

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
REGARDING THE CAREER PATHWAYS INITIATIVE (01-RFP-004):**

Q1 The due date was March 30, 2001, when is the new deadline?

A1 The new deadline for submitting a round one application for these funds will be April 30, 2001. The deadline for round 2 application remains July 31, 2001.

Q2 Will there be a second Pre-Application meeting closer to the due date for the second round application?

A2 There is not a plan currently but we can do one depending upon the level of interest and if it is the consensus that another meeting is necessary.

Q3 What are the start and end dates for the first and second rounds of grants for Career Pathways?

A3 The time period for the each round of grants will be approximately one year. The start and end dates for the first round of grants is anticipated to be June 1, 2001 through June 30, 2002. The second round of grants is expected to be October 1, 2001 to October 31, 2002.

Q4 How many pages do you expect the application to be that is submitted? Can the department develop a five (5) page fill-in-the-blank format with short narrative to accommodate this initiative? A standard format will address several needs - - it will be more efficient for the people involved in writing the application given the tight time frame and their other responsibilities; it will lend efficiency and consistency to the review process; and it will provide an equal playing field between the largest and the smallest school districts which do not have a grant writer.

A4 There is no specified maximum or minimum number of pages for the application. However, we would consider a concise application that is responsive to all the required components of the application to be a better proposal. The department has considered the request to develop a standard format and has decided against that approach in order to provide each applicant the most flexibility to address and stress the issues most important in their application.

Q5 Is there a minimum or maximum length for the application? In fact, what is the specific format expected? Both a narrative and chart are referred to within the grant application package.

A5 See the response to question 4. There is no minimum or maximum length for the application. The evaluation committee would like the applications to be as concise as possible while still addressing all the required information. The specific format is outlined in Section IV of the application package.

Q6 *Can two schools districts work together in submitting a proposal?*

A6 It may be desirable in terms of effectiveness and efficiency for school districts to work together. Therefore, this would be encouraged. If a single proposal is submitted, all districts will be required to meet the benchmarks outlined in the application package and implement career pathways by the end of the grant period. If one school or one district does not meet the performance objectives, no school or district will receive final payment.

Q7 *Our area consists of five school districts. Can we submit five separate applications but be considered as one joint application?*

A7 If the school districts in your area are going to work together, the evaluation committee would prefer to see one application with a fiscal agent responsible for the grant. The proposal must identify the roles and activities to be undertaken by each school district and how the objectives of the grant will be attained for all the applicant school districts during the one-year grant period.

Q8 *Can local school districts combine their efforts and write one grant?*

A8 Yes.

Q9 *Grand Rapids Community College has been hearing about the Career Pathway grant. We have started developing a career pathway program here at the College. We have piloted a small group of students and we offer work-based learning experiences, mentors, etc. We were wondering if a community college could apply for this funding.*

A9 It is anticipated the grants will only be made to school districts. To the extent the local school feels there is value in including the community college in their career pathway plan, a partnership with the school district would be appropriate.

Q10 *Is an intermediate school district eligible to apply for funds under this grant?*

A10 No award will be made directly to an intermediate school district (ISD). However, an ISD can participate in the project if the local school district desires to include the ISD in their plan. This type of collaboration is encouraged.

Q11 *Can Alternative Schools apply for funds? Career Preparation guidelines say no Adult Education Programs.*

A11 These funds are not available for Adult Education Programs. However, Alternative Education programs can participate as part of the school district.

Q12 *Can group of schools/ISD or/EAGs apply?*

A12 A group of schools can apply. ISDs can apply as part of the consortium and/or can serve as a fiscal agent. However, the school districts will remain responsible for meeting the performance objectives/deliverables. The EAG cannot apply for these funds.

Q13 *Can an ISD serve as a fiscal agent for this grant if several school districts write a consortium proposal?*

A13 Yes. Must be spearheaded by staff in the districts and the districts will be held accountable for the deliverables. Performance must be achieved by all school districts submitting a joint application in order to qualify for the final 15% payment.

Q14 *Does the application have to include assurances?*

A14 The point of providing the boiler plate language in Section I of the application package, was to notify the potential grantee of the terms and conditions to which they will be held if a grant is awarded. It was not the intent of the MDCD that assurances would have to be submitted as part of the application proposal. However, please be aware that any successful applicant will be expected to comply with the assurances and all the terms and conditions.

Q15 *Where on the” www.state.mi.us/career” website is the grant application located? Upon trying to access the RFP, the message continually comes up that the site is unavailable.*

A15 The above web site should have linked to our new address, which is www.mdcd.org. However, you can go directly to the new site. At the site there is a menu down the left-hand side of the page. Select “RFP Listings,” then scroll down to “Career Pathways.”

Q16 *The RFP states on page nine (9) that “it is the intent of the MDCD that the applicant implement all six of the Career Pathways as described below”, however, included in the Standards and Benchmarks for Career Pathways (distributed by the MDCD), the standard states “Alternatives to the six Career Pathways must assure that the number of Career Pathways chosen represent the entire spectrum of careers available to students entering the workforce, reflect the full range of work requirements and reflect the full range of educational requirements.” If a school districts has implemented career pathways (but less than the six identified by MDCD) will that affect their eligibility to receive funding under this RFP process?*

A16 Yes. Priority will be given to those applicants that outline a plan to implement all six career pathways.

Q17 *Do we need to implement the six career pathways?*

A17 Yes. The department would like to see and has required all six career pathways be implemented.

Q18 *If schools have already done well in the areas specified by the grant, can they create other priorities and still qualify for the money? Otherwise, the schools are penalized for doing well.*

A18 No. The purpose of this initiative is to increase the number of career pathway schools and build capacity. We are trying to help school districts that are ready to implement career pathways fund the initiative. If your school district has already implemented career

pathways, your district is not eligible for these funds to use for other priorities. However, some consideration, although a lower priority, would be given to enhance the existing activities offered for career pathways.

Q19 *Can a district that has already partially implemented career pathways, but wants to expand the number of pathways, apply?*

A19 Yes. The optimum objective is to provide curriculum in all six career pathway areas. We are trying to build capacity across the state by initiating new sites and refining existing sites.

Q20 *What is the role of the EAG in this RFP? In our region, the EAG is very engaged and involved. Do they have any formal oversight?*

A20 The EAG does not have a formal oversight role with this project. However, the EAG is being asked to concur with the application as to its consistency with the educational goals of the Workforce Development Board's strategic plan. See response to question 26.

Q21 *Does the EAG have any input into which school districts are recommended for funding?*

A21 Unless EAG concurrence is received, an application will not be reviewed. However, the EAG is not expected to make specific funding recommendations. The school district will determine the amount for which it will apply under this grant. The MDCD will review the feasibility of the proposal and the reasonableness of the budget in relationship to the proposal. The state reserves the right to award in whole or in part. Therefore, the applicant is not guaranteed it will receive the amount requested. The maximum amount awarded will be \$150,000.

Q22 *From the information on the web site, it appears a letter of support is needed from the Career Initiative Alignment Regional Leadership Team, but not from the EAG. Is this true?*

A22 The application stated that sign-off was required of the Regional Leadership Team. At the pre-application meeting on March 9, 2001, it was made clear that sign-off was required by the EAG. The application has been amended to be clear on this point.

Q23 *How do these grants fit in with regional strategic plans?*

A23 The activities undertaken by this grant should be consistent with the educational goal outlined in the regional strategic plans.

Q24 *Do the EAG's know about this?*

A24 A letter will be sent to the EAG with a copy to the director and chair of the Workforce Development Board. We will also notify the Career Prep/Tech Prep/CTE Program.

Q25 *Why were the regions left out of this process?*

A25 It's not clear what is meant by this question. The application package stated a letter of

support was needed from the Career Initiative Alignment Regional Leadership Team. This requirement was modified to include sign-off from the local EAG.

Q26 *Does the EAG have to send a letter to endorse each school district's application? Within Berrien-Van Buren- Cass Counties, there are 37 separate school districts. Would a form letter endorsing the career pathways system be sufficient that would accompany each application within the EAG jurisdiction?*

A26 The MDCD wants the local EAG to review each application to ensure it is consistent with the educational goals of the Workforce Development Board's strategic plan. A draft letter for this purpose has been developed and is available for the EAG to use, but usage is optional. The letter has been added as Attachment A to the application package. The MDCD is hopeful that the Career Pathways contact person can assist in this effort by coordinating the applications that will be submitted to each EAG. This will reduce the number of persons and entities with which the EAG has to deal.

Q27 *Does the entire EAG have to approve? Can it just be the Executive Committee?*

A27 You should contact your local EAG to determine how they operate. In some jurisdictions the entire group may need to meet. Some EAGs may rely on the Executive Committee. In others, the chair may have the authority to sign. As was pointed out at the March 9, 2001 pre-application meeting, applicants will need to be cognizant of when the EAG meets. Applicants may want the EAG to indicate the plan is consistent with the Long Range Plan and the Strategic Plan.

Q28 *Does the Workforce Development Board (WDB) have to send a letter to endorse each school district's application? If the purpose is to assure alliance between the EAG goals and the Regional Career Pathways Plan, this can be accomplished by endorsement to that fact from the EAG, which is appointed by the WDB versus the EAG and the WDB having to sign off on the application.*

A28 No. The WDBs will not be required to sign-off on each application.

Q29 *Can Career Preparation dollars be used as match?*

A29 No. By law, career preparation dollars has it own match requirement. You may not use funds that require a match to match other funds.

Q30 *May a district use career preparation grant funds as the matching funds for the career pathway grant?*

A30 No. As stated in answer 29, career preparation funds have a match requirement by legislation. They cannot be used to match other grants.

Q31 *It was said that career preparation grant funds couldn't be used as match. Can other grant funds be used as match?*

A31 Not if they are already part of a match for another program. Ask your Business Officer and/or see Attachment B, Budget Guidelines, to the grant application package on web at www.mdcd.org under “RPF listings.”

- Q32** *Please explain more specifically what qualifies as a match. Would the following:*
- a. A portion of the counselor's salary in relation to the amount of the school year spent on pathways, EDPs, assessment, etc.*
 - b. Secretarial/clerical time as used for graduate follow up surveys, duplication of career pathways materials, filing of portfolio materials and related forms in the CA-60's.*
 - c. Salary for school-to-work coordinator position monitoring in and out of school job placements.*
 - d. A portion of teacher salaries for teachers teaching career pathway and preparation lessons as a part of a seminar since these lessons are outside their general teacher duties and specific majors and minors.*
 - e. Do we understand correctly that as teachers implement specific career pathway lessons and projects such as school stores, manufacturing projects, etc., within their regular classrooms and curriculums a portion of their salary cannot be used as a part of the district's match?*

A32 In general, the match must support the grant initiative of career pathways. The evaluation committee will review each proposed match contribution on an individual basis in order to make that determination. Therefore, please make sure an adequate explanation of the match proposed is provided in the budget narrative. As mentioned at the March 9, 2001 pre-application meeting, you should review the Budget Guidelines we have made available as Attachment B to the application package. The Budget Guidelines are consistent with the budget guidelines provided by the department for career preparation planning. Also, please consult with your business officers on this issue. In response to the specific examples:

- a. Using a portion of a counselor's salary in relation to the amount of the school year spent on pathways, EDPs, assessment, etc. is fine.
- b. Secretarial/clerical time as used for graduate follow up surveys is not appropriate; however, duplication of career pathway materials, filing of portfolio materials and related forms in the CA-60s, can be used as match.
- c. The use of the salary of the school-to-work coordinator position monitoring in and out of school job placements is not allowable match.
- d. A portion of teacher salaries for teachers teaching career pathway and preparation lessons as a part of a seminar are not appropriate as match even though these lessons are outside their general teacher duties and specific majors and minors because these activities should be mainstreamed and brought into the classroom.
- e. You are correct that teachers that implement specific career pathway lessons and projects such as school stores, manufacturing projects, etc., within their regular classrooms and curriculums cannot use a portion of their salary as a part of the district's match.

Q33 *Is there something in print that clarifies the match requirements in terms of what is allowed and what is not allowed?*

- Q33 Yes. We have provided budget guideline as Attachment B to the grant application package.
- Q34 *Since one of the goals of the district is to implement courses and projects within curricular areas teaching specific job skills, can career pathway grant money be used to fund media production and journalism curriculum requirements, specifically production equipment and publishing software?***
- A34 On page 17 of the grant application package it states funds cannot be used for equipment. Funds should be used to develop structure. Schools should be able to provide equipment and teaching materials at their own expense.
- Q35 *Can equipment purchases as mentioned in question 13 plus computers be included in the grant application? Does this require a hard match as it has in our past applications?***
- A35 No. As noted above, equipment purchases are not allowed as match. The match has to be used to directly support career pathways.
- Q36 *Can a salary for a new position be written into the grant? The duties of this position would include coordination of career pathway activities including school-to-work placements, EDP development, some assessment, etc.***
- A36 In making a responding to this question, the evaluation committee would want an explanation of how the position will be sustained after the grant has expired in order to continue systematic change. We would want to ensure the position funded through this grant would be used to supplement and not supplant existing funds. It might be possible to contract for this service rather than create a new position for this purpose.
- Q37 *There is a five percent (5%) cap on coordinating costs. Is there a cap on management?***
- A37 Yes, the 5% cap on coordination is the maximum amount for administration and management allowable under the grant.
- Q38 *In-Kind Match: For seminars that are done to a grade level, can that part be used as match?***
- A38 No. Classroom teachers' salaries cannot be used as match. Non-teaching personnel that conduct career pathway activities in a classroom can be used.
- Q39 *Who are the non-teaching staff?***
- A39 Non-teaching staff may include administrators, coordinators, secretaries, and counselors. In order to use as match, you must be able to demonstrate that they are implementing the Career Pathways activities.
- Q40 *It was said that career preparation grant funds couldn't be used as match. Can other grant funds be used as match?***

A40 Not if they are already part of a match for another program. Ask your Business Officer and/or see Attachment B, Budget Guidelines, to the grant application package on web at www.mdcd.org under “RPF listings.”

Q41 Can the monies from this grant cover the same priorities of the Career Preparation grant in order to fully fund an activity?

A41 Yes.

Q42 How might these Career Pathways funds be coordinated with the Career Preparation grants?

A42 Budget modifications to Career Preparation will be allowed to effect coordination.

Q43 Can activities introducing career pathways and implementing career exploration at the elementary level been funded through this grant?

A43 No. Because of the limited amount of funds available, this grant will focus on middle and high school activities.

Q44 How should information requested on pages 12 – 17 be incorporated into the mandated format on pages 23 – 25?

A44 The plan for addressing the tasks outlined on pages 12-17 should be provided in the work plan as discussed on page 23, Item IV-C 2 of the application package.

Q45 Should the objectives addressed on pages 10 – 12 be incorporated into the narrative?

A45 Yes. The objectives should be addressed in the narrative. The evaluation committee will want to see how the applicant plans to address the objectives.

Q46 The following appear to be duplicative entries. Do you want the same information entered in both areas of the grant?

Section IV-A states: “...List all subcontractors; include firm name and address, contact person and a complete description of work to be subcontracted. Include descriptive information concerning subcontractor’s organization and abilities.”

Section IV-C 5 states: “...List here all subcontracts; include firm name and address, contact person and complete description of work to be subcontracted. Include descriptive information concerning subcontractor’s organization and abilities.”

A46 Section IV-A is intended to provide us an overview of who is applying for the funds. We are looking for a list of all parties, including subcontractors, who will be involved in the project and a general description of the work they will perform. Section IV-C 5 is meant to be more of a technical work plan. We want a detailed description of the work the subcontractor will be performing under the grant. These sections will be modified in the application package to clarify the intent.

Q47 *Should the “current status of implementation” chart presented on pages 12 – 14 be completed and must be included as an appendix?*

A47 Yes. The applicant as a self-assessment of the current status of the applicant’s career pathway initiatives must be and submit the status chart as part of the application. In fact, as mentioned at the pre-application meeting held of March 9, 2001, the assessment will be done a total of three (3) times during the course of the grant - - 1) as part of the application; 2) with the mid-year report; and, 3) with the final report. The change in status as measured by the assessment will be part of the way the MDCCD will measure performance and progress for payment purposes.

Q48 *Are parents required to sign the EDP’s?*

A48 Yes, parents are required to sign the EDPs. See page 15 of the grant application package.

Q49 *How will these grant requests correspond with the new Career Preparation priorities for the region of EDP’s and Career Pathways?*

A49 These grant funds should be used in conjunction with career preparation funds to advance the use of EDPs and career pathways.

Q50 *Do all EDP components need to be completed by the end of 8th grade?*

A50 No. The EDP should be initiated during middle school but all components do not need to be completed until the end of high school or beyond.

Q51 *Do you have any suggestions how small districts can be assisted to write grants?*

A51 Small districts might work with the career preparation coordinator and/or collaborate with other parties. Another way might be to have smaller district work in partnership with larger districts and/or their ISD.

Q52 *It took a long time for Career Preparation revisions to be approved because staff didn’t fully understand the concept. Will the reviewers assigned to career pathways be well versed?*

A52 The department is committed to make sure staff assigned to the evaluation committee are knowledgeable about career pathways. If necessary, the department will provide in-service training to bring all reviewers up to a minimum level of understanding in order to be able to streamline the process and effectively evaluate the applications.

Q53 *Will my district be at a disadvantage if we wait to apply for round 2?*

A53 That is not anticipated.

Q54 *How will money be divided between rounds 1 & 2?*

A54 No specific breakdown between the rounds has been determined.

Q55 *Will there be a rubric to assign points?*

A55 No. The selection criteria listed in the grant will be weighted in the priority order identified in the revised grant application package posted on the web. Awards will be made to the most responsive and responsible proposal that provide the State the best value given the applications received.

Q56 *Is the second round of applications open only to those entities that applied the first round but did not receive funding? Or are new applicants, who have not applied, eligible to apply in July?*

A56 The second round of funding is open to new and previous applicants.

Q57 *If all the money is used up in the first round, will people be notified?*

A57 Yes. Notification can be checked on the department's web site.

Q58 *When will questions and answers be available on the web?*

A58 The intent would be to post the responses within 7 to 10 business days of this meeting.

Q59 *Can the website post an example of a PERT-type chart?*

A59 Yes. See Attachment C to the application package.

Q60 *Why do the subcontractors have to be identified ahead of time?*

A60 It is a time/implementation issue. The evaluation team will want to know that the subcontractors have already agreed to do the work. We don't want to provide a grant and then find that the parties are not ready to begin implementation because they cannot find someone with the skills or time to work on the project.

Q61 *Is this initiative truly competitive or is the goal to spread grants around the State?*

A61 The goal is to get more schools operating career pathways in the state. We are going to review the applications that are submitted and make a determination on the merits of the proposals. Hopefully we will receive applications from around the state.

Q62 *Would a district be better to wait until after their gap analysis is complete before applying?*

A62 The intent is to work with districts at the point where they are and to use the data that has

already been collected. There is no reason to generate new information. Applicants must complete the assessment outlined in the application package three (3) times if funding is received. Therefore, the information from your gap analysis can be included after it is received.

Q63 *Will all the deliverables outlined in the grant need to be completed by the end of the grant?*

A63 Yes. An applicant must be able to demonstrate prior to final payment, that all the deliverables have been accomplished. Because some districts have more work to do than others, the project may require a more ambitious timeline for some districts.

Q64 *Do the local Boards of Education have to formally adopt career pathways, or can the schools just indicate career pathways has been implemented ?*

A64 The local Boards of Education are expected to give formal recognition of the framework of career pathways or provide evidence of formal discussion by the Board as the strategic direction of the district. Because we are trying to accomplish system change, the Board needs to be involved in a total school district effort, not just individual school buildings. Evidence of the Board action can include a resolution, minutes of the Board meeting(s) that reflects the discussion(s), or a letter to the superintendent of the school district supportive of career pathways.

Q65 *Does the grant for career pathways have to be implemented within one classroom or several?*

A65 We want career pathways implemented throughout the entire school district, not just one classroom.

Q66 *Can we teach career pathways throughout our curriculum as part of our discipline or does it have to be a class that is mandatory for every child within our system?*

A66 Career pathways should be integrated into the entire school curriculum. Again, we are trying to facilitate systematic change. Therefore, it should not simply be a mandatory class for all students.