

Community Schools Grant Application for the Implementation of the Virginia Community Schools Framework

Application Submission Date:
December 9, 2022



Virginia Department of Education

P. O. Box 2120

Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120

Purpose of Program

The 2022 Virginia General Assembly enacted House Bill 1355 amending the *Code of Virginia* [§ 22.1-199.7](#) to support the establishment of community schools to remove nonacademic barriers to learning as a means to enhance student academic success in public elementary and secondary schools. To support these provisions, the [2022 Appropriations Act](#) (Item 136) provides for grants to school divisions for the development and implementation of community school initiatives. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) is providing an opportunity for school divisions to apply for grant funding for the planning and implementation of community schools.

Funding Parameters

The Virginia General Assembly appropriated \$10,000,000 for grants to school divisions and Communities in Schools and its affiliates to support the development and implementation of community schools initiatives. Community schools initiatives provide a framework for integrated student supports, expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, active family and community engagement, and collaborative leadership and practices. Proposed programs shall reflect the recommendations outlined in the [Virginia Community School Framework](#) (2019). All grants under this appropriation will be awarded by the Department of Education in consultation with a stakeholder workgroup convened to focus on community schools. A maximum of \$5,000,000 may be awarded to a single entity.

Eligible applicants for this opportunity include Virginia school divisions (i.e. local education agencies or LEAs). Grants may be awarded for the purpose of planning, including conducting a needs assessment, and for the purpose of implementation of community schools at an individual school, group of schools, or all schools in the division. The VDOE expects to make between 10 and 20 awards to school divisions with an estimated award range of \$250,000 to \$500,000. Any unobligated balance for this program on June 30, 2023, shall be reappropriated for expenditure in the second year for the same purpose. All unspent funds awarded to school divisions must be returned to the VDOE by June 30, 2024.

Submission Instructions

Completed application packets must be submitted via email to the attention of Alexandra Javna, Student Services Specialist, at Alexandra.Javna@doe.virginia.gov no later than December 9, 2022.

Application packets must be fully completed in order to be considered for funding. A complete application packet must include all of the following:

Application Cover Page*

[Part One: Shared Leadership](#) (10 points)

Attach: *Community Schools Exploration Team Document**

Attach: *Community-Based Organization Letter of Support*

[Part Two: Statement of Need](#) (20 points)

Attach: *Statement of Need**

[Part Three: Goal Aligned Work Plan](#) (50 points)

Attach: *Goal Aligned Work Plan Template (one plan for each goal)**

[Part Four: Detailed Budget](#)* (20 points)

* *All of these documents can be found on the Virginia Community Schools Webpage.*

Application Selection and Award Timeline

The VDOE will award these grants in consultation with a stakeholder workgroup. The project period for these awards is January 2022 - June 30, 2024.

Key Application Elements

Grant awards shall prioritize eligible programs serving schools that demonstrate significant need, including Title I-eligible schools. Grant proposals should reflect the recommendations outlined in the [Virginia Community School Framework](#) (2019) as well as the following key elements.

Part One: Shared Leadership

Community Schools Exploration Team: Using the *Community Schools Exploration Team document* (located on the Virginia Community Schools Webpage), identify the team members who contributed to this application. Divisions are encouraged (but not required) to have representation from the following stakeholders:

- Parents/Caregivers
- Community Leaders or Organizations
- Students
- Teachers
- Administrators
- School-Based Mental Health Personnel (e.g., school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists)

- Relevant Division Leadership
- Local Government or agencies such as Community Services Board or local Department of Social Services
- School Board Representation

Community-Based Organization Letter of Support: Although school divisions are applying for the grant, it is required that they identify a lead partner agency to help coordinate programs and services. The lead partner agency could be a public or private agency or a community-based organization. A letter of support is required to demonstrate the shared leadership with a partner agency. If more than one partner agency has been identified for shared leadership, school divisions will include a letter of support from each lead partner agency.

Key Elements for Letter of Support:

- Rationale for the selection of this organization,
- Mission of the organization or description of their role in the community,
- Description of organization's scope of work in the community school partnership, and
- Signature by a senior member of the organization.

Part Two: Statement of Need

School divisions and individual schools may be at different stages of developing community schools. Some schools and school divisions may have already completed a needs assessment to identify areas of growth, while others have not started this process yet. The VDOE has provided an optional self-reflection activity as a resource to assist school divisions in identifying needs to be targeted by the funding. You do not need to attach your needs assessment or the optional self-reflection activity to the application packet.

With the input from the Community Schools Exploration Team, please complete and attach the *Statement of Need* (located on the Virginia Community Schools Webpage). The purpose of this document is to describe the needs of the school division and the targeted school(s). The team may use data from their own needs assessment or the Self-Reflection Activity to identify priorities and needs.

Key Elements for Statement of Need:

- Rationale for the selection of the school(s) to be targeted by this program,
- Description of assets of each targeted school,
- Commitment to have a community school coordinator at each targeted school, and
- Data-informed description of needs of each targeted school.

Part Three: Goal Aligned Work Plan

Complete and attach a *Goal Aligned Work Plan* for each of your identified goals. The *Goal Aligned Work Plan Template* is located on the Virginia Community Schools Webpage.

Key Elements of Goal Aligned Work Plan:

- Identified goals align with Statement of Need.
- Identified school(s) demonstrate need.
- Goals include appropriate measurement tools and are directly connected to student or school outcomes. Use of rigorous and equitable evaluation systems to assess student and school outcomes and overall effectiveness of the community school initiative (valid and reliable fidelity, progress and/or performance data).
- High-quality action plan supporting the four branches of a Virginia Community School Framework.
- Use of research- and evidence-based strategies and best practices to incorporate integrated student supports that address non-academic and out-of-school barriers to learning as a means to enhance student success.
- Goal Setting and Action Plan reflects the perspectives of multiple stakeholders (students, families, educators, school/community leaders, etc.).

Part Four: Detailed Budget

All budget requests must be directly aligned with the division's goals and action steps, as identified in this application. Complete and attach the *Budget Template*, which can be located on the Virginia Community Schools Webpage.

Key Elements of Budget:

- Funding requests are well-researched and appropriately allocated.
- Description and justification is clear and shows alignment with the work plan.
- Plans for sustainability of programs and initiatives beyond the funding. This may include plans for matching funds during the grant period.

Application Support and Contact Information

For technical assistance with the application process, school divisions may register for the [Information for Community Schools Grant Application webinar](#) at 10:30 a.m. on November 18, 2022.

Questions related to the Community Schools grant opportunity and application process may be directed to Alexandra Javna, Student Services Specialist, at Alexandra.Javna@doe.virginia.gov.

All application materials and resources may be located on the Virginia Community Schools Webpage.

Allowable Use of Funds

School divisions must propose activities or initiatives in one or more of the following areas:

- Collaborative Leadership
- Student Engagement and Motivation
- Family and Community Engagement
- Student Emotional Wellness, Mental Health Needs and Basic Needs

Examples of allowable activities include (but are not limited to):

- high-quality early learning programs and service;
- accelerated learning aligned with academic supports and other enrichment activities, providing students with a comprehensive academic program;
- family engagement, family leadership, family literacy, and parent/caregiver education programs;
- mentoring and other youth development programs;
- community service and service learning opportunities;
- programs that provide assistance to students who have been chronically absent, truant, suspended, or expelled;
- job training and career counseling services;
- nutrition services and physical activities;
- primary health and dental care;
- activities that improve access to and use of social service programs and programs that promote family financial stability; mental health services;
- adult education, including instruction of adults in English as a second language; and
- any other activity, resource, or service that strategically aligns with the Community Schools Framework.

Application Resources

General Resources

- [Virginia Community Schools Webpage](#), Virginia Department of Education
- [What is a Community School?](#) (2019) The Partnership for the Future of Learning Video description of the community school approach.

- [Community Schools Playbook](#), The Partnership for the Future of Learning Guide provides tools for advancing community schools as a strategy to improve schools, provide more equitable opportunities, and prepare students for success in life and as citizens.
- [The Children's Aid Society](#), The Children's Aid Society helps children in poverty to succeed and thrive. This is done by providing comprehensive supports to children, youth, and their families in targeted high-needs New York City neighborhoods.
- [Coalition for Community Schools](#), The Coalition is dedicated to advancing this mission through a shared set of principles: to build on community strengths, invest in trusting relationships, and a commitment to continuous improvement. The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) is the home of the Coalition for Community Schools, acting as the intermediary between the Coalition's national intermediaries and place-based networks.
- [National Center for Community Schools \(NCCS\)](#) – NCCS' mission is to transform education by partnering with schools, districts, community partners, government agencies, and other stakeholders to create and sustain community schools.

Collaborative Partnership Resources

[Building School- Community Partnerships](#) (2022) Comprehensive Center Network (CCNETWORK)

Session videos describe how to engage a diverse set of partners, implement effective consultation practices, and build and sustain working relationships. Partnerships are important at every level to accomplish goals for students, but they require leadership, effective communication tools, and ongoing attention.

Student Engagement and Motivation Resources

- [Virginia's High Quality Work-Based Learning Guide](#)
- [Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports](#)
- [Techniques for Giving Students Charge of How They Learn](#)

Family and Community Engagement

[Focusing on Families: How Districts and States Can Support Families to form Strong Partnerships with Schools](#), by Jaimie Grazi Orland (Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Mid-Atlantic)

This article describes lessons learned from the field on the impact of strong partnerships between schools and families.

[Collaborating to Transform and Improve Education Systems: A playbook for family-school engagement](#) (2021) Center for Universal Education at Brookings.

This guide addresses family engagement as it relates to school improvement. The playbook demonstrates the effectiveness of family-school engagement—namely the collaboration between the multiple actors, from parents/caregivers and community members to teachers and school leaders—has an important role to play in improving and transforming education systems to achieve four main goals: (1) improving the attendance and completion of students; (2) improving the learning and development of students; (3) redefining the purpose of school for students; and (4) redefining the purpose of school for society.

[Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships](#), United States Department of Education

This paper presents a new framework for designing family engagement initiatives that build capacity among educators and families to partners with one another around student success. It is designed to serve as a compass, laying out the goals and conditions necessary to chart a path toward effective family engagement efforts that are linked to student achievement and school improvement.

Student's Emotional, Mental Health, and Basic Needs Resources

[The RISE Index: School Edition](#) is a tool to help schools assess, prioritize, and plan key activities that promote the social-emotional health of staff and students. Specifically, the RISE Index supports schools to achieve the following goals: increase job satisfaction, improve connectedness, increase SEL, and increase mental health supports.

The [SHAPE Needs Assessment and Resource Mapping Guide](#) is a guide to help school divisions identify strengths and gaps, clarify priorities, inform quality improvement, and advance action planning.