

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (MDE)
Office of Education Improvement and Innovation (OEII)
Educational Technology and Data Coordination**

**Section 99h: Competitive FIRST Robotics Grants
Request for Proposal**

**GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS
(9-15-2016)**

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 fiscal year (FY) 2016 State School Aid Act, Section 99h appropriated \$2,500,000 for the 2016-17 school year for competitive grants to districts that provide pupils in grades K-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). Legislation has expanded the grant program from High School FIRST Robotics Competition and Middle School FIRST Tech Challenge to Elementary FIRST Lego League and Early Elementary JR FIRST Lego League. Additional work project funds from the 2015-16 grant cycle will be carried forward to supplement the FY2016 legislative allocation.

PURPOSE OF THE GRANT:

To improve mathematics, science, and technology skills by participating in events hosted by FIRST in Michigan. The intent of the grant is to increase the number of pupils demonstrating proficiency in science and mathematics on the state assessments and to increase the number of pupils who are college- and career-ready upon high school graduation. The competitive FIRST Robotics Grants supports the MDE's Top 10 in 10 goals two, three, four, and six through several key activities. The FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Program supports goal two, strategy 2.6 and 2.7 by engaging students in well-rounded learning experiences in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), language, business, culture, and creativity, as well as providing access to personalized learning technologies that support and enhance those learning experiences. The FIRST Robotics Program supports goal three by providing coaches and mentors with opportunities to receive additional professional development and access to State Continuing Education Clock-Hours. The FIRST

Robotics Program supports goal four by providing funding to districts with high-risk factors to ensure access to equitable resources. Finally, the FIRST Robotics Program supports goal six by requiring the establishment of partnerships between teams and job providers, community colleges, and higher education to assure a prepared and quality future workforce.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

All individual local education agencies (LEAs), public school academies (PSAs), and intermediate school districts (ISDs) that enroll students grades K-12 that provide pupils with expanded opportunities to improve mathematics, science and technology skills by participating in events hosted by FIRST in Michigan.

GRANT REQUIREMENTS:

All individual LEAs, PSAs, and ISDs that enroll students, and operate a FIRST in Michigan aligned FIRST Team(s) are eligible if they meet the grant requirements outlined below.

Defined in Statute:

Districts applying for a grant under this section shall submit an application in a form and manner determined by the department. To be eligible for a grant, a district shall demonstrate that it has:

- established a partnership for the purpose of the FIRST program with at least one sponsor, business entity, higher education institution, or technical school;
- shall submit a spending plan;
- shall pay at least 25% of the cost of the FIRST Robotics program; and
- shall provide a local match from other private or local funds for the received under the subdivision for support awards equal to at least 50% of the costs of participating in an event.

Proposed by Staff:

Each applicant must:

- Register their team with www.firstinspires.org.
- Provide MDE with an electronic roster, which includes student Unique Identification Code (UIC).
- Have a current FIRST Robotics program, team number, and coach in place.
- Be willing to offer elective high school credits for students who have successfully logged 60 hours, provided the team attends a minimum of two

FIRST in Michigan district competitions.¹

- Be willing to participate in the digital badging program established by the statewide FIRST Robotics team of coaches.
- Be willing to start a FIRST Team to build a full K-12 FIRST in Michigan progression within the school district.
- 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.

In support of legislative intent, all awards will be distributed to districts in a competitive and equitable manner that will maximize the number of teams that will be able to receive funding. Preference will be given to applicants that support under-represented areas by prioritizing:

- High economically disadvantaged populations (focus and priority based schools).
- Schools that serve a high percentage of low income families (based on Free and Reduced Lunch count data).
- Rookie teams, as defined by FIRST, participating in the FIRST Robotics.
- Districts that establish feeder teams (teams that generate student populations that will potentially move up to high school or middle school programs).
- Districts in a broad geographical distribution.

TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE:

*****\$2,500,000*****

¹ 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.

GRANT STRUCTURE:

a) Coach's Stipend Award

Registered FIRST team in the State of Michigan will be eligible for a coach's stipend award up to \$1,500 to be used for a single coach's salary only. Awards are limited and will be awarded based on the prioritization of need that support under-represented areas outlined on page 3.

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

The MDE has made support awards available to FIRST Robotics Teams, FIRST Tech Challenge Teams, FIRST Lego League Teams and JR. FIRST Lego League Teams. The support awards will be paid out to eligible districts per team that meet the all grant requirement and based on criteria prioritization as outlined above. The payment structure is:

- Rookie High School FIRST Robotics Teams \$7,500
- 2nd year High School FIRST Robotics Teams - \$5,000
- 3rd year High School FIRST Robotics Teams - \$2,000
- 4th year and beyond High School FIRST Robotics - \$1,000
- FIRST Tech Challenge Teams - \$300
- FIRST Lego League Teams - \$200
- JR. FIRST Lego League Teams - \$100

c) Advancement Awards²

Advancement Awards to the state and world championship competitions will be awarded in equal amounts per team for those teams that advance to the state championship and a second equal award amount to those teams that advance to the world championship.

² The testing window for the state required summative assessments for 2016-17 have been announced spanning a window from the week of April 10 to the week of May 22. These dates overlap with the FIRST Robotics schedule, including 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 districts and teams work together to ensure student participation in both testing and the advancement events.

GRANT APPLICATIONS:

Process to Apply:

Grant applications will be made available via MEGS+ and monitored by the Educational Technology Unit staff within the Office of Education Improvement and Innovation. School districts (ISDs, LEAs, and PSAs) submitting an application for more than one team in the district - whether for multiple FTC teams, FRC teams, FLL teams, JR. FLL teams, or a combination of the FIRST team progression - shall submit a single district-wide application adding a separate page for each team. Each team is required to submit a team page and sponsor page within a single MEGS+ district application. Step-by-step instructions for completing the MEGS+ application can be found at www.techplan.org/rdi.

Application Requirements:

- Team name and full permanent team number. Teams with a temporary team number at the time of application should enter the full temporary number.
- Name and contact information (email address and phone number) of team coach.
- Agree to contribute a match of at least 25 percent of the Stipend Award and Advancement Award and 50 percent 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 FIRST 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 26, 2016, and are due by 11:59 p.m. on November 7, 2016.

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. 249 of 2016, 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 2016-17 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 2016-17 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.

PROCESS FOR THE GRANT COMPETITION:

Key Dates*

- September 15, 2016.....Grant RFP is announced via eblast memo
- September 26, 2016.....Application is live in MEGS+
- November 7, 2016Applications due at 11:59pm in MEGS+
- November 9, 2016.....Grant applications reviews
- December 20, 2016.....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 FY2016 of State School Aid, Section 99h must be used in full by September 30, 2017.

Indirect Charges:

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

Payment Schedule:

Payments for the Coach Stipend Awards and Support Awards will be scheduled for December 20, 2016, via SAMS. Funding for Advancement Awards will be scheduled for May 2017 at the discretion of the Educational Technology Unit in coordination with members of FIRST Leadership.

Additional Resources:

The MDE and FIRST in Michigan have worked together to provide supplementary resources for grant applicants. They include, but are not limited to a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document, a template spending plan, and State Continuing Education Clock Hours instructions and log. These resources can be found at www.techplan.org/rdi. Additional information regarding the continuum of FIRST Robotics programming in Michigan, visit www.firstinmichigan.org/.