



## Community Connectors Grant Information

### Goal of the grant

Community Connectors is one of the key education reforms signed into law by Gov. John R. Kasich in June 2014. Its goal is to bring together parents, community organizations, faith or values based organizations, as defined below, businesses and others to support Ohio's schools and mentor students. Students in grades 5-12 will benefit from these programs. A grant may serve students in one or more grade levels.

Community Connectors provides \$10 million in lottery profits in 3-to-1 matching grants. The grants will help give more Ohio students access to role models who can help motivate and inspire them. As importantly, they will help students develop skills that lead to success in school and the workplace. The maximum award per application is \$100,000 over one year.

Community Connector grantees will carry out the five core principles of the program:

1. Setting Goals to be Prepared for the 21st Century Careers;
2. Building Character;
3. Developing Pathways to Achievement;
4. Building a Sense of Resiliency;
5. Believing in a Positive Future.

### Who can apply for a grant?

Nonprofit entities, faith or values based organizations, houses of worship, community nonprofits and nonprofit entities associated with for-profit businesses are eligible. If the lead applicant is a community nonprofit or nonprofit associated with a for-profit business, a faith or values based organization **must be included** as a partner. Additionally, a community business partner must be included on every application.

### For the Community Connectors grant, what types of organizations fulfill the "faith-based" requirement?

A faith-based organization eligible to be an applicant's faith-based partner is any organization whose mission is based on the belief that every child's life has a purpose and that instilling values such as hard work, discipline and personal responsibility are necessary for ensuring that purpose is fulfilled. While faith or religion may be the basis for this belief, a group does not have to be affiliated with an organized religion or faith tradition to be considered a faith-based partner. Secular, non-religious, values-driven organizations also qualify. What is most important, and necessary to meet the faith-based organization requirement, is a dedication to children that is focused on finding the worth of each child, ensuring the child understands and absorbs that worth, and harnessing the understanding to achieve a fulfilling life. Both faith-based and values-driven organizations that are not religiously affiliated may use the signed Nature of Partnership Agreement to explain how their missions are based on finding and developing a purpose for each child's life.



Examples of collaborations:

- If your organization is a community nonprofit, you will need three additional entities. These must be a school district, a faith or values based organization, or house of worship and a business. If the lead applicant is a faith or values based organization or house of worship, there must be two additional partners. These are a school district and business.
- Nonprofit organizations from the faith or values based, business and civic communities are eligible **to lead** projects. They must team up with an eligible public school district, a business and a faith-based organization to establish a mentorship program.

### **Applicant Eligibility and Qualifications**

Community Connectors programs will reflect broad and deep collaborations in the community. Lead applicants will be responsible for building those collaborations among faith-based organizations, community nonprofits, the business community and school districts.

#### ***Lead applicants must meet all of these criteria to be eligible:***

- Be a nonprofit entity. Faith or values based organizations, houses of worship, community nonprofits and nonprofit entities associated with for-profit businesses are eligible. If the lead applicant is a community nonprofit or nonprofit associated with a for-profit business, a faith or values based organization **must be included** as a partner.
- Collaborate with at least one business or industry partner. Lead nonprofit organizations affiliated with for-profit companies may partner with those companies.
- The lead entity **must** partner with an eligible school district in which at least 40 percent of the student population is economically disadvantaged or has a graduation rate below 92 percent. The partnership must include a school district. However, programs can target one school within a district. Nonprofit organizations may partner with multiple eligible school districts.

### **Which districts, joint vocational school districts, STEM schools and community schools are eligible to take part?**

Programs can partner with eligible school districts in which at least 40 percent of the student population is economically disadvantaged or has a graduation rate below 92 percent. Joint vocational school districts, STEM schools and community schools, like school districts, are not eligible to be the lead applicants but can receive services under the grant. Joint vocational school districts, STEM schools and community schools are considered districts unto themselves for the purposes of this grant. You can find the list of eligible districts [here](#), charter schools [here](#) and a list of joint vocational school districts and STEM schools [here](#). All students from the eligible district, regardless of socioeconomic status, will be eligible to participate in the program.



### Can you partner with just one school within a district?

The partnership must include the school district. However, programs may choose to target one school within an economically disadvantaged or low-performing school district.

### How can Community Connectors grant dollars be spent?

A grant can spend Community Connectors dollars on grant administration, safety, training and essential supplies. Additionally, a maximum of 5 percent of your request from Community Connectors can go toward other miscellaneous costs that directly relate to the proposed program. Also, you can spend your match dollars for anything that directly relates to the proposed program and is unrelated to the approved categories.

The approved spending categories are:

1. Grant administration: Includes administrative costs associated with volunteer coordination and costs associated with mentor and mentee matching. These can be salaries and associated fringe or contracted services. Grants **may not** fund indirect costs paid at a flat rate.
2. Safety: Includes background checks for mentors and staff. Could also include CPR and First Aid training.
3. Training: Includes training for mentors and limited training for staff. All training needs to directly relate to the mentoring process. **Grant funds do not cover travel expenses for training.**
4. Essential supplies: Needed office supplies and any supplies that directly support the proposed program. This does NOT include technology and equipment expenses (hardware and software).
5. Miscellaneous costs: This can include, but is not limited to, travel expenses, T-shirts, software, admission to field trip activities, banquets and equipment expenses.

### How will the funds be disbursed?

This grant is reimbursement only. Awardees must be able to provide invoices, receipts and other documentation to receive reimbursement through the Ohio Department of Education's Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) System.

### What is the timeframe to apply and when will the grant be awarded?

- Deadline for intent to apply is April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Deadline for submission in the CCIP is April 29<sup>th</sup>
- Grants are expected to be awarded the week of June 6<sup>th</sup>
- Awardee training will be the week of June 20<sup>th</sup>
- All awardees must be ready to **implement selected programs by September 1<sup>st</sup>**