

Secretary DeVos Launches New Student Centered Grant Competition to Spur Short-Term Education Opportunities, Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth as America Reopens



JUNE 19, 2020

<https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/secretary-devos-launches-new-student-centered-grant-competition-spur-short-term-education-opportunities-entrepreneurship-and-economic-growth-america-reopens>

WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced today a new higher education discretionary grant program designed to provide students the opportunity to develop new skills, provide innovators and inventors the resources to expand existing businesses or build new ones, and encourage institutions of higher education to foster business development and innovation as America begins to recover from COVID-19-related disruptions to education and our economy.

The Reimagine Workforce Preparation Grant Program will be funded through the Education Stabilization Fund (ESF), authorized by the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*, signed into law by President Donald J. Trump.

“America’s colleges and universities are a national treasure, but it is time for them to reinvent themselves and to be more responsive to the needs of their students and local communities,” said Secretary DeVos. “That includes providing lower-cost options that leverage the expertise of local business leaders and better embrace technological change. Through the Reimagine Workforce Preparation grants, we are empowering them, along with their community partners, educators, business leaders, and entrepreneurs, to do just that. Our goal is to help workers and entrepreneurs get back on their feet and get our economy back up and running as quickly as possible.”

The CARES Act provided \$307.5 million for discretionary grants, which the Secretary has chosen to divide between two competitions: \$127.5 million for the Reimagine Workforce Preparation Grant and \$180 million for the [Rethink K-12 Education Models Grant](#).

The Reimagine Workforce Preparation Grant competition is open to all states, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. To apply, states must demonstrate a burden created by the coronavirus pandemic and propose a project that will support people living and working in their communities, specifically along one of two tracks:

1. Expanding educational opportunities through short-term, career pathways or sector-based education and training programs
 - Grantees are invited to propose the development or expansion of short-term education programs, including career pathways programs, to help prepare unemployed or underemployed individuals for high demand jobs in their community or region; and/or
 - Grantees are invited to propose the development or expansion of industry sector-based education and training programs that lead to a credential that employers in a given sector recognize and reward; or
2. Supporting local entrepreneurship through small business incubators
 - Grantees are invited to submit applications that help colleges and universities make their faculty, staff and facilities more accessible to small businesses in their communities, and to ensure that institutions can sustain their operations at a time when enrollments are declining and campus buildings may be underutilized, including through the creation of small business incubators that are on the campus of, or affiliated with, one or more colleges and universities in the state.

A panel of independent peer reviewers will evaluate each application to ensure that it meets the needs of the state and engages the full range of education and workforce stakeholders. Each state's workforce board may submit one proposal, and the highest-scoring proposals will be funded. States that were hardest hit by COVID-19 disruptions and projects that seek to address the needs of Minority-Serving Institutions and distressed communities will be prioritized among the strongest applicants.

Interested states should submit their completed application no later than Aug. 24, 2020, and the Department intends to make awards no later than Oct. 2020. Additional information on the grants can be found [here](#).