

Frequently Asked Questions

FY25 FC 0726: Early Literacy Consortium Grant

Please refer to the [recording of the Information Session](#) on this grant for information about:

- The grant's purpose
- The timeline of applying and receiving funds
- Logistical considerations for those who may want to apply

Q: How do we access the application in GEM\$?

A: If your EPP or district does not already have a login, please check out: <https://mass.egrantsmanagement.com/>. You can also email or call the GEM\$ support contacts at (781) 338-6595 or EdGrants@mass.gov. Once logged in, search for the fund code: 0726.

Q: We are thinking of using the funds to [purchase HQIM, hire a vendor for professional development, hire teacher candidates as tutors, host a convening, etc]... Is this allowable?

A: As long as it aligns with the three goals and fund use categories in the RFP, then it is allowable. The only exceptions are: out-of-state travel, food, current transportation costs or other currently funded costs, or any expenditures not directly related to grant activities

Q: If we won't get grant funds until January, is it possible to start work in the fall? Or do we have to wait?

A: It will depend on when your application is approved. If awarded, grant activities from the approval date through June 30, 2025 will be covered by the grant.

Q: We have adopted [ELA K-2 Program] as our district's early literacy curriculum. Is it considered HQIM?

A: In the RFP, we define HQIM as early literacy curricular materials that are rated "Partially Meets Expectations" or "Meets Expectations" on [CURATE](#) at the time of application or rated "Green" on [EdReports](#). Additionally, if the district's core instructional materials do not include a foundational skills component, but does meet the criterion listed above, evidence-based foundational skills curricular materials must be in use as well.

Q: The RFP states that the consortium has to commit to meeting with DESE once a month. Who would need to participate in these meetings?

A: The point person for the grant would need to commit to meeting with DESE staff once a month for the duration of the grant. Other representatives from the consortium are welcome as well!

Q: How should Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) approach the process of finding districts who are well-positioned to support teacher candidates in learning about evidence-based early literacy?

A: There is not a specific DESE webpage or resource that can directly support EPPs in finding partner districts that are the “right fit.” However, here are some considerations that EPPs are able to take into account when choosing schools that they may want to bring into their consortium:

1. Will including the district strengthen existing partner schools and districts where many of the EPP’s teacher candidates are placed for field-based experiences?
2. Will including the school/district allow for the EPP to better meet the expectations outlined in the FBE and PAR domains of the *Early Literacy Program Approval Criteria*?
3. Does the partner district already use HQIM for early literacy instruction?
 - a. More information about what districts are using for curricular materials can be found on [DESE’s District Profiles Page](#). Click on the district that you are thinking of including in your partnership. Click on the side tab that says “Curriculum Data” to learn more about the materials the district is currently using.
4. Has the partner district already engaged in work to improve evidence-based early literacy instruction?
 - a. Does the school’s improvement plan include efforts to advance evidence-based early literacy?
 - b. Has the school engaged in grants such as [GLEAM](#) that aim to support improvement of evidence-based early literacy?
 - c. Does the school plan to apply for [PRISM](#) grants in the upcoming school years?

Q: How should consortia think about the sustainability of these funds? Will the grant be available in the future?

A: DESE hopes to be able to offer this grant for the next four years, pending funding.

Follow up Q: If the grant will be available, should we include information about our consortium's future plans in our application?

A: If your consortium has a strategic plan for improving literacy education that extends beyond the next school year, please include it in your application! It will help demonstrate commitment to the priorities of the grant, illuminate how this upcoming year's plans will build to something greater, and show that all partners in the consortium have come together to create a shared vision.

Q: We were awarded the consortium grant last year. Do we have to reapply with all of the same partners as last year?

A: No. Consortia that were awarded the grant in FY24 can reapply, but it is not necessary for the consortia to have all partner schools, districts, and educator preparation providers still represented. Part of the impetus for making this a competitive grant for all applicants (including those awarded in the past) was to allow consortia to self-reflect on whether or not partners were a "good fit" and all working toward the same goal.

Q: Do consortia that were awarded the grant last year have competitive priority when reapplying for FY25?

A: Yes. Partnerships established in FY23 or FY24 that have a proven track record with DESE of working towards the grant's priorities and goals will be given competitive priority when applying for FY25. For more information on competitive priorities for the consortium grant, please reference the [Early Literacy Consortium Grant RFP](#).

Q: Are there any documents we are required to upload as part of the grant application, for example an MOU with our higher ed partner?

A: No. There are no additional documents that you will be required to upload as part of the grant application. Completing the full application on GEM\$ will require the collaboration and signatures of all members within the consortium. For example, the name and signature of the leader for each member of the consortium (districts and organizations) will be required in the Grants Assurances section of the application on GEM\$.

Q: What are the key differences between a Category 2 and Category 3 applicant?

A: A category 2 applicant has established partnerships with multiple sponsoring organizations and public school districts in their region and are designing and planning to implement programming that will advance effective early literacy instruction. They are in the planning stages of planning for early literacy programming among the consortium, and looking for funding to launch the programming that has been planned.

A category 3 applicant has established partnerships with a clear, strategic plan for the consortium's work. They must be able to provide a description of the consortium's mission, an outline of the consortium's scope of work to date, and the consortium's strategic plan to be eligible for Category 3 funding. These applicants will have launched early literacy programming, and are looking for funding to continue and/or build upon the existing programming.