

REGULATION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: CND, DAA
Responsible Office: Financial Services
Management, Budget, and Planning
Chief Operating Officer
Related Source: Montgomery County Public Schools, *Strategic Planning Framework, Building Our Future Together: Students, Staff, and Community*

Seeking and Securing Federal, State, and Private Grants

I. PURPOSE

To prescribe the procedures for seeking and receiving grants within Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

II. BACKGROUND

This regulation only applies to MCPS offices, departments, divisions, and schools. The grants approval process does not extend to funds obtained and administered by parent and community groups, private nonprofit organizations and foundations, and individuals. Funds from these sources must comply with Montgomery County Board of Education Policy CND, *School-Related Fund-Raising*.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. A *grant* is an agreement with a foundation, government agency, corporation, or other external source that provides funds for a particular purpose over a definite period of time to fulfill the goals and desires of the funding source. MCPS seeks grant funding to support projects that address critical unmet needs or supplement existing programs and are consistent with the *MCPS Strategic Planning Framework, Building Our Future Together: Students, Staff, and Community*.
- B. An *MCPS-instituted grant* is a grant that is offered by MCPS or organizations working explicitly on behalf of MCPS. The Department of Financial Services will review the criteria established by MCPS divisions, departments, or organizations working explicitly on behalf of MCPS to determine if the grant program is an MCPS-instituted grant.

- C. *A restricted program financial report* is a report that must be filed annually with a grantor agency. Grants funded by the federal government directly, or by the federal government through another agency or organization always require restricted annual financial reports. Grants from the state or a nongovernmental grantor may require a restricted annual financial report at the discretion of the grantor. A nonspecific general request to inform a grantor of program results, including how funds were expended, does not constitute a restricted annual financial report.
- D. *A small grant* is a grant that is less than \$20,000, does not require restricted annual financial reporting, does not require cash or in-kind match nor a commitment of MCPS resources, and is not used to employ personnel, other than substitutes, in the schools during the regular school day.
- E. *A supported project grant* is a grant that meets one or more of the following criteria:
 - 1. Amount of grant is greater than or equal to \$20,000
 - 2. Funding source requires restricted annual financial reporting
 - 3. Grant requires cash or in-kind matching funds or commitment of MCPS resources
 - 4. Grant funds are used to employ personnel other than substitutes in schools during the school day

IV. IDENTIFYING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- A. The grants specialist does the following:
 - 1. Works closely with program staff to research appropriate funding opportunities. Funding opportunities are identified in a variety of ways, including the following:
 - a) Outreach and involvement with professional and community organizations; coordination with other school systems, county agencies, and community organizations seeking grant funding; and relationships with federal and state agencies and private funding sources
 - b) Receipt of information from MCPS personnel, including principals and program staff, who have learned of grant funding opportunities through contact with professional organizations

2. Conducts training sessions on seeking grant funding and encourages participants to develop materials and contacts which will be of assistance in the search for grant support.
- B. The grants specialist or appropriate MCPS personnel obtains the grant application or funding guidelines from the funding source.
 - C. The department or division of MCPS or the organization working explicitly on behalf of MCPS will announce availability of MCPS-instituted grants.
 - D. All grant seekers must contact the grants specialist with information about programs and projects for which grant support is desired.

V. DEVELOPING THE GRANT APPLICATION OR PROPOSAL

- A. Identifying Project Personnel
 1. The responsible administrator appoints a project manager. The project manager and the grants specialist review the terms and conditions in the application.
 - a) The project manager of a grant must be a central office staff member if the grant is for more than one school, the grant is initiated centrally, or the proposed grant award amount is greater than or equal to \$20,000.
 - b) If the grant is for a program or project at one school only and the school initiated the grant, the principal may be the project manager. The principal may delegate project management tasks to other school staff members, but the principal must retain overall project management responsibility.
 2. The project manager's responsibilities specific to the development of the application or proposal include the following:
 - a) Coordinate the involvement of program and other staff in project planning.
 - b) Prepare the grant application or proposal.
 - c) Ensure timely submission of the grant application or proposal.

d) Oversee additional project management responsibilities described in Section VII, *Implementing and Administering the Grant*.

3. The grants specialist facilitates contacts between the project manager, the funding source, and other MCPS personnel, as needed.

B. Developing the Project

1. For supported project grants, the project manager completes MCPS Form 280-60, *Approval to Submit Proposal for Grant Funding*, with guidance from the grants specialist as soon as a decision to apply has been made.

2. The project must be developed in consultation with any offices incurring project responsibilities.

3. For all grants, grant seekers must follow procedures outlined in the announcement materials and the grant application or request for proposal.

4. The project manager completes the grant application or proposal, incorporating feedback from the grants specialist and key program staff where appropriate.

5. The project manager and grants specialist may seek letters of support from individuals and/or organizations to be included in the proposal or application. These letters are reviewed during the MCPS approval process along with the final grant application or proposal.

6. The grants specialist must be consulted on any grant application or proposal intended to fund a capital improvement project or significant purchase of technology for use in the classroom.

C. Developing the Budget

1. The appropriate management and budget specialist in the Department of Management, Budget, and Planning (DMBP) provides guidance to the project manager on the development of a proposal budget that meets both MCPS regulations and funder requirements.

2. Funds from MCPS-instituted grants or small grants cannot be used to employ personnel other than substitutes in the schools during the school day.

3. No grant funds may be used to pay MCPS employees as consultants.

4. Grant funds must be budgeted to support the reporting of student information, if required by the grantor.
5. Funds may be used to support the Office of Shared Accountability (OSA), if OSA is required to conduct evaluations or provide summary information for the grant.
6. Grant funds must be budgeted to hire external evaluator(s), if required by the grantor. External evaluators are responsible for using the *Online Request for a Research Activity* system for obtaining a decision from OSA.
7. The director of DMBP ensures that cost calculations are accurate, and that fixed costs (such as audit costs and indirect expenses, where allowed) and personnel costs are included in the budget at the correct rates, as per MCPS and funder regulations.

D. Obtaining Approval

1. All small grant funds that focus on school-based programs require the approval of the principal and the associate superintendent or appropriate executive-level administrator on the grant application or proposal.
2. If the grant requires reporting of student information and/or a project evaluation, the project manager must submit the grant application or proposal to OSA for approval.
3. The project manager, with the assistance of the grants specialist, obtains the required approvals.
4. The project manager submits a copy of the grant application or proposal to DMBP.
5. The project manager consults with the grants specialist to determine who should submit the application or proposal. Special conditions apply to electronic submissions, whereby electronic submissions or updates to applications or proposals may only be sent by the grants specialist.
6. If required, the grants specialist submits a copy of the grant application or proposal to the State Single Point of Contact (as stated in Executive Order 12372).

VI. RECEIVING GRANT FUNDS

- A. The grantor must make grant checks payable to MCPS or to the school.
- B. Receiving Small Grant and MCPS-Instituted Grant Funds

Upon receipt of grant funds, the project manager does the following:

- 1. Notifies the director of DMBP of the award. DMBP maintains this information for inclusion in reports on small grants requested by the Board.
- 2. Deposits the funds in an account following the procedures in accordance with MCPS Regulation DIA-RB, *Payments for Personal Services and Reimbursements for Expenses from School Independent Activity Funds (IAFs)*.
- 3. Works with the Employee and Retiree Service Center to use and submit documents to properly pay stipends, substitutes, and related benefits.

C. Receiving Supported Project Grant Funds:

1. Budgeted Grant

The Board approves budgeted grants as part of the annual operating budget request.

2. Grant Funding Not Provided for in the Annual Operating Budget

a) Provision for Future Supported Projects

The provision for future supported projects appropriation allows MCPS to establish supported projects without having to request a supplemental appropriation from the Montgomery County Council (County Council).

- (1) To be eligible, a project must require no local matching funds now or in the future.
- (2) If a project meets criteria (1) above, the project also must meet one of the following criteria to be eligible:
 - (a) The project received grant funding the year before;
or

- (b) The project budget is within the dollar limit for future supported projects as set by the County Council (currently \$200,000 or less).
 - (3) Noncash or in-kind contributions may be considered as part of a match.
 - (4) The Board advises the County Council and the county executive in writing of each approved project.
- b) Request for Supplemental Appropriation

Grant awards that do not meet the Provision for Future-Supported Projects must be approved in advance by the County Council as well as the Board. For these projects, a request for a supplemental appropriation will be forwarded to the county executive and County Council for approval.

- 3. The appropriate management and budget specialist, with guidance from the grants specialist, prepares a Board resolution to seek authorization to receive and expend grant funds. After Board approval, the request is forwarded to the county executive and the County Council.
- 4. Once Board and County Council approval has been obtained, the project manager in cooperation with DMBP, completes MCPS Form 210-1, *Request/Authorization for Movement of Funds and/or Positions*.

VII. IMPLEMENTING AND ADMINISTERING THE GRANT

- A. For all grants, project management responsibilities include the following:
- 1. Supervise staff assigned to the project.
 - 2. Report to the associate superintendent, if applicable, on the status of the project.
 - 3. Ensure that the tasks and terms set forth in the grant are completed in accordance with the budget and timeline.
 - 4. Account for grants funds as outlined in Chapter 11, *Grants Administration*, of the *MCPS Financial Manual*.

5. Ensure that purchases follow MCPS procurement procedures as outlined in the *MCPS Procurement Manual*.
 6. Ensure the quality and timeliness of reports, including restricted program financial reports, financial statements, and other products required under the terms of the grant.
 7. Submit semiannual and annual reports about grant activities to the funder, as required, and the grants specialist. Copies of reports sent to the grants specialist must include a cover sheet indicating the name of the funder, the name of the grant, the time period of the report and the name of the project manager.
 8. Coordinate with other MCPS staff to complete required evaluations, reports, billings, and audits.
 9. Cooperate with DMBP to oversee the smooth continuation of a multiyear project and the proper termination of a completed project by ensuring that grant funds are expended or by obtaining written authorization from the funding source to extend the life of the grant.
- B. For externally funded grants the project manager ensures that the terms of the grant are not changed without the written authorization of MCPS and the funding source, informing DMBP of proposed fiscal and program changes.
- C. Unless otherwise specified, all positions funded by grants are conditional upon future grant funding. The project manager works closely with the Office of Human Resources and Development, whose staff provides guidance to temporary and permanent employees about their rights and responsibilities regarding employment with MCPS upon termination of the grant.
- D. DMBP and the Division of Controller monitor project spending during the life of the project. DMBP will provide notice of termination of a grant supported project to the project manager 90 days before the scheduled conclusion of the grant funding.

VIII. LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS THAT BENEFIT MCPS STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

MCPS may issue letters of support for proposals for projects that benefit MCPS students, families, and communities submitted by parent and community groups, private nonprofit organizations and foundations, and individuals. All letters of support will be reviewed by the grants specialist and approved by the superintendent of schools.

IX. REPORTS TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The director of DMBP reports monthly to the superintendent of schools and the Board on supported project grants. The supported project grants summary contains the source of funds, summary of the project, the grant amount, and the duration of the grant.

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