

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ARPA-Right to Read Grant
Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success



November 21, 2022 – December 31, 2024

Purpose: To assist Connecticut local and regional boards of education in addressing educational disparities and increasing their investment in scientifically based, evidence-based literacy teaching and learning.

This document is for information only.

The grant application must be completed by August 31, 2023, online in eGrants Management System (eGMS) at <https://connecticut.egrantsmanagement.com>.

No paper or email applications will be accepted.

**Connecticut State Department of Education
Academic Office
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 603
Hartford, CT 06103-1841**



CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Charlene M. Russell-Tucker
Commissioner of Education

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; workplace hazards to reproductive systems, gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); military or veteran status; status as a victim of domestic violence; or criminal record in state employment, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes. Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Attorney Louis Todisco, Connecticut State Department of Education, by mail 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103-1841; or by telephone 860-713-6594; or by email Louis.Todisco@ct.gov.

Guidance on the ARPA-Right to Read Grant

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| I. Overview | 1 |
| II. Purpose..... | 1 |
| III. Eligible Applicants and Obligations of ARPA-Right to Read Grant Recipients | 2 |
| IV. Online Electronic Application Process in the eGrants Management System (eGMS)..... | 2 |
| V. Technical Assistance and Management..... | 4 |
| VI. Grant Award Options | 4 |
| VII. Eligible Activities and Spending | 4 |
| VIII. Program Quality Requirements and Management Control of the Program | 5 |
| IX. Other Application Requirements | 5 |
| X. Resources to Support the ARPA-Right to Read Grant | 5 |
| Standard Statement of Assurances for Grant Programs | 6 |
| Affirmative Action Certification Form..... | 12 |

ARPA-Right to Read Grant

I. Overview

In June 2021, [An Act Concerning Provisions Related to Revenue and Other Items to Implement the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2023](#), was passed and includes laws to support the reading success of students across Connecticut. This legislation is often referred to as the “Right to Read” bill. Per Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section (Sec.) 10-14hh(a), each local and regional board of education is required to implement for the 2023–24 school year and each school year thereafter a reading curriculum model or program for Pre-Kindergarten to grade three (Grades PreK-3), inclusive, that has been reviewed and recommended by the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success at the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) in consultation with the Reading Leadership Implementation Council.

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was signed into law and established the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund and Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) Program. One of the purposes of the ARPA SLFRF Funding is to provide districts and schools with support in addressing academic educational disparities and increasing their investment in evidence-based materials, interventions, and services.

Utilizing ARPA Funding, the CSDE has developed the ARPA-Right to Read Grant to support local and regional boards of education in addressing educational disparities and increasing their investment in evidence-based literacy teaching and learning aligned to the science of reading (e.g., implementing a scientifically based, evidence-based approved curriculum literacy model or program, implementing an approved Grades K-3 universal screening reading assessment).

II. Purpose

The CSDE believes that diagnosing and addressing unfinished learning in the context of grade level work requires districts to plan and implement accelerated instructional approaches, tutoring, and expanded learning time opportunities for students across the grades. Connecticut state assessment results for 2021–22 show evidence that there are some signs of learning acceleration and recovery; however, overall student achievement still lags of pre-pandemic levels.

The CSDE prioritizes the establishment of an educational system that is structured to provide culturally responsive, evidence-based teaching and learning practices, including the building of community partnerships and the authentic engagement of parents. The ARPA-Right to Read Grant is focused on ensuring equity and excellence for all Connecticut students as every student deserves culturally responsive, evidence-based, standards-aligned literacy instruction.

Utilizing Connecticut ARPA Funds, the ARPA-Right to Read Grant offers Connecticut local and regional boards of education the opportunity to receive funding to assist in the establishment of Grades K-3 scientifically based, evidence-based literacy teaching and learning aligned to [Connecticut's Grades K-3 Literacy Strategy](#).

III. Eligible Applicants and Obligations of ARPA-Right to Read Grant Recipients

Local or regional boards of education, including charter schools and Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), may apply for the ARPA-Right to Read Grant.

All applications submitted become the property of the CSDE and become part of the public domain. The CSDE reserves the right to make necessary policy and programmatic changes after proposals are submitted and to negotiate awards with potential recipients. ARPA-Right to Read Grant recipients are required to:

- use the funds to support Connecticut approved, evidence-based, scientifically based Kindergarten to grade three (Grades K-3) universal screening reading assessments, Grades K-3 Reading curriculum models and programs, and associated professional learning,
- establish a district leadership literacy team that will attend a total of 20, two-hour CSDE sponsored virtual workshops pertaining to the science of reading and the creation of a district literacy plan,
- establish school-based literacy leadership teams to build and sustain scientifically based, evidence-based literacy practices and systems,
- create and execute a district literacy plan focused on structures and the utilization of scientifically based, evidence-based literacy curricula, instructional materials, and adult learning opportunities,
- participate in statewide workshops or conferences to support other Connecticut school districts in developing replicable programs,
- participate in biannual meetings with the CSDE to monitor expenditures, and
- consent to participate in evaluations examining the impact of the grant funds on literacy teaching and learning.

IV. Online Electronic Application Process in the eGrants Management System (eGMS)

No paper or email applications will be accepted. The ARPA-Right to Read Grant Application must be completed online in the [eGMS](#). The application requires applicants to provide the following:

- a brief project description (maximum of a 1,000 words) detailing the project's purpose, the population being served, the desired outcome from the project, and how this outcome is being measured, along with any current data on progress towards the desired outcome;

- an overview of the main activities of the project, the approximate timeline, primary delivery mechanisms, and partners, if applicable. Links to the website(s) of the project, if available. A brief description of how this response is related and reasonably and proportional to a public health or negative economic impact of COVID-19;
- a description of how the local or regional board of education will continue to address the impact of lost instructional time as a result of COVID-19 and continue to support evidence-based, scientifically based literacy instruction beyond the funding period of the ARPA-Right to Read Grant (December 31, 2024);
- goals and targets describing how planned or current uses of funds prioritize economic and racial equity as a goal, and naming specific targets intended to produce meaningful equity results at scale, including initiatives to achieve those targets. Also, this description must include how planned uses of funds will support Connecticut approved, evidence-based, scientifically based assessments, curriculum models or programs, and professional learning including the establishment of a district leadership literacy team, school-based literacy leadership teams, a district literacy plan, and professional learning plan;
- explanation of project implementation including how the local or regional board of education's overall equity strategy translates into focus areas for SLFRF projects and the specific services or programs offered by the jurisdiction in the Federal ARPA Expenditure Category, as indicated in the final rule for services to address lost instructional time in Category 2.27: Addressing the Impacts of Lost Instructional Time. This includes approaches such as in-school acceleration, tutoring programs, out-of-school-time programs, summer learning, and other strategies that provide Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Compliance and Reporting Guidance to 37 impacted and disproportionately impacted communities with services to address the negative economic impacts of the pandemic;
- a description of constraints and challenges potentially impacting project success in terms of increasing equity. This section should describe the geographic and demographic distribution of funding, including whether it is targeted toward traditionally marginalized communities, and may reference the demographic data information in the Project and Expenditure Reports as relevant; and
- a description of planned or current uses of funds, incorporating community engagement strategies including written feedback through surveys, project proposals, and related documents; oral feedback through community meetings, issue-specific listening sessions, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and additional public engagement; as well as other forms of input, such as steering committees, taskforces, and digital campaigns that capture diverse feedback from the community. Completed or planned community engagement strategies that specifically focus on the SLFRF Program and projects or community engagement strategies that include SLFRF among other government programs and how community engagement strategies support equity goals, including engagement with communities that have historically faced significant barriers to services, such as

people of color, people with low incomes, limited English proficient populations, and other traditionally underserved groups may be included.

V. Technical Assistance and Management

All questions regarding the ARPA-Right to Read Grant may be directed to Dr. Melissa K. Wlodarczyk Hickey at Melissa.Hickey@ct.gov. The CSDE reserves the right to monitor program progress at least annually, including examination and approval of all reports and data collection.

VI. Grant Award Options

The ARPA resources were proportionally distributed among local and regional boards of education based on their individual weighted student enrollment in Grades K-3 in the October 2022 collection. The weighting of student enrollment is based on socioeconomic status (i.e., a weight of 2 for students eligible for free meals, a weight of 1.3 for student eligible for reduced-price meals, and a weight of 1 for students not eligible for free- or reduced-price meals).

The CSDE shall award the ARPA-Right to Read Grant to each grant recipient for the fiscal years ending 2023 and 2024. The grant shall be paid on a reimbursement basis for eligible expenditures dated November 21, 2022, through December 31, 2024. No encumbrances or expenditures may be incurred after December 31, 2024. Grants must be completed by August 31, 2023.

Grantees will be required to submit an End-of-Year Report (EYR) for FY 2023 as of June 30, 2023, and for FY 2024 as of December 31, 2024.

VII. Eligible Activities and Spending

A. Eligible Spending Categories

1. ARPA-Right to Read Grant funds may be used to purchase professional learning and in-service training aligned to Connecticut approved Grades K-3 universal screening reading assessments and reading curriculum models and programs; and
2. ARPA-Right to Read Grant funds may be used to purchase technology-related supplies, supplies, and books (e.g., Connecticut approved Grades K-3 universal screening reading assessments and Grades K-3 reading curriculum models or programs).

B. Ineligible Spending Categories

1. ARPA-Right to Read Grant funds may not be used for positions;
2. ARPA-Right to Read Grant funds may not be used to purchase office or computer equipment; and

3. ARPA-Right to Read Grant funds may not be used to purchase motor vehicles, facilities, or to support new construction.

VIII. Program Quality Requirements and Management Control of the Program

The grantee has complete management responsibility of the ARPA-Right to Read Grant.

The CSDE reserves the right to make awards under this program without discussion with the applicants. Therefore, applications should represent the best effort from both a technical and cost standpoint.

IX. Other Application Requirements

- A. All bidders are hereby notified that the grant to be awarded is subject to contract compliance requirements as set forth in C.G.S. Sec. 4a-60 and C.G.S. Sec. 4a-60a and C.G.S. Secs. 46a-68j-23 et seq. of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies (RCSA). Freedom of Information Act.
- B. All of the information contained in a proposal submitted in response to the ARPA-Right to Read Grant is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Sections 1-200 et seq. The FOIA declares that except as provided by federal law or state statute, records maintained or kept on file by any public agency (as defined in the statute) are public records and every person has the right to inspect such records and receive a copy of such records.

X. Resources to Support the ARPA-Right to Read Grant

When completing this application, local and regional boards of education should refer to the [Connecticut's Grades K-3 Literacy Strategy](#).

Standard Statement of Assurances for Grant Programs

Connecticut State Department of Education

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Project Title: | ARPA-Right to Read Grant |
| Applicant: | |

The Applicant hereby assures the Connecticut State Department of Education that:

- A. The applicant has the necessary legal authority to apply for and receive the proposed grant;
- B. The filing of this application has been authorized by the applicant's governing body, and the undersigned official has been duly authorized to file this application for and on behalf of said applicant, and otherwise to act as the authorized representative of the applicant in connection with this application;
- C. The activities and services for which assistance is sought under this grant will be administered by or under the supervision and control of the applicant;
- D. The project will be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and in compliance with regulations and other policies and administrative directives of the State Board of Education and the Connecticut State Department of Education;
- E. Grant funds shall not be used to supplant funds normally budgeted by the agency but shall be used in addition to such funds;
- F. Fiscal control and accounting procedures will be used to ensure proper disbursement of all funds awarded;
- G. The applicant will submit a final project report (within 60 days of the project completion) and such other reports, as specified, to the Connecticut State Department of Education, including information relating to the project records and access thereto as the Connecticut State Department of Education may find necessary;
- H. The Connecticut State Department of Education reserves the exclusive right to use and grant the right to use and/or publish any part or parts of any summary, abstract, reports, publications, records and materials resulting from this project and this grant;
- I. If the project achieves the specified objectives, every reasonable effort will be made to continue the project and/or implement the results after the termination of state/federal funding;

J. The applicant will protect, indemnify, and save harmless the State Board of Education from financial loss and expense, including legal fees and costs, if any, arising out of any breach of the duties, in whole or part, described in the application for the grant or for any other misconduct, misrepresentation, error, or omission – either intentional or unintentional -- arising from or otherwise related to the applicant’s, district’s, or school’s actions or inaction in the application for, receipt of, use of, and compliance with the grant and the conditions thereof;

K. At the conclusion of each grant period, the applicant will provide for an independent audit report acceptable to the grantor in accordance with Sections 7-394a and 7-396a of the C.G.S., and the applicant shall return to the Connecticut State Department of Education any moneys not expended in accordance with the approved program/operation budget as determined by the audit;

L. NONDISCRIMINATION

1. For purposes of this Section, the following terms are defined as follows:

- a) “Commission” means the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities;
- b) “Contract” and “contract” means this grant;
- c) “Contractor” and “contractor” means the applicant and any successors or assigns;
- d) “Gender identity or expression” means a person’s gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person’s physiology or assigned sex at birth, which gender-related identity can be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held, part of a person’s core identity or not being asserted for an improper purpose.
- e) “good faith” means that degree of diligence which a reasonable person would exercise in the performance of legal duties and obligations;
- f) “good faith efforts” shall include, but not be limited to, those reasonable initial efforts necessary to comply with statutory or regulatory requirements and additional or substituted efforts when it is determined that such initial efforts will not be sufficient to comply with such requirements;

- g) “marital status” means being single, married as recognized by the State of Connecticut, widowed, separated or divorced;
- h) “mental disability” means one or more mental disorders, as defined in the most recent edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders", or a record of or regarding a person as having one or more such disorders;
- i) “minority business enterprise” means any small contractor or supplier of materials fifty-one percent or more of the capital stock, if any, or assets of which is owned by a person or persons: (1) who are active in the daily affairs of the enterprise, (2) who have the power to direct the management and policies of the enterprise, and (3) who are members of a minority, as such term is defined in subsection (a) of C.G.S. Section (§) 32-9n; and
- j) “public works contract” means any agreement between any individual, firm or corporation and the State or any political subdivision of the State other than a municipality for construction, rehabilitation, conversion, extension, demolition or repair of a public building, highway or other changes or improvements in real property, or which is financed in whole or in part by the State, including, but not limited to, matching expenditures, grants, loans, insurance or guarantees.

For purposes of this Section, the terms “Contract” and “contract” do not include a contract where each contractor is (1) a political subdivision of the state, including, but not limited to, a municipality, unless the contract is a municipal public works contract or quasi-public agency project contract, (2) any other state, including but not limited to any federally recognized Indian tribal governments, as defined in C.G.S. § 1-267, (3) the federal government, (4) a foreign government, or (5) an agency of a subdivision, state or government described in the immediately preceding enumerated items (1), (2), (3), or (4).

- k. The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, status as a veteran, intellectual disability, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by such Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or of the State of Connecticut; and the Contractor further agrees to take affirmative action to

ensure that applicants with job-related qualifications are employed and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, status as a veteran, intellectual disability, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by the Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved; (2) the Contractor agrees, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the Contractor, to state that it is an “affirmative action equal opportunity employer” in accordance with regulations adopted by the Commission; (3) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which the Contractor has a collective bargaining Agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which the Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission advising the labor union or workers’ representative of the Contractor's commitments under this section and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (4) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this Section and C.G.S. §§ 46a-68e and 46a-68f and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to C.G.S. §§ 46a-56, 46a-68e, 46a-68f and 46a-86; and (5) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor as relate to the provisions of this Section and C.G.S. § 46a-56. If the contract is a public works contract, municipal public works contract or contract for a quasi-public agency project, the Contractor agrees and warrants that he or she will make good faith efforts to employ minority business enterprises as subcontractors and suppliers of materials on such public works or quasi-public agency projects.

2. Determination of the Contractor’s good faith efforts shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following factors: The Contractor's employment and subcontracting policies, patterns and practices; affirmative advertising, recruitment and training; technical assistance activities and such other reasonable activities or efforts as the Commission may prescribe that are designed to ensure the participation of minority business enterprises in public works projects.
3. The Contractor shall develop and maintain adequate documentation, in a manner prescribed by the Commission, of its good faith efforts.
4. The Contractor shall include the provisions of subsection (B) of this Section in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a

contract with the State and in every subcontract entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a municipal public works contract for a quasi-public agency project, and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with C.G.S. §46a-56, as amended; provided if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission regarding the State contract, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.

5. The Contractor agrees to comply with any and all federal and state laws, including but not limited to the regulations referred to in this Section as they exist on the date of this Contract and as they may be adopted or amended from time to time during the term of this Contract and any amendments thereto.
6. (1) The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of sexual orientation, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or the State of Connecticut, and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their sexual orientation; (2) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which such Contractor has a collective bargaining Agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which such Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities advising the labor union or workers' representative of the Contractor's commitments under this section, and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (3) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to C.G.S. § 46a-56; and (4) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor which relate to the provisions of this Section and C.G.S. § 46a-56.
7. The Contractor shall include the provisions of the foregoing paragraph in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such

subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with C.G.S. § 46a-56, as amended; provided, if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission regarding a State contract, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.

M. The grant award is subject to approval of the Connecticut State Department of Education and availability of state or federal funds.

N. The applicant agrees and warrants that Sections 4-190 to 4-197, inclusive, of the C.G.S. concerning the Personal Data Act and Sections 10-4-8 to 10-4-10, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies promulgated there under are hereby incorporated by reference.

I, the undersigned authorized official, hereby certify that these assurances shall be fully implemented.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Signature of Authorized Official: | |
| Name: <i>(typed)</i> | |
| Title: <i>(typed)</i> | |
| Date: | |

Affirmative Action Certification Form

The certification below should be completed by those applicant organizations that have an Affirmative Action Plan on file with the CSDE.

Applicant organizations that do not have an Affirmative Action Plan on file with the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) must complete and submit the Affirmative Action Compliance Report with their application. The Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities Contract Compliance Regulations Notifications to Bidders is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/ /media/CHRO/NotificationtoBidderspdf.pdf>.

| Affirmative Action Certification Form |
|--|
| <p>According to the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO), municipalities that operate school districts and file a federal and/or state Affirmative Action Plan(s) are exempt from the requirement of filing an Affirmative Action Plan with the Connecticut State Department of Education. Agencies with an Affirmative Action Plan on file need to certify such by signing the statement below.</p> <p><i>I, the undersigned authorized official, hereby certify that the applying organization/agency: _____, has a current Affirmative Action Packet on file with the Connecticut State Department of Education. The Affirmative Action Packet is, by reference, part of this application.</i></p> <p>Signature of Authorized Official: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Name and Title: _____</p> |