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## **DCA Now Accepting Applications for School Regionalization Efficiency Program**

*Grants Help School Districts to Conduct Feasibility Studies to Explore Merging with  
Neighboring Communities*

**TRENTON, NJ** – The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) today announced that its Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) is now accepting applications from public school districts and eligible governing bodies for School Regionalization Efficiency Program (SREP) funding. The grant program covers eligible costs associated with feasibility studies that explore how school districts could merge, including forming countywide and regional school districts, and if a potential merger would result in cost savings or other efficiencies and benefits to students and taxpayers.

“School regionalization in New Jersey is moving forward, with more and more districts taking advantage of the School Regionalization Efficiency Program grants offered through the Division of Local Government Services,” **said DCA Commissioner Jacquelyn A. Suárez.** “These grants allow public school districts an opportunity to explore potential regionalization outcomes that can provide the best possible education for students while at the same time ensuring cost savings for taxpayers. We look forward to continued conversations with school district officials to help their initiatives move forward.”

“The School Regionalization Efficiency Program offers a valuable opportunity for districts to consider how regionalization can strengthen and expand educational offerings for their students,” **said Acting Department of Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer.** “By encouraging districts to explore these pathways, we aim to improve school operations and enhance resources and services available to students. Through regionalization, communities can create new educational and extracurricular opportunities for students, support seamless academic progression, and improve outcomes across grade levels.”

New Jersey boards of education of local school districts, consolidated school districts, and non-operating school districts, and boards of education of a limited purpose or all-purpose regional districts are eligible to apply for grant funding. Governing bodies of school districts that do not have a board of education, or a municipality constituting part of a consolidated

school district, and the governing body of a municipality constituting a constituent district of a limited purpose or all-purpose regional district, are also eligible to receive SREP grant funding.

Funding is available to support K-12 regionalization and countywide school district consolidation studies for the following three types of projects:

1. **Preliminary approval** feasibility studies to form an all-purpose regional district by expanding an existing limited-purpose regional district through consolidation with some or all the constituent or sending school districts, or to form a countywide school district.
2. **Newly proposed** feasibility studies for school district regionalization and those studies in the process of being conducted.
3. **Previously conducted** feasibility studies for school district regionalization completed within two (2) years prior to the enactment of P.L. 2021 c. 133 on June 29, 2021.

All feasibility study projects seeking SREP funding must meet the following criteria:

- Reflect the potential for meaningful and implementable regionalization plans to advance an enhanced learning environment for participating school districts;
- Coordinate curriculum across schools and grades throughout the proposed consolidation/regionalization;
- Reflect the potential for improved efficiency and cost savings;
- Demonstrate that the proposed regionalization does not, and is not foreseeably likely to, increase or exacerbate the segregation of students by racial, socioeconomic, disability, or English language learner status as determined by the number and percentage of students enrolled in the school districts seeking to consolidate or, as applicable, in the school districts from which a school district is seeking to withdraw;
- Lead to the establishment of a limited purpose or all-purpose regional district to the maximum extent practicable;
- Consolidate school districts that are in close geographic proximity of each other; and
- Reflect a documented commitment from participating boards of education, and municipal governing bodies to make good faith efforts to implement study recommendations and subsequent execution of a regionalization plan that promotes efficiency and quality of education.

Factors like enrollment, facility utilization, contiguous districts with small enrollment, existing send/receive relationships, administrative staffing, class size, diversity

enhancement, debt and contractual obligations, faculty needs and attrition, and other factors will be evaluated in the feasibility studies.

The amount awarded for any school consolidation feasibility study may account for up to 100 percent of study costs, depending upon application quality and outcome.

Once a study has been completed, the school districts may follow through with service sharing agreements but are not obligated to do so.

This is a rolling application process, and applications must be submitted through the DCA SAGE Portal at <https://dcasage.intelligrants.com/portal.asp>. It is recommended that applications be submitted as soon as possible due to SREP funding availability in the FY 2025 state budget appropriation.

For further details, the program guidelines and application are posted at [https://www.nj.gov/dca/dlgs/programs/srep\\_grants.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/dca/dlgs/programs/srep_grants.shtml) on the DCA website. To request information about SREP grants, school district officials can email [DLGS.SREPGRANT@dca.nj.gov](mailto:DLGS.SREPGRANT@dca.nj.gov). For information on shared services more broadly, they can email [sharedservices@dca.nj.gov](mailto:sharedservices@dca.nj.gov).

DLGS serves as an advocate for local government interests and provides technical and financial assistance in budgeting, financial reporting, joint services, purchasing, and management issues. It is responsible for the financial integrity of all local government units and reviews and approves all municipal, county, and fire district budgets. The Division also reviews many local government financial actions and governs and guides the conduct of local government officials.

DCA offers a wide range of programs and services, including local government management and finance, affordable housing production, fire safety, building safety, community planning and development, disaster recovery and mitigation, and information privacy.

For more information about DCA, visit <https://nj.gov/dca/> or follow the Department on social media:



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