



# Middle School STEM and CTE Career Exploration Start-Up Grants

## 2020-21 Application Announcement

Tennessee Department of Education | September 2020



**Contents**

Background ..... 3

Priorities..... 3

Award and Accountability Information ..... 4

Applicant Eligibility and Submission ..... 4

Application Questions for Middle School STEM Start-Up Grant..... 5

Application Questions for Middle School CTE Career Exploration Start-Up Grant..... 6

Additional Information ..... 7

Critical Dates..... 7

# Middle School STEM and CTE Career Exploration Start-Up Grants Application

## ***Background***

In February 2019, Governor Bill Lee announced the Future Workforce Initiative aimed at increasing access to CTE and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in the classroom. This grant will emphasize middle school career and technical education (CTE) classrooms across Tennessee with the goal of adding an additional 100 new middle school STEM programs by 2022.

## ***Priorities***

Applicants for the Middle School STEM and CTE Career Exploration Start-Up Grants will be required to demonstrate the ability to create sustainable, positive change in their district aligned to the following priorities:

1. **Alignment:** Priority will be given to districts that can demonstrate a clear progression of course offerings between middle schools and high schools for their students.
2. **Strong advisement for all students:** Priority will be given to districts that can demonstrate a plan for projects and activities focused on career guidance and advisement through a blend of rigorous and engaging core academic and career-technical instruction.
3. **Industry partnerships:** Priority will be given to expanding employer partnerships that create opportunities for students to participate in a capstone project-based learning experience.

The process to develop middle school STEM and CTE Career Exploration programs should include collaborative planning between key stakeholders including community partners and industry representatives; district and school-based administrators; school counselors; and general education, CTE, and special education educators.

## ***Award and Accountability Information***

### **Award:**

- *Type of Award:* Discretionary
- *Estimated Amount of Available Funds:* **\$500,000 STEM; \$200,000 CTE Career Exploration**
- *Estimated Number of Awards:* 70 awards; all grant awards will be **capped at \$10,000 per middle school.**
- *Project Period:* A total of 7 months from Dec. 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021. All funds must be obligated by June 30, 2021, and liquidated by Sept. 30, 2021.
- *Funds to be Released:* All grant funds will be available on Dec. 1, 2020.

**Accountability Requirements:** Awarded applicants will be required to complete the following to remain in good standing:

- Final report or presentation on the achievements and expenditures made possible through the Middle School Career & Technical Education (CTE) Start-Up Grants. This will be a culminating artifact and will occur no later than July 30, 2021.

**Note:** The department is not bound by any funding or award estimates in this notice. Additional programmatic requirements may be required to ensure compliance.

## ***Applicant Eligibility and Submission***

**Eligible Applicants:** Local education agencies (LEAs), as defined in the Every Student Succeeds Act, or who will act as the fiscal agent for a regional consortium of LEAs, postsecondary institutions, and industry partners.

A [Notice of Intent to Apply](#) must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. (CT) on **Oct. 15, 2020**. Failure to do so will disqualify any subsequent submitted grant application.

Applicants will complete all requirements, including their proposed budget and an Assurances and Signatures form, inside the ePlan platform ([eplan.tn.gov](http://eplan.tn.gov)). The application will be available in the LEA Document Library on **Oct. 19, 2020**.

## ***Application Questions for Middle School STEM Start-Up Grant***

The Middle School STEM Start-Up Grant questions can be found below. Applicants should use these questions to develop robust, thoughtful responses prior to entry in ePlan.

1. What middle school STEM courses and aligned 9-12 approved CTE program(s) of study is identified for this grant?
2. What career assessment will students be utilizing in the 2020-21 school year, per [Public Chapter 108](#)?
3. What are your intended goals for the middle school STEM program? What are the specific outcomes for each identified goal?
4. What is the proposed use of the grant funds? Please provide a detailed list.
5. Identify strategic partnerships (postsecondary, industry, and other districts) already in place that will provide an advantage in implementing the middle school STEM program.
6. What commitments (funding or otherwise) are anticipated by the district to ensure sustainability of the middle school STEM program once the grant funds expire? Please be specific.
7. How many middle school students will be impacted during the grant year? What is the anticipated impact to nontraditional students enrolling in the aligned 9-12 approved CTE program(s) of study as a result of the program?

## ***Application Questions for Middle School CTE Career Exploration Start-Up Grant***

The Middle School CTE Career Exploration Start-Up Grant questions can be found below. Applicants should use these questions to develop robust, thoughtful responses prior to entry in ePlan.

1. Provide information showing how the middle school CTE Career Exploration program will be aligned with 9-12 approved CTE program(s) of study that will prepare students for high-skill, high-wage, and/or in-demand occupations.
2. What career assessment will students be utilizing in the 2020-21 school year, per [Public Chapter 108](#)?
3. What are your intended goals for the middle school CTE Career Exploration program? What are the specific outcomes for each identified goal?
4. What is the proposed use of the grant funds? Please provide a detailed list.
5. Identify strategic partnerships (postsecondary, industry, and other districts) already in place who will provide an advantage in implementing the middle school CTE Career Exploration program.
6. What commitments (funding or otherwise) are anticipated by the district to ensure sustainability of the middle school CTE Career Exploration program once the grant funds expire? Please be specific.
7. How many middle school students will be impacted during the grant year? What is the anticipated impact to nontraditional students enrolling in 9-12 approved CTE program of study as a result of the program?

## ***Additional Information***

Each year, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) prepares an index of county economic status for every county in the United States. Economic status designations are identified through a composite measure of each county's three-year average unemployment rate, per capita market income, and poverty rate. Based on these indicators, each county is then categorized as distressed, at-risk, transitional, competitive or attainment. Tennessee has a long-term objective of having no distressed counties by 2025. To assist in attaining this state goal, proposals that serve counties designated distressed or at-risk will automatically receive points acknowledging the economic status of that area.

For the purpose of scoring proposals, applicants serving counties designated as **distressed will receive three additional points**, and those serving counties designated as **at-risk will receive one additional point**. Points will be awarded based on the county's economic status designation as of **July 1, 2020**. The Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development has developed a dashboard illustrating the current economic status for all 95 counties in Tennessee as measured by the ARC. To view the TN ECD dashboard visit: [County Economic Status Map](#) .

**Note:** Supporting documentation can be uploaded in the "Related Documents" section of the LEA Document Library.

**The deadline for submission is 11:59 p.m. (CT) on Nov. 2, 2020. The application must be fully approved through the Authorized Representative level in order to be scored.**

## ***Critical Dates***

- **Wednesday, Sept. 24** Grant Announcement is released.
- **Thursday, Oct. 15: *Notice of Intent to Apply*** is due no later than 11:59 p.m. CT.
- **Monday, Oct. 19:** Application is available in ePlan LEA Document Library.
- **Monday, Nov. 2:** Submission of application is due no later than 11:59 p.m. CT.
- **Friday, Nov. 20:** Grant decision letters are released to applicants.
- **Tuesday, Dec. 1:** Funds are accessible to awardees.