

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**Office of Education Improvement and Innovation  
Educational Technology and Data Coordination**

**Section 99h, FIRST Robotics Grants  
Request for Proposal**

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS  
(8-27-2015)**

**DISCLAIMER:**

**THE FOLLOWING COMPETITIVE GRANT IS ANNOUNCED AND AWARD IS CONTINGENT ON THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS. GRANT APPLICATIONS WILL BE COLLECTED USING THE MICHIGAN ELECTRONIC GRANTS SYSTEM PLUS (MEGS+). FUNDS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE STATE AID MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SAMS).**

**INTRODUCTION:**

The FY2015 State School Aid Act, Section 99h appropriated \$2,000,000 for the 2015-16 school year for competitive grants to districts that provide pupils in grades 7-12 with expanded opportunities to improve mathematics, science, and technology skills by participating in events hosted by a science and technology development program known as FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Tech Challenge (hereafter referred to as FTC) for middle school and FIRST Robotics Competition (hereafter referred to as FRC) for high school. An amount of fiscal year (FY)2014 carry-over of \$518,400 is available in addition to the two million appropriated for fiscal year FY2016.

**PURPOSE OF THE GRANT:**

To support the State Board of Education's mission in making "All students graduate ready for careers, college, and community," the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) staff has developed a structure to award the \$2,000,000 appropriated under Section 99h of FY2015 State School Aid to public school districts and public school academies to support students in grades 7-12 through participation in middle school FTC and high school FRC.

**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:**

All individual local education agencies (LEAs), public school academies (PSAs), and intermediate school districts (ISDs) that enroll students, or operate a middle school FTC team or high school FRC team on behalf of their constituent districts are eligible.

## **PROGRAM DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:**

Defined in Statute:

To be eligible for funding, a district shall demonstrate in its application that the district:

- has established a partnership for the purposes of the middle school FTC or high school FRC program with at least one sponsor, business entity, higher education institution, technical school, or individual;
- shall submit a spending plan; and
- shall pay at least 25% of the cost of the Coach Stipend Award and Advancement Award and at least 50% of the Support Award.

Defined in Statute under Section 99s, the Michigan STEM Partnership will conduct a competitive grant process for conducting student-focused, project-based programs and competitions. A program receiving funds under section 99h (FIRST) may not receive funds from the Michigan STEM Partnership competitive grant process.

Proposed by Staff:

- Applicants must be new or returning middle school FTC teams or new or returning high school FRC teams. All applicants must be on the registered team list with FIRST on the [usfirst.org](http://usfirst.org) website for the 2015-2016 school year and must have a FIRST FTC or FRC team number.
- All applicants must have an identified coach.
- Grant funds are to be used exclusively for FIRST Robotics and may not be used for any other programs.
- For high school FRC, priority funding will be given to start-up teams.
- In support of the MDE's priority of closing the achievement gap, preference will be given to identified Focus or Priority based schools. Additionally, preference will be given to schools that serve a high percentage of low income families, as determined by 2014-2015 building Free and Reduced Lunch count data.

## **TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE:**

**\*\*\*\$2,518,400\*\*\***

## GRANT STRUCTURE:

### a) Coach's Stipend Award

Each registered, public middle school FTC or high school FRC team in the State of Michigan is eligible for a \$1,500 grant to be used for a single coach's salary only. No more than one coach stipend will be awarded per high school for FRC and per middle school for FTC. A single individual coaching both a high school FRC team and a middle school FTC team in a given school district may receive two coaching awards. Awards are limited to 100 applicants for middle school FTC teams and 500 applicants for high school FRC teams.

### b) Support Awards (Event Registrations, Materials, Travel Costs, Other)

#### *Middle School FTC Team Award*

To support new and existing middle school FTC teams, the MDE has made awards available in the amount of \$300 per registered team that meets the outlined application requirements.

#### *High School FRC Start-Up Team Award*

To support newly formed FRC teams beginning in the 2015-16 school year, the MDE has made awards available in the amount of \$7,500 per registered team that meets the outlined application requirements.

#### *High School FRC Second Year Team Award*

To support FRC teams formed last year, now entering their second season of participation, the MDE has made grants available in the amount of \$5,000 per registered team that meets the outlined application requirements.

#### *High School FRC Third Year Plus Team Award*

To support FRC teams in their third year and beyond, the MDE has made grants available in the amount of \$2,500 per registered team that meets the outlined application requirements.

### c) Advancement Awards<sup>1</sup>

#### *Middle School FTC State, Super-Regional, and World Competition Award*

Contingent upon funding, the MDE will provide additional awards for reasonable expenses for teams that qualify to participate in the State Championship (\$100), Super-Regional (\$500), and/or World Championship (\$1,000) FTC events.

#### *High School FRC State and World Competition Award*

Contingent upon funding, the MDE will provide an equal amount of funding for reasonable expenses for teams that qualify to participate in the State Championship and/or World Championship high school FRC events.

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<sup>1</sup> A new testing window for the state required assessments (PSAT/SAT) for 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders has been announced for April 12-13, 2016 and makeups for April 26-27, 2016. These dates overlap with the Michigan State Championship and the World Championship. In order to receive the advancement award, it is required for students to participate in the Championships. It is suggested that this requirement be taken into account when scheduling testing.

## **GRANT APPLICATIONS:**

### ***Process to Apply:***

#### Eligibility Requirements:

All individual LEAs, PSAs, and ISDs that enroll students, or operate a middle school FTC or high school FRC team on behalf of their constituent districts are eligible if they meet the following requirements:

- Have a new or returning middle school FTC or high school FRC team registered to participate during the 2015-2016 school year.
- Be willing to start a middle school FTC team within their district middle schools.
- Program must serve students in grades 7-12.
- FTC middle school teams must agree to participate in at least one FTC middle school qualifying event, and FRC high school teams must agree to participate in at least two FRC high school district events.
- Districts must be willing to provide the MDE with pre and post student data based on the aggregate team roster average from one or more of the assessments in the appendix. The MDE is requesting this data from districts in order to monitor the academic impact of participation in FIRST Tech Challenge and FIRST Robotics Competition. This is part of the MDE's closing the achievement gap initiative.
- Willingness to provide a roster of participants to the MDE prior to May 1, 2016.
- Willingness to offer elective high school credit for FRC students, who have successfully logged 60 hours, provided the high school team attends a minimum of 2 district competitions.<sup>2</sup>

Grant applications will be made available via MEGS+ and monitored by the Educational Technology Unit staff within the Office of Education Improvement and Innovation. ISDs, LEAs, and PSAs are allowed to submit an application with multiple middle school FTC and FRC teams per district. Each team is required to submit a team page and sponsor page within the MEGS+ application. Step-by-step instructions for completing the MEGS+ application can be found at [www.techplan.org/rdi](http://www.techplan.org/rdi).

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<sup>2</sup> To issue credit for participating on a FIRST Robotics team, a school district must assign a certified teacher as the teacher of record. Because robotics is not a core subject, the teacher of record must be certified in the grade range, but not by a specific content area, i.e., science or mathematics.

#### Requirements of the Application:

- School districts applying for a grant for more than one team in the district - whether for multiple FTC teams, FRC teams, or a combination of FTC and FRC teams - shall submit a single district-wide application adding a separate page for each team. The application must include a single cumulative spending plan encompassing all of the district's teams.
- Team name and five digit middle school FTC or high school FRC team number. Teams with a temporary team number at the time of application should enter the last five digits of the temporary number. Team numbers shorter than 5 digits may precede the real number with zeros.
- Name and contact information (email address and phone number) of middle school FTC or high school FRC team coach.
- Agree to contribute a match of at least 25% of the Stipend Award and Advancement Award and 50% of the Support Award. The required match may be in the form of cash or the fair market value of in-kind donations from any of the following sources, including but not limited to: the school district, other grants, and donations from corporate partnerships or individuals.
- Name and classification of middle school FTC or high school FRC team sponsor.
  - Business
  - Higher Education Institute
  - Technical School
  - Individual
- District-wide cumulative FIRST spending plan.

#### **OPENING AND CLOSING DATES:**

Grant applications will be available in MEGS+ on September 8, 2015, and are due by 11:59 p.m. on November 3, 2015.

#### **NONPUBLIC SCHOOL PARTICIPATION:**

State of Michigan law does not allow the use of State School Aid funds for non-public school funding.

## **ASSURANCE OF ACCURACY:**

P.A. 85 of 2015, Section 99h of FY State School Aid Act

Staff Proposed Assurances:

- Full \$1,500 coach's stipend awarded to the district must be used solely to supplement FIRST Robotics team coach's salary.
- Support awards must be used solely for FIRST team registration and other FIRST-related team expenses.
- Each FTC team on the application agrees to participate in a minimum of one FIRST in Michigan middle school FTC qualifying event and each FRC team on the application agrees to participate in two high school FRC qualifying district events in the 2015-16 school year.
- If a middle school FTC team qualifies for State, Super-Regional, or World competitions, the team will participate in the competition. If a high school FRC team qualifies for State or World competitions, the team will participate in the competition.
- By submitting FIRST Robotics Grant application in MEGS+, the district agrees that all information provided is true and accurate. If it is found that information is incorrect, the MDE reserves the right to rescind funding awarded under Section 99h, FY 2015-16 State School Aid.

Legislative Assurances:

Each team receiving funding must provide a local match in the form of in-kind services or funding from other sources equal to at least 25% for the Coach's Stipend Award and the Advancement Award and at least 50% of the Support Award.

Each program that received 99h (FIRST) funding will not participate in the 99s Michigan STEM Partnership Grant Competition.

## **PROCESS FOR THE GRANT COMPETITION:**

### Key Dates\*

August 27, 2015.....Grant RFP is announced via eblast memo

September 8, 2015.....Application is live in MEGS+

November 3, 2015 .....Applications due at 11:59pm in MEGS+

November 4, 2015.....Grant applications reviews

December 20, 2015.....Awards made via SAMS

\*All dates subject to change at the discretion of the MDE.

**REJECTION OF PROPOSALS:**

The MDE reserves the right to reject any applications received as a result of this grant program announcement.

**REVIEW PROCESS, CRITERIA, AND REVIEWERS:**

The MDE utilizes a review panel when scoring its competitive grants. For this grant program, review teams will be composed of people from within and outside the MDE as needed, with expertise in FIRST Robotics. MDE staff will supervise the review process.

**Length of Award:**

All funds awarded as part of **FY2015 of State School Aid**, Section 99h must be used in full by June 30, 2017.

**Indirect Charges:**

State law does not allow indirect charges on State School Aid funds.

**Payment Schedule:**

Payments for Coach's Stipends Awards and Support Awards will be scheduled for December 20, 2015, via SAMS. Funding for Advancement Awards will be scheduled for May 2016 at the discretion of the Educational Technology Unit in coordination with members of FIRST Leadership.