

Advanced Course Access RFP (GC19-015)

Questions and Answers

1. Is this proposal for advanced course placement available for non-public schools?
 - a. As stated in the RFP, only BOCES-led consortiums and Big Five districts are eligible to apply for this grant. Applicants may choose to include non-public school participants, but they do not count towards the requirement of seven Rest of State districts.

2. We operate a PTECH school. Are we eligible to apply for funding for our PTECH program as part of expanding an already successful model program?
 - a. As stated in the RFP, only BOCES-led consortiums and Big Five districts are eligible to apply for this grant. A BOCES or Big Five district that has a P-Tech program and wishes to apply as lead or part of a consortium may apply to expand the program, as long as the proposed students are not already a part of a program that is funded by a P-Tech grant and there are at least seven other districts in the consortium.

3. Is the maximum award \$500,000 per year or total over the two year grant period?
 - a. The maximum award is \$500,000 per year of the grant.

4. Is the \$500,000 maximum award the maximum amount that applicants would receive per year, or is that the total maximum award for the entire two years of the program?
 - a. The maximum award is \$500,000 per year of the grant.

5. Is the maximum grant award \$500,000 per year for a total maximum award of \$1 million?
 - a. Yes, the maximum award is \$500,000 per year of the grant.

6. "Tuition costs" are listed as an ineligible expense. Does that refer only to tuition costs for staff implementing the ACA program, or does that include tuition costs to IHEs on behalf of students for advanced coursework?
 - a. The funds from the ACA grant do not cover a student's tuition costs for IHE coursework. Funds from the ACA grant can cover training costs for staff.

7. We notice that tuition is not an eligible expense and wonder why?
 - a. Other programs and grants exist to assist with tuition costs. Funding from the ACA grant cannot be used for this purpose.

8. The RFP states that 8th graders would be eligible to participate in the program. Are they eligible to receive college credit for advanced coursework taken during the program?
 - a. Decisions on the granting of college credit are made by Institutions of Higher Education.

9. Can 8th grade students participate in advanced coursework and receive college credit for their participation in these courses?
 - a. Decisions on whether or not a student may participate in a course for high school credit is made at the school/district level. Decisions on the granting of college credit are made by Institutions of Higher Education.

10. I am writing to clarify the wordings from the 2020-2022 Advanced Course Access (ACA) Program RFP below. Is the New York Department of Education eligible to submit only one application? Or may we submit multiple applications?
 - a. As stated in the RFP, the eligible applicant in New York City is the NYC Department of Education. The NYC Department of Education may only submit one application.

11. I have never written this grant before, but am considering it this time around. Is there documentation available to see prior year grants? I would like to see what is involved (questions for the narrative, etc.), to see if it's something I am able to work on.
 - a. This grant is a new program and as such, there is no documentation for prior years. Please refer to the RFP for a detailed list of the necessary components for all applications.

12. Is the project required to have an online or distance learning component?
 - a. The project is not required to have an online or distance learning component, but the proposed programs will be evaluated on the ability to effectively and directly provide access to advanced courses to as many students as possible while meeting expectations articulated in the RFP.

13. Is a new or enhanced BOCES CTE program an eligible or competitive project?
 - a. As stated in the RFP, the eligible applicants are BOCES consortiums or Big Five Districts. As a consortium lead, BOCES students may participate in the programs that are created as long as the program adheres to all expectations in the definition of "advanced coursework" as detailed on page 7.

14. Is there a minimum number of student participants/beneficiaries per year or over the two year project duration?
 - a. There is not a minimum number of student participants, but all programs will be evaluated in part based on the number of students that will directly receive access to advanced courses.

15. Would this grant cover transportation if the coursework/enrichment was offered during the summer months and/or weekends?
 - a. In-state transportation is an allowable expense. All proposed expenditures must be thoroughly justified.

16. Would this grant possibly cover a college academy for students to take courses on campus for their senior year of high school with the possibility of finishing a degree upon high school graduation?
 - a. A college academy could be an allowable delivery method so long as it adheres to all program expectations as described in the RFP. All programs that are proposed for the ACA grant will be judged based upon the rubric provided in the RFP.

17. Can a BOCES be a part of the consortium as a participant - i.e. can its students benefit from the access to the advanced courses?
 - a. Yes, students that attend a BOCES can participate in the courses that are created.
18. If yes, is it necessary for the students' districts of origin to also be a part of the consortium and sign MOUs to participate in order for the students to benefit? Or does the BOCES' participation in the consortium suffice?
 - a. The BOCES only needs to sign an MOU with the districts that are taking part in the course offerings. If the students are enrolling as part of their BOCES program, there is no need for an MOU with the individual district.
19. Can a BOCES not serving as the lead count towards the seven RoS districts required for a consortium for this project? Or are individual school districts the only entities that can make up the required seven RoS districts?
 - a. BOCES can participate in another BOCES-led program, but the BOCES would not count toward the seven rest of state districts.
20. The RFP states that out of state travel is not an allowable expense. Our proposal includes funding for AP certification through a summer institute. The course offerings within New York State are extremely limited. Would out of state travel to obtain certification be an allowable expense?
 - a. As stated in the RFP, out of state travel is not an allowable expense.
21. We are considering a project that would prepare students for AP coursework in year one and place them into the classrooms in year two. This would show a significant impact in year two but our six month evaluation in year one would show no impact. Is this an acceptable use of funds?
 - a. All programs that are proposed for the ACA grant will be judged based upon the rubric provided in the RFP. The expectation is that programs would begin enrolling students in advanced coursework in year one in order to meet the goal of providing access to the largest number of students.
22. Are AP test fees an allowable cost?
 - a. No, AP test fees are not an allowable cost. As stated on page 6 of the RFP, there is a program in place to lower the cost of AP and IB exams. You can learn more by visiting the [Office of Curriculum and Instruction website](#).
23. Our IHE partner will waive tuition costs for students but will impose a nominal fee per credit hour for other services. Is this an allowable expense?
 - a. There is not enough information to provide an answer. If the applicant feels the expense is allowable based on the information in the RFP, the applicant should include the expense in the budget with a thorough justification.
24. Does the teacher of record for each course need to be a New York State certified teacher?
 - a. Yes, in accordance with Commissioner's Regulations, each teacher of record must be a NYS certified teacher.

25. We're hearing from several BOCES that while their districts already have access to advanced courses (and so they aren't a good fit for this opportunity), they are in need of funding: 1) to better support students and teachers to help with course retention and passage rates and 2) to train more teachers to offer AP classes (vs. dual-credit college courses), as a way of giving students even more access to advanced course options. Does NYSED ever plan to offer competitive funding for those types of needs?
- a. This grant program does not automatically eliminate districts that have some access to advanced coursework. Please note the specific language of Goal 1: "Increase access to advanced courses for students, *particularly* in districts with very limited or no access to advanced course offerings." In addition, based on the RFP (pages 9-11), both of the stated needs are primary goals of the ACA grant program. Goal 3 details the expectation to "provide high-quality, targeted support for Certified NYS teachers." Goal 4 details the need for the program to "provide high-quality, targeted support to students to ensure success."
26. On page 22 of the RFP, there appears to be some words missing at about the middle of the page, in the last bullet that starts "How quickly the program would be able to begin serving students; and". What words are missing?
- a. There are no words missing from that bullet; the "and" was a typo. The last bullet should read: "How quickly the program would be able to begin serving students."
27. Do the CEO signatures on the required MOU need to all be originals? If yes, is it okay if we bump the signature lines to different pages, so as to facilitate the signature process – or, have each CEO sign a different copy of the MOU (but the same MOU, text-wise)?
- a. Please ensure that each CEO signs one MOU each. NYSED does not require the original signatures, but each CEO must sign one MOU specifically for that location. If your consortium is composed of 1 BOCES and 8 districts, there must be 8 MOUs in the application.
28. I understand the budget narrative needs to be for years 1 and 2 (and the FS-10 is for year 1 only). Do you have a preference if we fill out two complete budget narrative charts (as included on pages 37-38 of the RFP), or if we include both years' budget in one narrative chart, but just label the expenses clearly (as to if they are for year 1 or 2)?
- a. There is no preference, as long as the expenditures for each year are clearly labeled.
29. Can we use funds to pay for districts' fees to participate in advanced courses through their local BOCES?
- a. This cost is an allowable expense, as long as each expenditure is justified, and each program shows thorough evidence that it meets the goals of the ACA grant program. Please note that grant funds should be used to supplement, not supplant, current funding.
30. Can the Advanced Course Access Program be used to support developmental course work (i.e. dual enrollment classes that are non-credit bearing)?
- a. High School credit is granted by the high school. College credit is granted by the institution of higher education. The courses supported by the Advanced Course Access Program should meet the definition of Advanced Courses, as outlined in the RFP on page 7.

31. Dual Enrollment courses often have fewer students, and therefore are more costly to offer from a per student cost standpoint. Taking this into account, can grant funds pay a portion of a college or high school faculty salary for the new dual enrollment courses without being considered supplanting?
- a. Salaries and benefits are an allowable expense as long as they are thoroughly explained and justified, and are used to supplement, not supplant, current funding.
32. A community college is interested in partnering with us to support this work. Must all instructors be NYS certified teachers, or can a (non-NYS certified) college level instructor teach a course with supplementary NYS certified teacher support provided remotely or at the district level?
- a. Please refer to NY CRR 100.5(d)(10) which regulates the granting of credit for an online or blended course. According to 100.5(d)(10)(ii)(b),
“The school district, registered nonpublic school, charter school or the chief administrator of an educational program administered by a State agency shall ensure that... (b) instruction is provided by or under the direction and/or supervision of
 - (i) a certified teacher from the school district in which the student is enrolled; or
 - (ii) a certified teacher from a board of cooperative educational services (BOCES) that contracts with the school district to provide instruction in the subject area where authorized pursuant to Education Law section 1950; or
 - (iii) a certified teacher from a school district who provides instruction in the subject area under a shared service agreement; or
 - (iv) in the case of a registered nonpublic school, a teacher of the subject area from a registered nonpublic school; or
 - (v) in the case of a charter school, a teacher of the subject area from a charter school; or
 - (vi) in the case of an educational program administered by a State agency, a teacher of the subject area from such program.
33. Can the grant funding be used to pay salaries/benefits related to student college-credit-eligible summer coursework?
- a. Salaries and benefits are an allowable expense as long as they are thoroughly explained and justified, and are used to supplement, not supplant, current funding.
34. If a BOCES-led consortium with seven Rest-of-State districts is awarded the grant, what happens if one of those seven districts drops out or is unable to participate in the grant after it is awarded?
- a. NYSED has the right to withdraw funding from any program that does not meet the goals or expectations of the grant program.
35. What would also happen if one of those seven participating districts is a small, rural district and does not have any students in a particular semester or year that are able to take advanced courses?
- a. It is expected that students from at least seven school districts will participate in the program each semester.

36. We are a BOCES that has put together a consortium of districts, many of them very small and rural. Due to the small size of a couple of the schools (graduating class less than 15), there may be times during the grant period where a particular district does not have any interested students participating in the program. Does this effect the status of the grant if awarded?
- NYSED has the right to withdraw funding from any program that does not meet the goals or expectations of the grant program.
37. On P. 12 of the RFP it states that we must provide details to differentiate between students who participate in advanced courses as part of grant-funded programs and students who participate in those courses through other means. May grant funds be used to increase enrollment in and to provide supports for students and teachers in currently offered, online, advanced courses? What about in traditionally delivered advanced courses? What if a student is enrolled in both online and face-to-face courses? What if a teacher teaches both?
- Grant funds may be used to expand current programs, both online and face-to-face. All programs that are proposed for the ACA grant will be judged based upon the rubric provided in the RFP.
38. Are dual-credit certification courses offered by the local community college (e.g., cybersecurity) considered advanced courses? Would these courses be eligible for support from this grant?
- Dual enrollment courses (courses that confer both high school and college credit) are eligible for support from this grant.
39. Are courses that culminate with a CLEP exam considered advanced courses? Would these courses be eligible for support from this grant?
- Courses supported by the ACA grant must adhere to the definition of Advanced Course found on page 7 of the RFP. If the course that culminates with a CLEP exam also conveys credit towards a high school diploma, that course would meet the definition. However, if the course is merely a course to prepare a student to take a CLEP exam, and the course does not convey credit towards a high school diploma, the course would not meet the definition and would not be eligible for support from this grant.
40. Would substitute teacher costs to allow AP teachers (in either virtual and/or traditional classes) to score AP exams be allowable? College Board would cover travel expenses.
- No, this would not be viewed by NYSED as an allowable expense.
41. Can MWBE Firms be introduced to potential prime bidders to assist them with meeting ACA Grant's Goals?
- MWBE firms interested and available to serve as potential subcontractors in this project can provide their information to MWBEgrants@nysed.gov.