



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

General

Goal of the grant

Community Connectors is one of the key education reforms signed into law by Gov. John R. Kasich last June (2014), and seeks to bring together parents, community organizations, faith-based groups, businesses and others to support Ohio's schools and to mentor students.

Community Connectors provides \$10 million in lottery profits in 3-to-1 matching grants that will help give more Ohio students access to role models who can help motivate and inspire them, as well as help them develop skills that lead to success in school and the workplace.

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?

A nonprofit entity. Faith-based organizations, houses of worship, community nonprofits and nonprofit entities associated with a for-profit business are eligible. If the lead applicant is a community nonprofit or nonprofit associated with a for-profit business, a faith-based organization must be included as a partner.

Examples of Collaborations:

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

Eligible school districts are those in which at least 40% of the student population is economically disadvantaged or has a graduation rate below 92%. All students from the eligible district, regardless of socioeconomic status, will be eligible to participate in the program. Local partnerships will develop programs that serve students grades 5 – 12 (programs may serve students in one or more grade levels).

Applicant Eligibility & 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 *all of these criteria* to be eligible:

- Be a nonprofit entity. Faith-based organizations, houses of worship, community nonprofits, and nonprofit entities associated with a for-profit business are eligible. If the lead applicant is a community nonprofit or nonprofit associated with a for-profit business, a faith-based organization must be included as a partner.
- The lead entity **MUST** partner with an [eligible school district](#) in which at least 40% of the student population is economically disadvantaged or has a graduation rate below 92%. The partnership must include the school district; however programs can target one school within a district. Nonprofit organizations may partner with multiple school districts provided that one of the districts meets the 40% or higher economically disadvantaged student population or less than 92% graduation rate threshold.
- Collaborate with at least one business or industry partner. (Lead nonprofit organizations affiliated with for-profit companies may partner with those companies.)

What districts are considered eligible to take part?

Programs can partner with an [eligible school district](#) in which at least 40% of the student population is economically disadvantaged or has a graduation rate below 92%.

Can you partner with just one school within the 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.

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

Deadline for application submission is Friday, February 20, 2015.

- Grants are expected to be awarded March 2015.
- Assessment, planning, and training must be complete by September 2015.
- All awardees must be ready to **implement selected programs by September 2015.**

What funds are available and how will the funds be awarded?

This program has \$10 million to award from the lottery profit funds for initiatives that encourage community-led and values-driven mentoring relationships that benefit students and schools, and result in high levels of hopefulness for all involved. The maximum award is \$500,000, which will be awarded over three years. In year one the state will match up to \$3 for every \$1 local cash/in-kind investment, year two the state will match up to \$2 for every \$1 local cash/in-kind investment, and year three will be a up to \$1 state match for each \$1 local cash/in-kind investment. The local cash/in-kind contribution does not have to be constant across the three program years; however, the total grant award will not be greater than three times the local contribution.



Application FAQ

Can I submit more than one grant application?

While nothing prohibits multiple grant applications, organizations should be cognizant of the time and resources necessary for each successful program. Additionally, each application must meet the program's requirements for collaboration for each grant submitted and include all required documentation and paperwork for each submission.

Is there a word limit for the project proposal?

There is no specific word limit, but applications must be in 11-point Arial-type font, single-spaced, and submitted on the application template. There can be no more than 12 pages of text, excluding the attachments.

Can the application be worked on over several days and saved?

Yes. You can download the application. Save it to your computer's desktop, and upload it when it is complete.

Are there limitations on the use of funds?

Yes, funds must be spent in accordance with state and federal laws. Specific limitations are outlined in the Community Connectors Grant Assurances document that must be signed by each lead applicant. The program plan and budget will also serve as a limitation because programs must adhere to terms of their grant award. To the extent an applicant proposes to use funds in a manner otherwise prohibited, a grant may still be awarded on the stipulation and agreement of the lead applicant that such usage will not occur. The Department of Education will work to notify any potential applicant prior to the grant award to ensure the program is workable under such restrictions.

How do you define in-kind contribution? Are in-kind contributions allowable for the local match?

Local contributions may take the form of in-kind contributions or cash. In-kind contributions are limited to personnel time. If the personnel are currently funded by another source, the applicant must pay particular attention to all rules associated with that funding source and ensure that they are not supplanting existing funds. Cash contributions may include donated funds from applicant partners including businesses, community nonprofits, other faith-based organizations, and school districts (excluding state funds).

What supporting documents does the lead organization need to apply for the grant?

Applicants will need an IRS determination letter as proof of nonprofit status to apply. Applicants are required to submit a signed "Nature of Partnership" agreement that demonstrates collaboration, a signed Community Connectors Grant Assurances document, as well as several documents that describe specific program elements. These documents are listed in the "How to Apply" section of the application. Applicants are also encouraged to submit letters of support, copies of consent or assent forms, or previous evaluation or research studies. These documents are optional.

How many projects may a school district be a partner?

A district can partner with as many applicants as their capacity allows.



**COMMUNITY
CONNECTORS**

CommunityConnectors.Ohio.gov



The **Community Connectors Advisory Board** consists of diverse members of the faith-based, civic and community and business organizations and will advise the State Superintendent of Instruction on the awarding of grants to the lead organizations and school(s)/or school districts. [The Advisory Board](#) will review the grant applications and scoring, and make recommendations to the Superintendent of Public for the grant awards.

How do I get a copy of the application? Visit www.CommunityConnectors.Ohio.gov. All applications must be submitted by 5:00p.m., February 20, 2015.

Thank you for your interest in Ohio's innovative Community Connectors grant program.

For questions, visit: www.CommunityConnectors.ohio.gov and [register for the grant webcast](#).