



Career and Technical Education Program Expansion Grants

Final Guidelines

**Securing Our Children's Future Bond Act
P.L. 2018, c. 119**

October 2020

Revised March 2026

New Jersey Department of Education
P.O. Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625-0500

Final Guidelines

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Career and Technical Education Program Expansion Grants Securing Our Children’s Future Bond Act

The New Jersey Department of Education (“NJDOE”), in consultation with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, is issuing these Final Guidelines to provide information concerning the upcoming grant program to increase career and technical education (“CTE”) program capacity in county vocational school districts (“CVSDs”) as authorized by the Securing Our Children’s Future Bond Act, P.L. 2018, c.119 (“Bond Act”).

This document provides guidance to CVSDs as they plan to apply for grants pursuant to the Bond Act. Implementing regulations have been adopted at N.J.A.C. 6A:26A-1.1 to 1.4. **The final application and corresponding final guidance (“Guidance”) will be released shortly and may be modified from these Final Guidelines.**

1. Grant Program Overview

1.1 Description of Grant Program

The Bond Act provides \$350 million in grants for eligible projects that expand CTE programs in CVSDs and enhance school security in all school districts. Of the \$350 million, \$275 million has been allocated for use by CVSDs to fund school facilities construction projects that support CTE program expansion in accordance with labor market demands and economic development goals.

1.2 Summary of Key Considerations

Grant Objective	To increase district capacity to offer CTE programs to prepare students for high demand, technically skilled careers aligned with labor market demands
Eligible Entities	County vocational school districts (CVSDs)
Eligible Facilities	District-owned school buildings and leased school buildings with lease terms as described in Section 1.4 of these Final Guidelines
Eligible Work	Renovation of existing square footage to increase the number of student seats; New construction, such as a building addition, or stand-alone building, to increase the number of student seats; Physical plant upgrades needed to support the conversion of existing space to support an eligible CTE program or a building addition that increases the number of student seats; The purchase and installation of furniture and equipment, including technology, in new, renovated, or reassigned spaces; Site improvements related to CTE program expansion; or Demolition of non-instructional buildings, or portions of buildings, to accommodate new construction that increases the number of student seats.
Work Ineligible for Consideration	Site acquisition, including to expand an existing site; Building system upgrades and improvements not related to CTE program expansion; Building additions in which the total proposed net square footage of CTE classrooms, including adjacent support spaces serving the classroom, is less than 75 percent of the total net square footage of the proposed construction; Demolition that results in a net loss of CTE student seats; Improvements to leased buildings, except where the criteria found at Section 1.4 of these Final Guidelines is met; Costs incurred prior to the signing of a fully executed grant agreement; and Costs of professional consultants whose services are not incurred as part of the construction represented in the grant application.
Total Grant Allocation	\$275M

Funding Distribution	Competitive based on scoring rubric and geographic region; Grant applications will be divided into two groups based on estimated costs: smaller projects of \$25 million or less (“Small Projects”) and large projects (“Large Projects”) exceeding \$25 million. Grants for Large Projects will not exceed \$40M grant per project in a total of 4 districts (\$160M maximum); Grants for Small Projects will not exceed \$18.75M per project in at least 6 districts (\$115M maximum)
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1.3 Eligibility to Apply

The CTE program expansion grant program is open to all CVSDs. CVSDs may submit one application for each non-contiguous school campus.

1.4 Eligibility Criteria

CVSDs may request grant funding to increase district capacity to offer CTE programs to prepare students for high demand, technically skilled careers aligned with labor market demands and economic development goals. Eligible scopes of work are identified in Section 2.2, Eligible Construction Scopes of Work, of these Final Guidelines.

Leased school facilities are eligible for grants if (1) the lessor is a public entity, such as a school district or county college, (2) the term of the lease agreement is for a minimum of 20 years and has an end date no earlier than June 30, 2044 or 20 years from the date of execution of the grant agreement, whichever is later. and (3) the CVSD is authorized to make the improvements represented in the grant application.

1.5 Grant Award Structure and Prioritization Criteria

A maximum of \$160 million is allocated to fund Large Projects exceeding \$25 million. No more than four large projects will be approved. Each Large Project selected for an award will be funded at **75% of total estimated project costs up to a maximum of \$40 million** per Large Project. Should the four Large Projects be awarded a total of less than \$160 million, the unallocated funds may be held in reserve for a future round of grant funding and/or reassigned to the Small Project group.

The demand for CTE program grant funding is anticipated to exceed the \$275 million grant allocation. In support of New Jersey’s goal of opening a significant number of new CTE seats in high demand industry CTE programs across the State of New Jersey (State), all applications will be ranked based on the extent to which the applications address grant program requirements and priorities. This includes the extent to which the project proposes CTE programs that address or involve equitable access, collaboration with county colleges or employers, industry-valued credentials, the ability for students to earn college credits, apprenticeship programs, and innovative technologies, schedules, teaching methodologies, and partnerships. (See Section 4.4, Program Objectives, for additional information.) Consideration will also be given to geographic location to ensure student capacity is increased throughout the State.

1.6 Important Dates

Per Section 4f of the Bond Act, a comprehensive list of projects eligible for grant funding must be presented to the New Jersey State Legislature for approval and enactment of the appropriations for the grants. Therefore, applications must be submitted within a fixed time period for NJDOE review and approval.

Applications will *not* be accepted before or after the application period. At this time, there are no accommodations should a CVSD miss the submission deadline. Additional information for each round of funding for this grant program will be provided in Notices of Grant Opportunity.

NJDOE Office of School Facilities project applications and Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) amendments that include the proposed projects are required as part of the grant application. Both school facilities project applications and LRFP amendments are encouraged to be submitted prior to the start of the grant application period. See Section 4.5 and Section 4.6 of these Final Guidelines for additional information.

2. Project Guidelines and Eligibility Requirements

2.1 Bond Act Requirements

Applications must be consistent with the criteria described below to be considered for grant funding. **All requirements must be met, or the application will be deemed ineligible.**

- The proposed project has a commitment for the required matching funds, demonstrated by a resolution signed by the CVSD's Board of Education President and the Chairperson of the County Board of Chosen Freeholders.
- The proposed project increases the number of students in CTE programs and academic opportunity by expanding or offering new CTE programs.
- The new student seats are in CTE programs that prepare students for high demand, technically skilled careers in accordance with demonstrated county needs, aligned with labor market demands or economic development goals, in the following key industry clusters:
 - Construction and energy;
 - Finance;
 - Health care;
 - Leisure and hospitality;
 - Life sciences;
 - Manufacturing;
 - Retail trade;
 - Technology; and
 - Transportation, distribution and logistics.
- The proposed project meets the objectives of the grant program outlined at N.J.A.C. 6A:26A-2.1 and in section 4.4 of these Final Guidelines.

2.2 Eligible Construction Scopes of Work

All proposed school facilities improvements must directly support the addition of new student seats in CTE programs. Eligible scopes of work may include:

- The renovation of existing building square footage to increase the number of student seats;
- New construction of a building addition or standalone building to increase the number of student seats;
- Physical plant upgrades needed to support the conversion of existing space to support an eligible CTE program or a building addition that increases the number of student seats;

- The purchase and installation of furniture and equipment, including technology, in new, renovated, or reassigned spaces;
- Site improvements related to CTE program expansion; and
- The demolition of non-instructional buildings or portions of buildings to accommodate new construction that increases the number of student seats.

2.3 Ineligible Construction Scopes of Work

In order to maximize and expedite the creation of new student seats, the scopes of work listed below are ineligible for grant funding consideration. **The inclusion of ineligible work in an application will disqualify the entire application.** Applicants may submit a separate “other capital” project application to the Department’s Office of School Facilities to address work that is ineligible for grant consideration.

Scopes of work ineligible for grant consideration include:

- Site acquisition, including to expand an existing site;
- Building system upgrades and improvements *not* related to CTE program expansion;
- Building additions in which the total proposed net square footage of CTE classrooms, including adjacent support spaces serving the classroom, is less than **75%** of the total net square footage of proposed construction;
- Demolition that results in a net loss of CTE student seats;
- Improvements to leased facilities *except* where (1) the lessor is a public entity, such as a school district or county college, (2) the term of the lease agreement is no less than 20 years and has an end date no earlier than June 30, 2044 or 20 years from the date of execution of the grant agreement, whichever is late, and (3) the school district is authorized to make the improvements represented in the grant application;
- Costs incurred prior to the signing of a fully executed grant agreement; and
- Costs of professional consultants whose services are not incurred as part of the construction represented in the grant application.

3. Application Procedures

3.1 Number of Permissible Applications

Districts may submit one grant application for each school campus. A school campus is defined as a parcel of land that is non-contiguous with other properties serving district students. One campus may accommodate one or more schools in one or multiple buildings, and the grant application may address all or select schools and buildings on the campus.

Although districts are permitted to submit one grant application for each school campus, the number of grants awarded to a single district is limited. Refer to Section 5.3, Award and Allocation Criteria, of these guidelines for detailed information.

3.2 Application Format

A grant application for each school campus will consist of:

- An electronic submission of a complete application and document uploads accessed through NJDOE [Homeroom](#);

- A complete project application for Schematic Submission to the Department’s Office of School Facilities; and
- A Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) amendment using the [LRFP reporting system](#) that accurately represents the proposed work.

Detailed descriptions of the reporting requirements are provided in Section 4 of these guidelines. Please also refer to the grant application instructions for more information.

3.3 Application Deadline

The NJDOE administers discretionary grant programs in strict conformance with procedures designed to ensure accountability and integrity in the use of public funds. Therefore, late applications will not be accepted.

4. Application Components

4.1 Application Reporting Considerations

To apply for a CTE program expansion grant, applicants must prepare and submit a complete application as described in this section. Before preparing an application, applicants are advised to carefully review Section 2, Project Guidelines and Eligibility Information, to ensure a full understanding of the state’s vision and purpose for offering the grant program and the specific requirements to be addressed.

4.2 Certification of Eligibility

To submit a grant application, the applicant must confirm the application meets the eligibility requirements set forth in Section 2, Project Guidelines and Eligibility Requirements, by completing a Certification of Eligibility checklist. The application will only be eligible for grant consideration if the applicant can certify all requirements are met.

4.3 Project Description

Provide a brief description (250-300 words) of the proposed school facilities project and how it supports CTE program expansion in accordance with labor market demands and economic development goals and how it will implement the program to diverse student groups. Include a general description of the proposed construction and the resulting new CTE programs and student capacity. Proposed changes to existing CTE programs and student capacity as a result of the proposal should also be addressed.

4.4 Program Objectives

Describe the extent to which the application addresses the objectives of the grant program as outlined below. Each objective should be addressed separately, as applicable, and be consistent with the application. Applications are not required to respond to each objective to be eligible for grant consideration, but the extent to which proposals achieve the objectives will be considered in the rubric scoring as described in Section 5.3, Award and Allocation Criteria, of these guidelines.

- **Equitable Access:** Describe how the district plans to identify, recruit, enroll, and support students with a disability, English language learners, economically disadvantaged students, students preparing for nontraditional fields, homeless students, students placed in a resource family home, and students whose parent or guardian has been ordered into active military service in the United States Armed Forces. The plan description should ideally include at a minimum:

- A data analysis of students served, including a baselines, trends and gaps, and county demographics;
 - Targets for annual increases in representation of student populations identified as underserved and aimed at programs that reflect county demographic data;
 - Research-based strategies for effectively assembling and communicating with students and families in the identified subgroups, including when and where the county vocational school district anticipates making the communications; and
 - A value proposition that promotes CTE generally and the new program(s) specifically.
- **Collaboration:** Describe the extent to which the school district will establish or expand partnerships with one or more county colleges or employers to expand the program’s impact by offering activities or courses that build career awareness or technical employability skills for students or that develop the professional capacity of educators to teach CTE courses. The proposal should minimally include:
 - Letters of interest submitted by one or more interested partners;
 - Details concerning the grade levels and anticipated number of students to be served through the partnership;
 - Details on the partnership including the frequency and duration of the program or events and the organizational structure for communication and delivery; and
 - A description of the process by which the school district engaged employers to identify workforce needs.
 - **Industry-Valued Credentials:** If applicable, describe programs that lead to a NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) valued credential in a high demand sector, and how the proposed project delivers program(s) that support the student groups listed in the equitable access program objective to earn one or more industry-valued credential. The proposal should minimally explain:
 - How the program (or a part of the program) is aligned to an industry-valued credential; and
 - How the curriculum will promote success for all students in obtaining the industry-valued credential.
 - **College Credits:** Describe the extent to which the proposed project allows students to earn college credits up to and including an associate degree in a priority industry cluster and that are free of charge to economically disadvantaged students. The proposal should minimally include:
 - A sustainability plan that funds college credits for economically disadvantaged students enrolled in the program; and
 - A partnership agreement with an accredited two or four-year institution of higher education.
 - **Apprenticeship:** Describe the extent to which the proposed project identifies an industry partner that is currently operating, or will operate, an approved, registered apprenticeship

program and is willing to work with a school to offer a pre-apprenticeship model for students. The proposal should minimally include the following:

- A signed letter of interest by an industry partner and county college partner, as applicable;
 - A description of the current or planned pre-apprenticeship model to be offered with the industry partner;
 - The estimated number of students who would be able to participate in the apprenticeship program;
 - A clearly developed plan for the cost of student participation such as student transportation, supplies, materials and access to support services. A sustainability plan beyond the grant period should be included in the narrative; and
 - A specific and detailed plan for student transition to directly enter a registered apprenticeship program from a pre-apprenticeship program.
- **Innovation:** Describe in detail the extent to which the proposed project will deliver program(s) that leverage innovative technologies, schedules, teaching methodologies, and partnerships to provide authentic learning experiences in in-demand industries that are accessible to and engaging for 21st century learners.

4.5 School Facilities Project Application – Schematic Submission

A complete “other capital” project application for Schematic Submission must be submitted in accordance with NJDOE Office of School Facilities (OSF) policies and procedures. Project application requirements and other useful information can be found on the OSF’s [Project Application webpage](#). **Please note that the estimated project costs represented in the project application will establish the maximum award should the application be approved for grant funding.** “Other capital” project approval from the OSF does not indicate grant approval. Notification of grant approval will be issued separately.

Important OSF Project Application Considerations:

1. Project applications, following standard OSF policies and procedures, can be submitted to the OSF prior to the start of the grant application period and will be reviewed in the order received. **It is highly recommended that districts submit project applications to the OSF as early as possible to ensure complete and approvable submissions.**
2. The project application should be limited to the work proposed in the grant application and must not include work that is ineligible for grant approval as described in Section 2.3. A district may submit a *separate* project application to the OSF for ineligible work.
3. The project should be represented as an “**Other Capital Project**” in the project application.
4. If the grant application for one project impacts more than one school (two schools share one building or are located on one site), contact the OSF for guidance on how to structure the project application.
5. The proposed work must be represented in a Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) approved within the last 5 years.

4.6 Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) Amendment

The proposed project must be accurately represented in the district’s approved Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP) using the LRFP Reporting System. In particular, the LRFP’s “Existing Room Inventory Report” and “Proposed Room Inventory Report” should be carefully reviewed for the school(s) represented in the grant application to ensure that:

- Room names and square footages represented in the LRFP exactly match the room names and square footages displayed on the floor plans for both existing and proposed rooms;
- The proposed scope of work (new construction, room reassignment, demolition, etc.) listed for each room in the LRFP exactly matches the proposed work represented in the project application floor plans and cost estimate worksheet; and
- “District Practices Capacity” calculated in the LRFP room inventory reports is consistent with capacity representations elsewhere in the grant application.

The room types, square footages, and capacity represented in the LRFP’s “Proposed Room Inventory Report” must be consistent with all grant submission components, including the schematic floor plans and cost estimate submitted to the OSF as part of the project application. Coordination issues may result in the application failing to meet eligibility requirements for grant consideration.

It is highly recommended that each district immediately begin the LRFP amendment process if an amendment is needed. Refer to the NJDOE’s [Office of School Facilities webpage](#) for detailed guidance on how to access and use the LRFP reporting system and the [Major Amendment Guidelines](#) for step by step instructions.

Please note that county vocational school districts are not required to submit enrollment projections, since enrollments are capacity based. Proposed school capacities represented in the LRFP will be confirmed by NJDOE’s Office of Career and Technical Education as part of the grant application review process.

4.7 Leased Facilities

If grant funding is being requested for a leased facility, submit:

- The lease agreement, or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) pending the execution of a lease agreement or an addendum, which stipulates that (1) the lessor is a public entity, such as a school district or county college, (2) the term of the lease is no less than 20 years and has an expiration date is no earlier than June 30, 2044, and (3) the school district is authorized to make the improvements represented in the grant application; and
- A resolution adopted by the district board of education that includes an acknowledgment that, upon termination of the lease by either party prior to June 30, 2044, the school district shall be required to return a pro rata share of the CTE program expansion grant to the Department.

4.8 County Board of Freeholders and District Board of Education Resolutions

A County Board of Freeholders resolution and a District Board of Education resolution, signed by the Board President, approving the following is required:

- The submission of the grant application; and

- Funding for the district’s local share based on the estimated projects costs represented in the project application, including a contingency in the event of cost overruns.

5. Application Review and Award Information

5.1 Eligibility Review

The NJDOE reserves the right to reject any application not in conformance with the requirements of the grant program. Only those applications that adhere to the project eligibility guidelines described in Section 2 of these guidelines and fulfill all submission requirements outlined in Section 4 will be awarded grants.

5.2 Priority Rubric

The grants will be awarded on a competitive basis based on a rubric of program objectives and construction considerations that support New Jersey’s goal of expanding CTE program capacity throughout the state in accordance with labor market demands.

Evaluators will use the criteria described in this section to review and rate the application according to how well the application addresses grant program priorities.

5.2.1 Application Quality (10 points total)

The extent to which the application addresses the reporting requirements and presents a clear, realistic, and well-thought out proposal to address the goals of the grant program will be assessed.

5.2.2 Program Objectives (41 points total)

The extent to which the application addresses the program objectives listed below will be evaluated. The highest scoring responses for each objective will address all elements described in Section 4.4, Program Objectives.

5.2.2.1 Equitable Access (10 points): The district presents a targeted and achievable plan for identifying, recruiting, enrolling, and supporting students with a disability, English language learners, economically disadvantaged students, students preparing for nontraditional fields, homeless students, students placed in a resource family home, and students whose parent or guardian has been ordered into active military service in the United States Armed Forces.

5.2.2.2 Collaboration (11 points): The district has established partnerships with one or more county colleges or employers to expand the grant program’s impact by offering activities or courses that build career awareness or technical employability skills for students or that develop the professional capacity of educators to teach CTE courses.

5.2.2.2.1.1 Industry-Valued Credentials (5 points): The district’s proposal leads to a NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD) industry-valued credential in a high demand sector, and the proposed project delivers program(s) that support the student groups listed in the equitable access program objective to earn one or more industrial-valued credential.

5.2.2.2.2 **College Credits (5 points):** The proposal allows students to earn college credits up to and including an associate degree in a priority industry cluster and that are free of charge to economically disadvantaged students.

5.2.2.2.3 **Apprenticeship (5 points):** The proposed project identifies an industry partner that is currently operating, or will operate, an approved, registered apprenticeship program and is willing to work with a school to offer a pre-apprenticeship model for students.

5.2.2.2.4 **Innovation (5 points):** The proposed project will deliver program(s) that leverage innovative technologies, schedules, teaching methodologies, and partnerships to provide authentic learning experiences in in-demand industries that are accessible to and engaging for 21st century learners.

5.3 Construction Considerations (24 points total)

The degree to which the proposed school facilities project efficiently addresses the grant program objectives will be evaluated. The evaluation will be based on data provided in the NJDOE’s LRFP reporting system and the school facilities project Schematic Submission. Geographic location and CTE program types will be considered.

5.3.1.1 **CTE Classroom Square Footage (8 points):** The net square feet proposed for new CTE classrooms, including support spaces directly accessible from the classroom, will be compared to the total net square feet proposed to be renovated or constructed new in the grant application. Applications with higher percentages of CTE classroom square footage receive additional scoring consideration.

5.3.1.2 **Square Feet per Student (New CTE Program Capacity) (8 points):** The ratio of the total square footage to be renovated and/or constructed new relative to the proposed CTE program capacity will be calculated for each application and compared to applications in the same or similar industry cluster or group. Projects that most efficiently increase student capacity and minimize new construction will receive higher scores.

5.3.1.3 **Cost per Student (New CTE Program Capacity) (8 points):** The ratio of total proposed project costs relative to proposed new CTE program capacity will be calculated for each application and compared to applications in the same or similar industry cluster group, and in the same geographic group as listed in Section 5.3. Projects that most efficiently increase student capacity and minimize construction costs will receive higher scores.

5.4 Award and Allocation Criteria

To support expanded CTE program capacity throughout the state, the 21 CVSDs will be sorted into three groups based on geographic location as noted in the table below. Grants will be awarded to the applications with the highest rubric score in each group and among all districts.

Grant Geographic Groups

Group A	Group B	Group C
Atlantic	Hunterdon	Bergen
Burlington	Mercer	Essex
Camden	Middlesex	Hudson

Group A	Group B	Group C
Cape May	Monmouth	Morris
Cumberland	Ocean	Passaic
Gloucester	Somerset	Sussex
Salem	Union	Warren

For applications proposing Large Projects exceeding \$25 million, four grants to four different county vocational districts will be awarded as follows:

- Three grants will be awarded to the highest-ranking eligible project in each geographic group, based on the rubric of priorities.
- The fourth large project grant will be awarded to the next highest scoring eligible applicant, without regard to geographic location.

For applications proposing Small Projects of \$25 million or less, a minimum of six grants to six different districts will be awarded to eligible applicants as follows:

- The two highest-ranking projects in each geographic group based on the rubric of priorities will be awarded grants.
- If funds remain, additional grants will be awarded based solely on the score earned on the rubric of priorities, regardless of geographic location.
- A district may be awarded multiple small project grants if the total cost of the projects is less than \$25 million.

Districts that are awarded a large project grant are ineligible for a small project grant award, although they may submit applications for consideration should they not be selected for a large project award.

5.5 Grant Funding

For Small Projects, approved grants will fund 75% of total project costs. For Large Projects, approved grants will fund 75% of total project costs up to a maximum of \$40 million. The remaining costs will be borne by the county vocational school district and not be raised through the cost of tuition charged to sending school districts.

The grant amount will be capped as a maximum, not-to-exceed, award at the time of approval based on the cost estimate worksheet included in the project application to the NJDOE’s Office of School Facilities.

Requests for additional funding will not be considered. Therefore, project cost over-runs will be borne by the district. If the project scope of work must be revised to meet budget constraints based on updated cost estimates as the project advances through construction documentation or after construction bids are received, the school district may reduce the cost of the project through value engineering and square footage reductions that do not impact proposed CTE student seats or change the rubric score of the application to the extent that the recalculated score is lower than a project proposed by a school district that did not receive a grant. All changes must be approved by the Commissioner.

Should a district be unable to provide the local share due to higher than estimated costs, the grant will be awarded to the next eligible application based on the rubric of priorities.

6. Grant Award and Other Information

6.1 Grant Agreement Offer Letter

If the grant application meets all terms and conditions and receives the required approvals, a grant offer agreement letter will be issued for the district's acceptance. After the agreement is fully executed, project funding will commence. Per the regulations at N.J.A.C. 6A:26A-2.1(d)6, costs incurred prior to execution of the grant agreement are ineligible for grant funding.

6.2 Updates to Draft Application Guidelines

The NJDOE reserves the right to modify these guidelines prior to the issuance of each Notice of Grant Opportunity.

6.3 Questions

Comments and questions concerning these guidelines may be emailed to CTEgrant@doe.nj.gov.