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# **Recruitment and Retention Support Grant**

## Request for Proposals

**Deadline: July 1, 2022**

**Contact information:**

Dr. Meg Homer, Educator Engagement Specialist

Dr. Joan B. Johnson, Assistant Superintendent

Department of Teacher Education and Licensure

Virginia Department of Education

**Physical Address:**

James Monroe Building – 24th Floor

101 North 14th Street

Richmond, Virginia 23219

Email: meghan.homer@doe.virginia.gov

Telephone: (804) 371-2522

**Virginia Department of Education**

**RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SUPPORT GRANT**

**Request for Proposals**

As part of Virginia’s American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) funding, $500,000 in grant funding is available to assist public school divisions with recruitment and retention initiatives. Specifically, this Recruitment and Retention Support Grant, modeled after the successful Continuing Education Support Pilot Grant (December 2021), is designed to offer **recruitment incentives** to new employees and/or to provide **continuing education support** for current employees pursuing Virginia licensure. Divisions may submit a proposal for using up to $30,000 over the course of one year (2022-2023) to incentivize new employees to accept a position with the division and/or to cover tuition and institutional fees for teachers and classified staff members enrolling in classes at a regionally accredited institution of higher education in pursuit of Virginia licensure.

All Virginia public school divisions are eligible to apply. In submitting a proposal, divisions will estimate the anticipated amount to be spent on bonuses and/or the anticipated cost of tuition and related institutional fees (such as technology or library fees) and will provide an estimate of the number of individuals likely to benefit. Although divisions are required to consider all prospective and current employees (teachers and non-teaching staff), divisions will have the flexibility to develop and outline their own proposed procedure for selecting individual recipients of continuing education funds, if applicable. Divisions planning to use funds for continuing education support must develop a procedure for tracking enrollment and class registration and successful completion, and are advised to secure promissory notes with the individual recipients outlining plans for the recipient to return unused tuition dollars in the event that the recipient does not complete the intended class(es).

Proposals are due by **4pm on Friday, July 1, 2022** and should be submitted via email to Dr. Meg Homer: Meghan.Homer@doe.virginia.gov. Divisions applying for funding will be notified of their award status in mid-July of 2022 and will receive additional details on seeking reimbursement. A mid-term (January 2023) and final report (October 2023) will be due to the Virginia Department of Education, detailing how funds were used, including supplemental documentation as appropriate. Division awarded grant funding must request reimbursement of funds via the Online Management of Education Grant Awards (OMEGA) system no later than September 16, 2023.

**INTENT**

The intent of the Recruitment and Retention Support (RARS) Grant is to provide public school divisions with a structured framework upon which it can systematically develop plans to support recruitment and retention of employees through hiring incentives and continuing education funds. The RARS Grant is designed to assist all public school division employees, including teachers, counselors, social workers, support staff, bus drivers, and other classified staff members. It is the VDOE’s hope that the RARS grant will assist reducing critical shortage areas in public school divisions across the Commonwealth while fostering a culture of lifelong learning and a supportive community for all school employees.

School division proposals must clearly describe plans to use up to $30,000 to support these recruitment and retention strategies over a period of one school year (2022-2023). Use of the grant funding is limited to the following recruitment and retention strategies:

* Hiring Incentive:

Grant funding may be used to create monetary incentives for employees hired with a **start date of July 25, 2022 through November 15, 2022**. A newly hired employee may receive an incentive award of up to $5,000 (exact amount to be articulated in the school division’s proposal). School divisions must provide half of the incentive payment to the individual no later than January 1, 2023 and provide the balance of the full amount to the individual no earlier than May 1, 2023, provided the individual receives a satisfactory performance evaluation and provides a written commitment to return to the same school for the 2023-2024 school year. The incentive awards are taxable to the recipient, and the school division is responsible for ensuring all taxes are remitted.

**and/or…**

* Continuing Education Support:
	+ Grant funding may be used to cover the cost of employees’ tuition and related institutional fees, such as technology or library fees. Although those with provisional licenses may be likely participants, divisions are required to consider all prospective and current employees (teachers and non-teaching staff) taking coursework towards licensure. Although divisions will have the flexibility to develop and outline their own proposed procedure for selecting individual recipients of continuing education funds, preference should be given to those seeking initial licensure or those seeking *secondary endorsement in a critical shortage area*. Divisions planning to use funds for continuing education support must develop a procedure for tracking enrollment and class registration and successful completion, and are advised to secure promissory notes with the individual recipients outlining plans for the recipient to return unused tuition dollars in the event that the recipient does not complete the intended class(es).

**REPORTING**

Each school division with a funded proposal will provide the VDOE with a mid-term progress report by **January 16, 2023** and a final report by **October 2, 2023**. The annual progress report should include the number of employees served, expenditures, a narrative on the impact of the grant, and supplemental materials (such as documentation of satisfactory performance evaluation, unofficial transcripts, etc.) as applicable. See details below.

**TIMELINE**

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| --- | --- |
| July 1, 2022 | Application due via email to Meghan.Homer@doe.virginia.gov |
| Mid-July, 2022 | Award notification  |
| Mid-late July, 2022 | Division to identify individual recipients of hiring incentives and/or continuing education support |
|  | For divisions offering continuing education support: ensure employee recipients are enrolled and tracking/documentation procedure is established |
| January 1, 2023 | For divisions offering hiring incentives: ensure half of hiring incentive has been distributed to employees |
| January 16, 2023 | Mid-term Progress Report Due |
| October 2, 2023 | Final Report Due |

**PROPOSAL REVIEW**

VDOE staff will review proposals per requirements as defined in this RFP. If, in the judgment of the VDOE, an application is late or incomplete, the application may be omitted from the process. The decision of the VDOE is final. Applicants submitting proposals that are rejected by the VDOE will be notified in writing.

An expert review panel will evaluate eligible proposals based on the required components and the established criteria. The review panel will review each eligible proposal and make recommendations to VDOE in the areas of potential for impact, budget, and overall efficacy.

**REQUIRED COMPONENTS AND APPLCIAITON PROCEDURE**

Proposals must be submitted by **4pm on Friday, July 1, 2022** via email to Dr. Meg Homer: Meghan.Homer@doe.virginia.gov.

Listed below are the required components of a school division proposal in the order they must appear. The narrative sections of the proposal must be single-spaced with one-inch margins, and the font used must be 12-point Times New Roman. **Please adhere to word count limits** noted for each section.

**Cover Page and Abstract**

* Divisions must submit a compiled cover page, found on page 8. The cover page must be the first page of the division’s application.
* All proposals must include an abstract (**up to** **350 words**) briefly describing the plans for the funds including **hiring incentive**s and/or **continuing education support**. Provide justification for seeking funds such as noting critical shortage areas and any recruitment/retention challenges specific to the division, including vacancy data. If the division plans to use funds for hiring incentives, discuss targeted hiring efforts and the divisions’ greatest needs. If planning to use the award to support continuing education as a retention strategy, note any trends in significant barriers to completing coursework among employees and include a brief summary of plans to select recipients. If partnering with a specific Institution of Higher Education (IHE), note any reasons for the partnership such as location, offering of online courses, or a negotiated tuition discount.

**Recruitment and Retention Support Plan**

All proposals should include a plan using the following headings:

Participants (up to 300 words):

Discuss which individuals are likely to benefit from the funding, such as prospective employees or current employees seeking licensure in Virginia. Although divisions are not required to list the names of participants, divisions are asked to **estimate the number and type of employees** (bus drivers, instructional assistants, teachers, etc.) expected to be served.

If the division plans to use funds to assist in covering cost of post-secondary coursework leading to licensure, explain the **selection process**. Divisions should comment on how administrators will ensure that a range of employees (teachers, counselors, social workers, teacher’s aides, support staff, bus drivers, and other classified staff) are considered and how the selection process will support efforts to recruitment and retention efforts.

Budget (up to 500 words):

Provide a paragraph summarizing the overall plan for using the funds accompanied by an outline of anticipated expenses (table or chart). The DOE will make awards of up to $30,000 for each school division. Divisions will submit a mid-term report (template to be provided) by January 16, 2023 as well as a final report by October 2, 2023, along with supplemental documentation.

It is important to note that although divisions are asked to provide an estimate of costs, the actual award amount cannot exceed the estimated figure. For example, if a division submits a proposal for $15,000 to cover tuition but that actual cost of tuition exceeds $15,000, the DOE cannot cover the overage. Divisions are advised to plan accordingly.

Operations and Record Keeping (up to 250 words):

Include a plan for fiscal procedures and identify the designated contact person to handle distribution of any monetary incentives, payment of tuition bills, collection of invoices, and unofficial transcripts showing successful course completion, as applicable. The division should indicate who will be responsible for submitting mid-term and final reports with copies of supplemental documents.

Evaluation (up to 500 words):

Divisions must outline a plan for evaluating their entire Recruitment and Retention Support Grant. This section should include how the division plans to evaluate the *effectiveness* of the awards in addressing recruitment and/or retention challenges for the division. Distinct from the mid-term and final reports (mentioned above), the Evaluation Plan should cover how the division will measure the *impact or effect* of the grant, such as measuring an anticipated increase in the number of fully licensed teachers, improved evaluation results, reduced vacancies in specific areas, or effect on employee’s perception of the professional development support from leadership as measured through a questionnaire, etc.

**APPLICATION COVER PAGE**

**School Division:**

**School(s):**

**Superintendent’s Region (enter I-VIII):**

**Mailing Address:**

**Division Superintendent:**
**Email:**

**Grant Contact Person:**

**Title:**

**Email:**

**List any Relevant Partnership(s):**

**CERTIFICATION BY AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL**

*The applicant certifies that to the best of his/her knowledge the information in this application is correct and that the filing of this application is duly authorized by the local school board of this School Division.*

**Typed or Printed Name of Superintendent:**

**Signature of Superintendent:**