

TITLE 23: EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES  
SUBTITLE A: EDUCATION  
CHAPTER I: STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SUBCHAPTER g: SPECIAL COURSES OF STUDY

PART 269  
FREEDOM SCHOOLS GRANT PROGRAM

SUBPART A: GENERAL

Section

- 269.5 Definitions
- 269.10 Purpose and Applicability

SUBPART B: FREEDOM SCHOOLS GRANT PROGRAM

Section

- 269.20 Eligible Applicants
- 269.30 Application Procedure
- 269.40 Allocation of Funds
- 269.50 Program Specifications
- 269.60 Criteria for the Review of Applications

AUTHORITY: Authorized by Section 2-3.6 and implementing Section 2-3.186 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5].

SOURCE: Adopted at 47 Ill. Reg. 11456, effective July 28, 2023.

## SUBPART A: GENERAL

**Section 269.5 Definitions**

"Program" means the Freedom Schools Grant Program created by this Part.

"School Code" means 105 ILCS 5.

"State Board" means the State Board of Education.

"State Superintendent" means the State Superintendent of Education.

**Section 269.10 Purpose and Applicability**

This Part implements Section 2-3.186(e) of the School Code and establishes the application procedure and criteria for selection by the State Board of the entities that will receive funding for the Freedom Schools Grant Program. The purpose of the Program is to *facilitate improved educational outcomes for historically disadvantaged students, including African American students and other students of color, in grades pre-kindergarten through 12 in alignment with the integrity and practices of the Freedom School model established during the civil rights movement.* [105 ILCS 5/2-3.186(e)]

## SUBPART B: FREEDOM SCHOOLS GRANT PROGRAM

**Section 269.20 Eligible Applicants**

Entities that are eligible to apply for a grant under the Program are *public schools, public community colleges, and not-for-profit community-based organizations including, but not limited to, entities that work with the Children's Defense Fund or that offer established programs with proven results and outcomes.* [105 ILCS 5/2-3.186(e)]

**Section 269.30 Application Procedure**

For purposes of this Subpart, the terms "proposal" and "application" have the same meaning.

- a) When State funding is available for grants under this Part, the State Superintendent will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) on the Illinois Catalog of State Financial Assistance (<https://gata.illinois.gov/grants/csfa.html>) to solicit applications from eligible entities.
- b) The RFP will include the project-specific terms of the grant (see 44 Ill. Adm. Code 7000.370(a)(5)).
- c) The RFP will require the State-required certifications and assurances described in 44 Ill. Adm. Code 7000.370(a)(4).
- d) The RFP will include the Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance. The application page must be signed by the official authorized to submit proposals for the applicant.
- e) The RFP will require a program narrative that briefly describes the overall objectives and activities of the proposed project, including student, school, and community needs, the intended outcomes, and key people who will be involved in the project.
- f) The RFP will require a program plan that identifies program goals and objectives, activities that align to these goals, a timeline, budget, and anticipated audience. Applicants must provide general details regarding the anticipated process, measures, or data elements to be used in determining the degree to which program objectives have been met.
- g) The RFP will require submission of a State Budget Summary and Payment Schedule. No other budget form will be accepted. District budgets must be signed by the district superintendent. Other applicants must have an authorized official sign the form. The payment schedule must be based on the projected date of expenditures. Salaries and fringe benefits must be requested in equal intervals on the schedule. Supplies, equipment, contracted services, and professional development must be requested in the month for which the expenditure is anticipated.
- h) Subject to appropriation for the Program, applicants seeking continued funding under the Program beyond the initial grant period must submit an annual application under this Section.

**Section 269.40 Allocation of Funds**

Applications for funding will be approved by the State Superintendent and final determinations regarding the amounts to be provided will be made based upon the total funds appropriated for this Program.

**Section 269.50 Program Specifications**

- a) Each grantee must operate, at a minimum, *a 6-week summer program* or a program during the school year that provides out-of-school learning opportunities, which may include before-school, after-school, or weekend programming. The mission of those programs is to *improve the odds for children living in poverty*. The programs must use a *research-based and multicultural curriculum for disenfranchised communities most affected by the opportunity gap and learning loss caused by the pandemic*, and, *by expanding the teaching of African American history*, must develop *leadership skills* and provide *an understanding of the tenets of the civil rights movement*. [105 ILCS 5/2-3.186(b)]
- b) *The teachers in the programs established under subsection (a) must be from the grantee's local community, with an emphasis on historically disadvantaged youth, including African American students and other students of color, so that those individuals have access to summer jobs and teaching experiences that serve as a long-term pipeline to educational careers and the hiring of minority educators in public schools, are elevated as content experts and community leaders, and are able to provide students with access to both mentorship and equitable educational resources.* [105 ILCS 5/2-3.186(b)]
- c) Each grantee must employ strategies that focus on all of the following:
- 1) *racial justice and equity;*
  - 2) *transparency and building trusting relationships;*
  - 3) *self-determination and governance;*
  - 4) *building on community strengths and community wisdom;*
  - 5) *utilizing current data, best practices, and evidence;*
  - 6) *shared leadership and collaboration;*
  - 7) *a reflective learning culture;*
  - 8) *a whole-child approach to education; and*
  - 9) *literacy.* [105 ILCS 5/2-3.186(c)]

- d) Each grantee must *strive for authentic parent and community engagement during the development of Freedom School programs and their curriculum. Authentic parent and community engagement includes all of the following:*
- 1) *a shared responsibility that values equal partnerships between families and professionals;*
  - 2) *an assurance that students and families who are directly impacted by Freedom School policies and practices are the decision-makers in the creation, design, implementation, and assessment of those policies and practices;*
  - 3) *genuine respect for the culture and diversity of families; and*
  - 4) *relationships that center around the goal of supporting family well-being and learning. [105 ILCS 5/2-3.186(d)]*
- e) Students participating in Freedom School programs must participate in pre-assessments and post-assessments of literacy and other program objectives.

**Section 269.60 Criteria for the Review of Applications**

Applications for grants will be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

- a) Need (20 points) A summary of the program's needs is included within the proposal that includes the process used with the community to determine the need for the project, the availability of resources for the project, and the data used to determine the need.
- b) Quality of the Plan (20 points)
  - 1) The proposed activities are expected to improve student academic achievement as well as overall student success.
  - 2) The proposed activities are research-based and provide a multicultural curriculum for disenfranchised communities, expand the teaching of African American history, develop leadership skills, and provide an understanding of the tenets of the civil rights movement.
  - 3) The proposal contains details on how positive discipline practices, including restorative justice practices, will be instituted.
  - 4) The proposal contains details on how students will have access to mentors.
- c) Capacity (30 points) The proposal contains:
  - 1) A detailed plan of civic engagement activities that will occur during the program.
  - 2) Detailed information on how teachers in Freedom Schools program will be recruited and retained.
  - 3) Evidence that teachers will be trained to provide high-quality teaching that includes a curriculum that is engaging, culturally relevant, and challenging.
  - 4) An explanation of how teachers in the Freedom Schools program will have access to summer jobs and teaching experiences that serve as a long-term pipeline to educational careers.
  - 5) A detailed plan that centers around the goal of supporting family well-being and children's development.

- 6) A plan on how students will be recruited and retained.
  - 7) A description of how the proposed activities are likely to contribute to the achievement of program goals and objectives, including a realistic timeline, and of how the proposed activities correlate to the proposed budget. The proposal demonstrates the organizational capacity to fulfill the requirements of the grant and provide adequate support for the program.
  - 8) A budget and budget detail that is relevant to the number of students served.
  - 9) Previous experience or capacity that demonstrates the ability to provide educational and related activities that will complement and enhance the academic performance, achievement, and positive youth development of the students to be served.
  - 10) Evidence that the applicant has the experience or capacity to provide wrap-around supports and opportunities to students and families.
  - 11) Evidence that program leadership will be inclusive.
- d) Evaluation (10 points) The proposal has a detailed evaluation plan that includes pre-assessment and post-assessment administration. Evaluation methods include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data.