



COLORADO
Department of Education

ESSER Rural Coaction Request for Applications

Pursuant to the American Rescue Plan of 2021



Rural districts, BOCES, and other local education providers (LEPs) provide students in their communities with high-quality learning experiences each and every day. To expand student pathway opportunities and career-connected learning, partnerships among and across districts and BOCES can be very valuable. Collaborative action (referred to here as coaction) allows districts and BOCES to work together in partnership to increase opportunities for students across their regions. As such, CDE is launching the Rural Coaction Program to seed the creation of new and further the development of existing partnerships and pathways for learning in our rural communities. This program will be funded through the American Rescue Plan’s Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER III) funds.

Purpose and Program Activities



- This program exists to provide funding to coalitions of LEPs and/or Board of Cooperative Services (BOCES) [designated as rural](#) to utilize a collaborative partnership to increase student access to and engagement with student career pathways and career-connected learning. A coalition of LEPs or group of providers may apply for a grant.
- The purpose of funding is to improve student engagement in learning—particularly for those students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic—through increased collaborative action that results in the creation and/or expansion of student pathways/career-connected learning opportunities amongst rural Colorado school districts and/or BOCES, community partners, and Institutions of Higher Education (IHE's) in ways that innovatively address local needs. With these funds, districts will build capacity and resources (primarily to build student career pathways and learning opportunities), be able to incentivize hard-to-fill positions, be more adequately positioned to attract quality staff, and increase opportunities for student growth and achievement, in addition to strengthening and/or maintaining relationships with industry partners and IHE's.

Purpose and Program Activities (Continued)

A coalition of rural LEAs and/or BOCES (coaction partners) awarded a grant under the Rural Coaction Program shall use awarded funding to establish coaction partnerships to build student career pathways and career-connected learning opportunities that address the local needs of their communities. Examples of the eligible work include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing and/or expanding career-connected and other workplace learning opportunities (including Career and Technical Education) or increased student [career pathways that lead to in-demand careers](#), including but not limited to:
 - Establishing shared infrastructure for offering students access to career-connected learning;
 - The acquisition of equipment and other capital expenditures;
 - Developing new career-connected learning pathways;
 - Strengthening student engagement/re-engagement through career-connected or workplace learning opportunities;
 - Offering transportation so students can access career-connected learning opportunities; and
 - Building the groundwork for a successful application for the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Grant (Perkins Grant).
- Programming that encourages enrichment, academic innovation and/or strengthens school climate, including but not limited to:
 - Through work-based learning opportunities in district and out of district; and
 - The creation of summer internship and career-based learning opportunities.
- Addressing educator workforce challenges, including but not limited to:
 - Supporting the hiring of educators for the student career pathways or current academics so that new pathways can be developed; and
 - Hiring staff to provide coordination across districts and build relationships with industry and other community partners.

Coalitions can apply to one of two different cohorts:

- 1) *Cohort 1: Accelerated Coaction* -- This path is intended for coalitions that have existing partnerships with neighboring LEAs, strong connections already in place with community industry partners, and/or existing career-connected learning opportunities and ready to expand the reach of their programs through partnerships. The goal of this path is to expedite funding to coalitions in order to initiate work in advance of the 2022-2023 school year.
- 2) *Cohort 2: Incubated Coaction* -- This cohort allows coalitions of LEAs, such as those building new programs or new collaborations across LEAs, additional time to plan their collaboration and put the systems and processes in place to ensure a successful implementation of the coaction program. Applicants awarded in this cohort will have a planning period to build out the plans and infrastructure starting on July 1, 2022 and ending no later than December 31, 2022.

Purpose and Program Activities (Continued)

As a support, CDE will make a list of potential Rural Coaction Coaches available. These individuals/organizations may provide a wide range of technical assistance to the coaction partners such as: supporting coaction partners in developing a theory of action, developing systems and processes, facilitating collaboration among coaction partners, supporting community engagement activities, other planning/coordination that supports the coaction partners in successfully implementing the proposed program including, for Cohort 2 applicants, support the efforts outlined for the planning period such as completing the Planning Period report. Rural Coaction Coaches are not required for any application. The costs of such coaches should be incorporated into the application budget. The list of potential Rural Coaches will be listed on the [Rural Coaction program webpage](#) when available.



A coalition (two or more) of LEPs (including at least one rural LEP as [defined](#) by the Colorado Department of Education and the Commissioner's Rural Education Council) are eligible to apply for this opportunity. An eligible LEP is:

- A School District on behalf of all or a subset of schools;
 - A non-charter school may not submit a standalone application outside of their district.
- A Charter School authorized by a School District; and
- A Charter School authorized by the Charter School Institute.

Eligible Applicants (Continued)



Notes:

- A BOCES is an eligible applicant so long as the BOCES application represents two or more districts and so long as only students enrolled in rural districts are served by these funds.
- An application submitted by a BOCES on behalf of member districts should indicate which districts are participating in the proposed program. Districts participating in a BOCES application cannot participate in a second application.
- A non-rural district can be part of an application for this program so long as only students enrolled in rural districts are served by these funds.
- A charter school is identified as rural if the school operates within the boundaries of a district identified as rural.
- Strong partnerships with institutions of higher education and industry/commercial partners (e.g., local business, local government, community-based and/or nonprofit organizations) are critical (and is included as an evaluative component of the rubric) to competitive applications. However, to be eligible for consideration, a coalition must also include at least two LEPs as defined above.
- An LEP can only be part of one coalition application.

Priority Consideration

This program is designed to support rural LEPs in collaboratively building the capacity to provide and/or expand career-connected learning opportunities for students in their districts. Available grant funding will be distributed to eligible coaction programs based on the application rubric. Priority will be given to applications meeting the following priority considerations:

- Applications that involve at least one small rural district as [defined](#) by the Colorado Department of Education and the Commissioner's Rural Education Council.
- Applications that focus on engagement of those most impacted by the pandemic including low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and/or foster care youth.
- Applications that prioritize the expansion of career-connected learning opportunities within the educator workforce.
- Applications that include a plan for integrating multiple funding sources (e.g., the Carl Perkins Act, the Career Development Incentive Program) and/or program opportunities (e.g., the Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot Program, the Pathways in Technology Early College High School Programs).

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Available Funds

The Colorado Department of Education will be making \$15 million of ARP ESSER III funding available for this program. Applicants are invited to submit applications that meet the needs of their program with a maximum of \$2 million available per applicant. Please note that proposed budgets should align with the scope of the work proposed in the application and budgets need not be at the maximum.

Approximately \$6 million of funding will be made available for Cohort 1 – Accelerated Coaction with the remaining funds (approximately \$9 million) made available for the Cohort 2 – Incubated Coaction. Eligible but unfunded applicants from Cohort 1 will be considered for funding should funding from Cohort 2 remain after all eligible Cohort 2 applications have been funded.

However, there is no guarantee that submitting an application will result in funding or funding at the requested level.

Allowable Uses of Funds

Funds must be expended in a way that aligns with the plans submitted through the application and align with the [allowable uses](#) as defined through [ARP ESSER III](#) including, but not limited to:

- Teachers, coordinators, and other personnel expenses;
- Certification and/or professional learning costs for district faculty and staff;
- Contracts for services provided including the provision of technical assistance;
- Curricula and instructional resources;
- Capital expenditures including equipment, machinery, or real property; and
- Technology to support distance and hybrid learning.

These funds are specific to this program, Rural Coaction Program, and uses of funds for any other purpose are not allowed. Please review the [ESSER Allowable Uses](#) document for further clarity. If you have any questions regarding allowable expenses, please reach out to Allisha Cody (Cody_A@cde.state.co.us) for confirmation.

Duration of Grant

The timeline and duration of grants differs based on the cohort to which a coalition applies.

Accelerated Coaction: Grants will be awarded beginning on June 1, 2022, with an end date of no later than September 30, 2024. Grantees within this cohort will be expected to begin implementation of the coaction's program for the 2022-2023 school year. Funding for the 2023-2024 fiscal year will be dependent on the implementation of the program and adequate progress towards the student goals as outlined in the application.

Incubated Coaction: Grants will be awarded beginning on July 1, 2022, with an end date of no later than September 30, 2024. Applicants awarded funding under this cohort will be allowed a planning period starting on July 1, 2022, through no later than December 31, 2022. Funding for the remainder of the fiscal year will be dependent on making adequate progress towards meeting the goals outlined in the application for the planning period. Funding for the 2023-2024 fiscal year will be dependent on the implementation of the program and adequate progress towards the student goals as outlined in the application.

Each coalition of LEPs and/or BOCES that receives funding through the Rural Coaction Program is required to report, at a minimum, the following information to the Department on or before May 31 of each school year for which an LEP has received funding:

- A description of the status of planned activities (e.g., completed, in progress);
- Any adjustments made to the LEP's program plan and the reason adjustments were made;
- How program funds were used by the LEP and a summary of other resources used, if any, to implement the planned coalition plan;
- The staff and positions recruited, re-assigned, hired, or provided professional development to support the program;
- A description of the measurable student outcomes (including academic, social and/or emotional outcomes), disaggregated by student groups, and whether the expected result of the activities described in the plan were met;
- How the progress to date has impacted the sustainability plan submitted with the application and, if applicable, how the sustainability plan has changed; and
- Whether the local education provider's coalition plan will continue in the following fiscal year and, if not, the reason the program will not continue,

Additionally, coalitions receiving funding under the *Incubated Coaction* cohort will be required to submit a brief narrative report detailing progress made during the planning period of the grant with a description of what work has occurred, modifications necessary for successful implementation of the coaction plan, progress towards the goals outlined in the application for the planning period, and the final theory of action detailing how the program will drive the expected outcomes. This report will be due to CDE no later than November 30, 2022.

LEPs receiving funding will also be required to submit an Annual Financial Report. Details and format for this report will be provided upon award and as part of the budget workbook and/or grant award letter (GAL).

Review Process and Timeline




Applications will be reviewed by CDE staff and peer reviewers to ensure they contain all required components. Applicants for Cohort 1 (Accelerated Coaction) will be notified of final award status no later than **Monday, May 2, 2022**. Applicants for Cohort 2 (Incubated Coaction) will be notified of final award status no later than **Friday, June 3, 2022**.

Note: This is a competitive process – applicants must score at least 70 points out of the 100 possible points to be approved for funding. Additional points are awarded for applications meeting the priority considerations as outlined in the “Priority Considerations” section of the Request for Applications. Applications that score below 70 points may be asked to submit revisions that would bring the application up to a fundable level. There is no guarantee that submitting an application will result in funding or funding at the requested level. All award decisions are final. Applicants that do not meet the qualifications may reapply for future grant opportunities.



The Intent to Apply is **due by March 4, 2022, by 11:59 pm.** via [an online form](#). Though strongly encouraged, the Intent to Apply is informational and is not a required component of the grant application submission process.

The screenshot shows a blue header with the Colorado Department of Education logo and the title "ESSER Rural Coaction- Intent to Apply". Below the title is a thank-you message and a deadline. The form contains several input fields for contact information and a section for an authorized representative approval with radio buttons for "Yes" and "No". A "Submit" button is at the bottom.

 **COLORADO**
Department of Education

ESSER Rural Coaction- Intent to Apply

Thank you for your interest in the ESSER Rural Coaction Program. Please submit your Intent to Apply by March 4, 2022, by 11:59 pm. Though strongly encouraged, the Intent to Apply is informational and is not a required component of the grant application submission process.

Name of Lead Local Education Provider (LEP)/BOCES *

Name of Authorized Representative from Lead Applicant *

Name of Application Contact *

Contact E-mail Address *

Contact Telephone Number *

Authorized Representative Approval *
I affirm that I am the named Authorized Representative, or the Authorized Representative is aware and has approved of the intent to apply for this funding opportunity.

Yes
 No

Send me a copy of my responses



Submission Process and Deadline



Applications must be completed (including all elements outlined below) and submitted through the [online application](#) on the CDE Website by **Friday, April 1, 2022, at 11:59pm** for Cohort 1 and by **Monday, May 2, 2022, at 11:59pm** for Cohort 2. The Excel Budget Workbook and Program Assurances Form must also be uploaded to the online application form at the time of submission.

Application resources and required documents to include in the submission are available on CDE's [Rural Coaction program webpage](#). Incomplete or late applications will not be considered. Applicants should receive an automated confirmation email from the online system upon submission. If you do not, please email CompetitiveGrants@cde.state.co.us.





The Rural Coaction Program [online application](#) form includes the following elements, all of which must be completed.

- **Part I: Applicant Information**
- **Part II: Application Narrative**
 - **Budget Workbook** (can be downloaded from CDE's [Rural Coaction program webpage](#)) Upload the completed Budget Workbook (Excel) within the online application.
- **Part III: Program Assurances Form**
 - Upload the Program Assurances Form (PDF or Word file) within the [online application](#) form. Funding will not be awarded until all signatures are in place. Applications may be submitted without signatures; however, please attempt to obtain all signatures before submitting the application.

****Apply via the [online application form](#)****

The application form does not save works in progress, so applicants may find it useful to complete the application in the “Paper Application” and paste the responses into the online application.

Applicant Information

Lead Local Education Provider (LEP) / BOCES Information

LEP / BOCES Code *

LEP / BOCES Name *

DUNS / Unique Sam.gov Identifier *

DUNS Expiration Date *

Mailing Address *

City *

State *

ZIP *

Type of Education Provider *
Choose the option that best describes your organization or authorizer.

School District

BOCES

Charter School Institute

Charter School

Authorized Representative Information

Name *

Title *

Email *

Phone *

Program Contact Information

Name *

Title *

Email *

Phone *

Online Application - Narrative Questions Cohort 1 Accelerated

A plan detailing how coaction partners will expend the allocated funds to address local needs by accelerating learning opportunities and increasing student engagement and access (i.e., development of pathways, apprenticeships and internship programs, industry certifications, staff sharing, etc.):

- a. The measurable student outcomes the partners expect students to achieve as a result of the activities described in the plan (including, but not limited to, measures of student engagement, student achievement, and school climate) and the theory of action for how the program will drive towards those results. (no more than 750 words)
- b. A detailed description of the coaction partners' plan for building and/or expanding student career pathways and/or career-connected learning opportunities including timeline for implementation and a description of the evidence-base by which the partners believe this program will strengthen student engagement—particularly for students most impacted by the pandemic. (no more than 1000 words)
- c. Information concerning the key personnel (current and yet-to-be-hired) who will be responsible for the activities described in the plan, the credentials necessary for executing the program, and strategies/timelines for recruitment of required personnel. (no more than 500 words)
- d. The barriers to successfully building and/or expanding student career pathways and/or career-connected learning opportunities in the coaction partner's communities and how they plan to overcome those barriers. (no more than 500 words)
- e. The current state of the coaction partners' engagement and collaboration with one another and the partners' plan to effectively collaborate through this program. (no more than 500 words)
- f. The current state of the coaction partners' engagement and collaboration with community stakeholders (including industry partners and institutions of higher education) and the partners' plan to expand upon that engagement through this program. (no more than 500 words)
- g. A description (including the role to be played) of the key stakeholders (including Rural Coaction Coach, institutions of higher education, and industry partners) engaged in the development and implementation of the proposed programs. (no more than 500 words)
- h. A description of the coaction partners' sustainability plan for the created/expanded student career pathways and/or career-connected learning opportunities including, but not limited to, a theory of action that demonstrates long-term continuity of the program, how coaction partners will leverage other ongoing funding sources, and whether the partners anticipate applying for a pathway under the Perkins Act. (no more than 500 words)
- i. A description of how the coaction partners' plan addresses any of the other priority considerations not discussed in earlier sections. (no more than 500 words)

The number of rural students the coaction partners anticipate will be served annually by this coalition of LEPS/BOCES during the grant period:

Online Application - Narrative Questions Cohort 2 Incubated

A plan detailing how coaction partners will expend the allocated funds to address local needs by accelerating learning opportunities and increasing student engagement and access (i.e., development of pathways, apprenticeships and internship programs, industry certifications, staff sharing, etc.):

- a. A detailed description of the coaction partners' plan for building and/or expanding student career pathways and/or career-connected learning opportunities including a timeline for implementation and a description of the evidence-base by which the partners believe this program will strengthen student engagement—particularly for students most impacted by the pandemic. (no more than 1000 words)
- b. A description of how the coaction partners' plan will leverage the allowed maximum of six months of planning time from July 1 through December 31, 2022, including what goals and milestones the partners will use to track progress during this time. (no more than 500 words)
- c. Information concerning the key personnel (current and yet-to-be-hired) who will be responsible for the activities described in the plan, the credentials necessary for executing the program, and strategies/timelines for recruitment of required personnel. (no more than 500 words)
- d. Anticipated barriers to successfully building and/or expanding student career pathways and/or career-connected learning opportunities in the coaction partner's communities and how they plan to overcome those barriers. (no more than 500 words)
- e. The measurable student outcomes the partners expect students to achieve as a result of the activities described in the plan (including, but not limited to, measures of student engagement, student achievement, and school climate). (no more than 500 words)
- f. The current state of the coaction partners' engagement and collaboration with one another and the partners' plan to effectively collaborate through this program. (no more than 500 words)
- g. The current state of the coaction partners' engagement and collaboration with community stakeholders (including industry partners and institutions of higher education) and the partners' plan to expand upon that engagement through this program. (no more than 500 words)
- h. A description (including the role to be played) of the key stakeholders (including Rural Coaction Coach, institutions of higher education, and industry partners) engaged in the development and implementation of the proposed programs. (no more than 500 words)
- i. A description of the coaction partners sustainability plan for the created/expanded student career pathways and/or career-connected learning opportunities including, but not limited to, how they will leverage other, ongoing funding sources and whether the partners anticipate applying for a pathway under the Perkins Act. (no more than 500 words)
- j. A description of how the coaction partners' plan addresses any of the other priority considerations not discussed in earlier sections. (no more than 500 words)

How many rural students do the coaction partners anticipate will be served annually by this coalition of LEPs/BOCES during the grant period?



Budget Workbook

Complete and upload the Excel Budget Workbook to the online application. Ensure that all costs included in the budget are linked to the program plan within the narrative for funding.

How to submit your budget:

1. [Download Excel Budget Workbook](#).
2. Click **Choose File** to select the file you want to upload - *Excel format please*.
3. Click **Upload** to attach the file to your application.

Budget file upload *

No file chosen

Files must be less than **2 MB**.

Allowed file types: **xls xlsx xlsxm**.



Program Assurances

Complete and upload the Program Assurances Form to the online application.

How to submit:

1. [Download the Program Assurances Form](#)
2. Click **Choose File** to select the file you want to upload - *Word or PDF format please.*
3. Click **Upload** to attach the file to your application.

Program Assurances file upload *

No file chosen

Files must be less than **2 MB**.

Allowed file types: **pdf doc docx**.

Questions?

Program Questions:

Christina Monaco, Office of Field Services
(303) 981-6513 | Monaco_C@cde.state.co.us

Budget/Fiscal Questions:

Allisha Cody, Office of Grants Fiscal
(303) 919-2413 | Cody_A@cde.state.co.us

Application Process Questions:

Kim Burnham, Competitive Grants and Awards
(720) 607-1495 | Burnham_K@cde.state.co.us