

FY 2022 Phillip Jackson Freedom Schools Grant

Frequently Asked Questions

~~3/30/22~~

~~4/11/22~~

Updated 4/22/22

Accessing Grant Information

1. **Where can information on the fiscal year 2022 Phillip Jackson Freedom Schools Grant be located?**

A: Information on the FY 2022 Phillip Jackson Freedom Schools Grant can be found under the FY 2022 Phillip Jackson Freedom Schools Grant tab on [ISBE's Out of School Time](#) webpage.

2. **Where can an entity access their Region-County-District-Type (RCDT) code?**

A: Your RCDT code can be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/RCDTS-Lookup.aspx>.

3. **What if an entity does not have an RCDT Code?**

A: Email Adenike Sosina at asosina@isbe.net for information on how to establish an RCDT code.

4. **When completing the RCDT request forms, what is the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number and where can it be found?**

A: The UEI number is a 12-digit alpha-numeric number obtained through the System for Award Management (SAM). Each applicant must be registered in SAM before submitting its application. If you are not registered in SAM, you may do so at sam.gov.

5. **Are a SAM CAGE Code number, a UEI number, and GATA prequalification required at the time the proposal is submitted or by the time of the grant award (if it is awarded)?**

A: These items are required at the time the proposal is submitted.

6. **What if an entity has contacted sam.gov but is having difficulties finalizing its registration before the April 29 deadline?**

A: A proposal may be submitted; however, this would need to be resolved by the time ISBE is ready to provide an award to grantees. Selected grantees must have a SAM CAGE Code number in order to receive an award.

Eligibility

7. **The grant emphasizes that African American students and other students of color should be among the primary beneficiaries. If a district is mostly white, would it be less competitive for this grant or would it still be able to apply to support its own disadvantaged students (e.g., low-income students and/or students with disabilities)?**

A: Please refer to the purpose and description of the program when determining if an entity should apply.

Program Purpose: The purpose of this funding opportunity is to establish a Freedom School network to supplement the learning taking place in public schools by creating programs with a mission to improve the odds for children in poverty. Freedom Schools in multiple states 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, developing leadership skills, and providing an understanding of the tenets of the civil rights movement.

Program Description: Freedom School programs will operate at least a six-week summer program and/or a program during the school year that provides out-of-school learning opportunities that may include before-school, after-school, or weekend programming. The mission of the program is to improve the odds for children living in poverty. 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, developing leadership skills, and providing an understanding of the tenets of the civil rights movement. The teachers in Freedom Schools must be from the local community, with an emphasis on historically disadvantaged youth, including African American students and other students of color, so that (i) these 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, (ii) these individuals are elevated as content experts and community leaders, and (iii) Freedom School students have access to both mentorship and equitable educational resources.

8. Can community-based organizations apply with partnering schools?

A: Eligible entities for this grant include public schools, public universities, public community colleges, not-for-profit entities, and community-based organizations. Priority will be given to joint applications between a community-based organization or a not-for-profit and another eligible entity.

Funding Information and Award Amounts

9. When will successful applicants begin receiving payment for services? Will payment be retroactive?

A: It is anticipated that successful applicants will receive a Notice of Award via email approximately 90 days after the application deadline. The award letter is NOT an authorization to begin performance or expenditures. After the merit-based appeal timeframe has ended, awardees will receive additional information from the program area that includes the next steps for finalizing the grant. Monies spent prior to programmatic approval are done so at the applicant's own risk.

10. What is the funding period for this grant?

A: The grant period will begin no sooner than May 2, 2022 and will extend from the execution date of the grant until August 31, 2023.

11. What is the funding award for this grant?

A: The total amount of federal funding available is \$17 million. The amount funded per applicant will be \$350,000. There will be 45 awards made available.

12. Will an award be made to grantees whose proposed budget is less than \$350,000?

A: A budget summary is a required component of the application materials. Applicants must utilize this to break down their anticipated budget. In addition, applicants must include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Federal Budget Summary within their Budget Summary Breakdown (Attachment 7A).

13. Must grant funds be used toward direct services for youth? Can some of the grant funds be used toward training and learning to improve direct service programs?

A: One of the criteria of the proposal is that the proposed budget is focused on direct services to students. In addition, applicants should describe within the Budget Narrative how funds will be used to support direct instruction to students and achieve program objectives. Overall, the grant funds must be used to fulfill the purpose and objectives of the Freedom Schools Grant as outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)/Request for Proposals (RFP).

14. Are grant funds disbursed in a lump sum payment to grantees or are grantees reimbursed for expenses after invoices are submitted for payment? Can payments be made in advance of work performed?

A: Funds for grants are disbursed on a reimbursement system. This is completed by submitting expenditure reports through ISBE's IWAS system. Please also see question No. 9 the [fiscal handbook](#) for more information on this process. Page 26 of that document notes that "... funds are distributed via cumulative cash basis expenditures reported by the grantee in the Electronic Expenditure Reporting System via IWAS."

Applying/Proposals

15. Should an entity's proposal be written for FY 2022 and FY 2023?

A: This NOFO/RFP is for the FY 2022 Phillip Jackson Freedom Schools Grant. Successful applicants may reapply via continuing application for up to two additional years. Funding in the subsequent years will be contingent upon compliance with federal and state law, state grant-making rules, passage of sufficient appropriations for the program, and satisfactory performance in the preceding grant period. No promise or undertaking made in this NOFO/RFP is an assurance that a grant agreement will be renewed, nor does this NOFO/RFP create any right to or expectation of renewal.

16. Could an eligible applicant propose to serve different grade bands for two weeks in the summer totaling six weeks (e.g., preK-5 for two weeks, middle school for two weeks, and high

school for two weeks totaling six summer weeks)? Or would ALL student populations being served be required to attend six summer weeks?

A: Freedom School programs will operate at least a six-week summer program and/or a program during the school year that provides out-of-school learning opportunities that may include before-school, after-school, or weekend programming. Please note that students in either a Freedom school summer program that operates at least six weeks or a program during the school year will be required to participate in pre- and post-assessments of literacy and other program objectives.

17. What is the minimum number of hours Freedom Schools are required to operate within a week? For example, our 21st Century grant requires 12 hours.

A: The Phillip Jackson Freedom Schools Grant does not have a minimum number of hours; however, applicants will need to meet the program objectives, deliverables and milestones, and performance measures. Therefore, applicants should think about whether they can meet the requested objectives. In addition, applicants must provide a justification for their hours of operation as outlined in the NOFO/RFP.

18. Aside from training on the reporting requirements, will there be training/technical assistance on curriculum development, pedagogy, etc.? Are all the educational components left up to the individual sites to develop? Will grantees have curriculum/training provided through ISBE? What is the cost for this?

A: One of the deliverables of grantees for this grant is attendance at ISBE-sponsored workshops and trainings. In addition, the Budget Summary Breakdown (Attachment 7A) MUST include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Federal Budget Summary. The Budget Summary Breakdown should also include subcontract information, if applicable. The Budget Narrative (Attachment 7B) should describe how funds will be used to support direct instruction to students and program objectives.

19. What curriculum are applicants expected to use under the FY 2022 Phillip Jackson Freedom Schools Grant?

A: Freedom School programs established under this grant must use a research-based and multicultural curriculum. In addition, applicants must describe in detail how the proposed activities are research-based and provide a multicultural curriculum for disenfranchised communities by expanding the teaching of African American history, developing leadership skills, and providing an understanding of the tenets of the civil rights movement.

20. Will ISBE be responsible for the pre- and post-evaluation of participants or is that something that has to be negotiated with the local school district?

A: Grantees will be responsible for the administration of pre- and post-assessments to program participants.

21. Is there a minimum number of students that must be served?

A: A minimum number of students to be served is not specified in the NOFO/RFP for this grant. In addition, an applicant must provide a detailed evaluation plan that includes pre- and post-assessment administration within their proposal.

22. Aside from the grant requirements, is there any plan to develop a community of (best) practice among grant recipients?

A: Sustainability after the grant has ended would be something the grantee will need to consider for their established program. In addition, attendance at ISBE-sponsored workshops and trainings is a deliverable of this grant. This may be a good opportunity for grant recipients to share best practices.

23. The grant project overview states “teachers from Freedom Schools must be from the local community.” How is “local community” defined? If teachers are recruited from a neighboring community (outside of the district), would this be considered “local”?

A: Teachers will be recruited from the local community of the students the program proposes to serve. In addition, these individuals are elevated as content experts and community leaders of this local community. Teachers may be recruited from neighboring communities. Applicants must keep in mind that the goal of this grant program is to have teachers who are familiar with the areas the students live in.

24. Is the FY 2022 Phillip Jackson Freedom Schools Grant tied to the established Children’s Defense Fund Freedom School?

A: The FY 2022 Phillip Jackson Freedom Schools Grant differs from the Children’s Defense Fund Freedom School. This NOFO/RFP is brought forth through the Illinois Freedom Schools grant program statute ([105 ILCS 5/2-3.186](#)).

25. Though we do not explicitly track our impacts on English language literacy, we do measure music literacy through annual theory exams and juries. Would our work to promote music literacy, and its positive educational outcomes, count in this instance?

A: Literacy within the context of this grant program is referencing English literacy (reading, writing, etc.).

26. Does the reference to "teachers" in the Phillip Jackson Freedom Schools documents reflect a preference for certified teachers to lead the program?

A: The NOFO/RFP specifies the following when selecting teachers for this program:

The teachers in Freedom Schools must be from the local community, with an emphasis on historically disadvantaged youth, including African American students and other students of color, so that (i) these 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, (ii) these individuals are elevated as content experts and community leaders, and (iii) Freedom School students have access to both mentorship and equitable educational resources. In addition, applicants must provide detailed information on how teachers will be recruited and retained for this program.

27. What is the difference between Performance Measures, Targets, and Performance Standards?

A: Performance Measures are the level of performance a program aims to achieve. The Targets are the measures grantees are expected to meet during each quarter of the grant. Performance Standards are the minimum thresholds for acceptable performance.

28. In terms of the evaluation assessment, do applicants need to include a sample of the pre- and post-assessment or can applicants express that they will contract an expert to provide evaluation services?

A: Per the Section 4: Evaluation criteria of the NOFO/RFP: The applicant has a detailed evaluation plan that includes pre- and post-assessment administration. With this said, applicants must provide details on their pre- and post-assessment administration.