MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (MDE)
Office of Systems, Evaluation, and Technology
Educational Technology Unit
Section 99h: Competitive Robotics Competition Grants

Request for Proposal (RFP)
GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS
(11-12-2020)

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) 2020 State School Aid Act, Section 99h appropriated $4,400,000 for the 2020-21 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 science and technology development program known as FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) or other competitive robotics programs, including those hosted by the Robotics Education and Competition (REC) Foundation known as VEX, VEX IQ, and RAD, and Square One.

PURPOSE OF THE GRANT:
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 Robotics Competition Grant support Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan's mission of supporting learning and learners by addressing all of the guiding principles by offering districts the autonomy to choose the comprehensive robotics program that best meets the needs of their students, family, and community.

The 99h: Competitive Robotics Competition Grant programming engages 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 99h: Competitive Robotics Competition Grant provides coaches and mentors with opportunities to receive additional professional development and access to State Continuing Education Clock-Hours (SCECH). The Grant Program provides funding to districts with high-risk factors to ensure access to equitable resources. Finally, the 99h: Competitive Robotics Competition Grant Program requires 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 robotics competition events are eligible.

Registered nonpublic schools are eligible applicants for current year's funding. To register with the MDE, visit: https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-81351_81352_35175---,00.html. Nonpublic schools must be registered with the MDE prior to the application deadline.

GRANT REQUIREMENTS:
The grant requirements upon which applicants will be selected and are required to meet are:

Defined in Statue:

   To be eligible for a grant, a district will demonstrate that it has:

- Established a partnership for the purpose of the Robotics competition program with at least one sponsor, business entity, higher education institution, or technical school.

- Submitted a spending plan.

- Agreed to pay at least 25 percent of the cost of the Robotics competition program.

Proposed by Staff:
Each applicant must:

- Be registered for the current season with the Robotics competition program of their choosing.

- Provide MDE with an electronic roster of Robotics competition participants.

- Have a current Robotics competition program team number and coach in place for the current season.

- Participate in a minimum of one Robotics competition event in Michigan during the current season or the qualifying number of events for advancement per the guidelines of the Robotics competition program.

- Be willing to offer elective high school credits for students who have successfully logged 60 hours, provided the team attends the minimum number of competitions.

- Be willing to participate in a digital badging program established by the Robotics competitive program.

Each nonpublic school applicant must:

- Be registered with the MDE and meet all state reporting requirements for nonpublic schools.

- Must meet all of the same requirements as districts and intermediate school districts.

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).
- Districts in a broad geographical distribution.
- Schools that serve a high percentage of low-income families (based on Free and Reduced Lunch count data).
- First time teams participating in Robotics competitions starting with the high school program and working down to kindergarten.
- Districts that establish feeder teams (teams that generate student populations that will potentially move up to high school or middle school programs).

TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE:

$4,400,000 for Public Schools

$300,000 for Non-Public Schools

ROBOTICS COMPETITION PROGRAMMING GRANT STRUCTURE:
a) Coach's Stipend Award

All registered Robotics Competition teams (FIRST, REC, Square One, etc.) in the State of Michigan will be eligible for a coach's stipend award up to $1,500 per building, per program.

b) Support Awards[1] (Event Registrations, Materials, Travel Costs, Other)

The MDE has made support awards available to Robotics Competition Teams, including FIRST Tech Challenge Teams, FIRST LEGO League Teams, FIRST LEGO League Jr. Teams, VEX, VEX IQ, RAD, and Square One's Full Scale IVD, Mini IVD Racing, Autonomous IVD, V2X IVD, and Underwater IVD robotics teams. The support awards will be paid out to eligible districts per team. Awards are limited and will be awarded based on the prioritization of needs that support under-represented areas outlined on page 3.

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[1] Visit https://www.techplan.org/edtech-initiatives/rdi/first-robotics/ to review the funding models for FIRST and REC Programming.

Actual award amounts may be adjusted based on availability of funding. The payment structure is tentatively outlined as follows:

- $9,000 - Rookie High School FIRST Robotics Teams
- $8,000 - 2nd year High School FIRST Robotics Teams
- $7,000 - 3rd year High School FIRST Robotics Teams
- $6,000 - 4th year High School FIRST Robotics Teams
- $5,000 - 5th year and Beyond High School FIRST Robotics Teams
- $4,000 – Rookie FIRST Tech Challenge Teams
- $3,000 – Veteran FIRST Tech Challenge Teams
- $ 800 – Rookies FIRST LEGO League Teams
- $ 500 – Veterans FIRST LEGO League Teams
- $ 350 - Rookie FIRST LEGO League Jr. Teams
- $ 200 - Veteran FIRST LEGO League Jr. Team
- $ 400 - FIRST Lego League - Discover
- $4,000 – VEX Rookie Teams
- $3,000 – VEX Veteran Teams
- $ 800 – VEX-IQ Rookie Teams
- $ 500 – VEX IQ Veteran Teams
- $5,000 – VEX AI Rookie Team
- $ 800 – RAD Rookie Teams
- $ 400 – RAD Veteran Teams
- $5,000 – Square One Autonomous
- $6,500 – Square One Full Scale
- $5,000 – Square One Mini Racing
- $4,000 – Square One V2X
- $4,000 – Square One Underwater

c) Advancement Awards [2]

Advancement Awards to teams that compete and advance to the next level of competition will be awarded in equal amounts per team. All advancement awards are contingent upon available funding.

Note: All grant recipients must provide a 25% in-kind or cash match for the total cost of the robotics competition program award. Possible in-kind contributions include items such as: providing a room to build; transportation to and from events; donation of food, supplies, and materials; payment of coaches' FICA and

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[2] The testing window for the state required summative assessments for 2019-20 have been announced spanning a window from the week of April 13 to the week of May 25. A link to the M-Step Testing Calendar can be found at: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Testing_Schedule_for_Summative_Assessments_635008_7.pdf. 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.

social security, if they are employed by the school district or additional cash payment to coach (see calculation below); etc.

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***MDE Stipend Award + 25% Match = Total Stipend Amount ***
Contracted Coach Example: $1,500 stipend + $375 match = $1,875
District Employee/Coach Example: $1,500 stipend paid to coach = $1,500 and $375 paid into FICA = $375

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GRANT APPLICATIONS:
Grant applications will be made available via MEGS+ and monitored by the Educational Technology Unit staff within the Office of Systems, Evaluation, and Technology. Public (ISDs, LEAs, and PSAs) districts submitting an application for more than one team in the district - whether for multiple FTC teams, FRC teams, FLL teams, FLL Jr. teams, VEX, VEX IQ, RAD, Square One teams, or a combination of programming - shall submit a single district-wide application adding a separate page for each team. Each team is required to submit a team page and a corresponding partnership information page within a single MEGS+ district application.

Nonpublic school districts submitting an application are all also required to submit a single district-wide application adding a separate page for each team with a corresponding partnership information page. Nonpublic schools are also required to submit a page that provides the MDE with their SIGMA vendor and address code. Step-by-step instructions for completing the MEGS+ application can be found at https://www.techplan.org/edtech-initiatives/rdi/first-robotics/.

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 total robotics program 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 one robotics team sponsor.
  - Business/Nonprofit
  - Higher Education Institute
  - Technical School
  - Individual
- District-wide cumulative spending plan. A spending plan template can be found at https://www.techplan.org/edtech-initiatives/rdi/first-robotics/.
- Student roster. A student roster template can be found at https://www.techplan.org/edtech-initiatives/rdi/first-robotics/.

OPENING AND CLOSING DATES:
Grant applications will be available in MEGS+ on November 12, 2020 and are due by 11:59 p.m. on December 11, 2020.

ASSURANCE OF ACCURACY:
An assurance must be submitted stating that all information provided within is true and accurate. If, during the implementation of any funded project, the MDE establishes that inaccurate or false information was provided in the application, the grant may be rescinded.

PROCESS FOR THE GRANT COMPETITION:
Key Dates*
November 5, 2020…………………………………….Grant RFP is announced via eblast memo
November 12, 2020…………………………………………………………Application is live in MEGS+
November 18 & 20, 2020…………………………..…………………Technical Assistance Webinar
(*https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87870368059?pwd=L0lZOEt5eDM5OExOajRhZnFuU0s2Zz09, enter the Meeting ID: 878 7036 8059 and Passcode: 03Fj5q)*
December 11, 2020…………………………………Applications due at 11:59pm in MEGS+
December 14-16, 2020………………………………………………………….Grant application review
January 4, 2021 ………………………………………………………Grants Awards Announced
January 20, 2021………………………………………………………………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 the multiple robotics competition programs. The MDE staff will supervise the review process. An administrative review will be conducted by MDE prior to funding and at the end of the season to ensure all teams meet the grant requirements.

LENGTH OF AWARD:
All funds awarded as part of FY2020 of State School Aid, Section 99h must be used in full by September 30, 2021.

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 January 20, 2021, via SAMS. Funding for Advancement Awards will be scheduled for May 2021 at the discretion of the Educational Technology Unit in coordination with members of the robotics competition programs.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:
The MDE, FIRST in Michigan, RECF, and Square One 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, a template student roster, and State Continuing Education Clock Hours instructions and log. These resources can be found at https://www.techplan.org/edtech-initiatives/rdi/first-robotics/. Additional information regarding the continuum of FIRST Robotics programming in Michigan, visit http://www.firstinmichigan.org/. Additional information regarding the REC Foundation VEX, VEX IQ, and RAD programming, visit https://www.roboticseducation.org/. Additional information regarding the Square One programming, visit https://www.squareonenetwork.org/.