered with the Ohio Attorney General's Office, Charitable Law Section, if applicable.

- The lead applicant's most recent form 990 demonstrates that the lead applicant's administrative costs are less than 25%;

- No findings of recovery have been issued by the Auditor of State against the lead applicant and participating organizations.

- The lead applicant submits a fully executed Certification Form by a duly authorized representative in the form provided by the Ohio Department of Education and which includes and the following documents, if applicable:
  - A copy of the IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter, if applicable.
  - List of board members with term dates and acknowledgement that they serve without compensation;
  - Signed copy of IRS Form 990 covering a fiscal period to include June 30, 2016 or more current OR if not required to file an IRS Form 990, provide a pro forma IRS Form 990;
  - A copy of most recent year-end financial statement, review opinion or independent financial audit to include June 30, 2016 consistent with the following;
    - *If a lead applicant's total revenues are less than $100,000, a year-end financial statement approved by the lead applicant's board and certified by the lead applicant's officer;*
    - *If the lead applicant's total revenue is greater than $100,000 but less than $250,000, a review opinion by a Certified Public Accountant; or*
    - *If total revenue is greater than $250,000, an independent financial audit conducted by a Certified Public Accountant.*
  - Copy of organization's non-discrimination/equal opportunity policy.

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Which districts, joint vocational school districts, STEM schools and community schools are eligible to take part?

Programs can partner with eligible school districts in which at least 40 percent of the student population is economically disadvantaged and/or has a graduation rate below 92 percent. Joint vocational school districts, STEM schools and community schools, like school districts, are **not** eligible to be the lead applicants but can receive services under the grant. Joint vocational school districts, STEM schools and community schools are considered districts unto themselves for the purposes of this grant. A list of eligible districts, charter schools, joint vocational school districts and STEM schools can be found at www.communityconnectors.ohio.gov . All students from the eligible district, regardless of socioeconomic status, will be eligible to participate in the program.

Can you partner with just one school within a district?

The partnership must include the school district. However, programs may choose to target one building within an economically disadvantaged or low-performing school district.

How can Community Connectors grant dollars be spent?

Community Connectors award dollars may be spent on grant administration, safety, training and essential supplies. Additionally, a maximum of 5 percent of your request from Community Connectors can go toward other miscellaneous costs that directly relate to the proposed program. Also, you can spend your match dollars for anything that directly relates to the proposed program and is unrelated to the approved categories.

The approved spending categories are:

1. Grant administration: Includes administrative costs associated with volunteer coordination and costs associated with mentor and mentee matching. These can be salaries and associated fringe or contracted services. Grants **may not** fund indirect costs paid at a flat rate.
2. Safety: Includes background checks for mentors and staff. Could also include CPR and First Aid training.
3. Training: Includes training for mentors and limited training for staff. All training needs to directly relate to the mentoring process. **Grant funds do not cover travel expenses for training.**
4. Essential supplies: Needed office supplies and any supplies that directly support the proposed program. This does NOT include technology and equipment expenses (hardware and software).
5. Miscellaneous costs: Limited to 5% of state grant funds awarded. This can include, but is not limited to, travel expenses, T-shirts, software, admission to field trip activities, banquets and equipment expenses.

How will the funds be disbursed?

This grant is reimbursement only. Awardees must be able to provide invoices, receipts and other documentation to receive reimbursement through the Ohio Department of Education's Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) System, with all submissions being made no later than September 30, 2019.

What is the timeframe to apply and when will the grant be awarded?

Intent to Apply Open:	12/18/2017 through 2/2/2018
Application Open in CCIP:	2/5/18 at 8:00 am through 3/16/18 at 4:00 pm
Grant Award Notification:	by 6/15/2018
Grant Implementation Dates:	7/1/2018 – 6/30/2019