

FAQs for the PAsmart Computer Science and STEM Education Grants

General

1. What is the funding source for the PAsmart grants?

- The grant source is state funding. Pennsylvania's FY2018-19 Enacted Budget included a total of \$30 million for the Governor's PAsmart Initiative.

2. What is the definition of a local education agency (LEA) and how does that affect eligibility to apply for PAsmart grants?

- LEAs are public school districts, charter schools, career and technical centers (CTCs), and Intermediate Units (IUs).
- For Targeted Grants, only LEAs are eligible to apply. Only one application will be accepted per LEA.
- For Advancing Grants, only LEAs may serve as the fiscal agent for the grant. The fiscal agent will receive, manage, and disburse grant funds. Fiscal agents may use funds to pay partners in the consortium for their services.

3. I missed the PAsmart grants informational webinar. Can I find them online?

- The webinars are posted on the Governor's PAsmart grants page – <https://www.governor.pa.gov/pasmart-grants/>. In addition, you can find the webinars on PDE's YouTube page. Subscribe here to make sure you get the video: <https://www.youtube.com/c/PADeptofEd>

4. Are private or parochial schools eligible for PAsmart grants?

- For Targeted Grants, only LEAs may apply for a Targeted Grant. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are public school districts, charter schools, career and technical centers (CTCs) and Intermediate Units (IUs). Private and parochial schools are nonpublic schools, not LEAs.
- However, Advancing Grants require lead applicants to identify partners to assist with expanding access to CS/STEM education and expanding the number of CS/STEM educators. ([See pg. 12 of the RFP](#)) A private or parochial could be one of those partners, if the school is a non-profit. A private or parochial school may not be the lead applicant nor the fiscal agent.

Targeted Grants

1. Is previous computer science (CS) experience required for the educators participating in this grant?

- Targeted Grants are meant to support educators from all grades, K-12, who have very limited or no experience in CS but would like to start offering CS programs to their students. As such, no previous CS experience is required.

2. How long is the application?

- The Targeted Grant application is designed to be simple and accessible. There are 32 simple questions and will likely take less than 30 minutes to complete.

- 3. When does Phase 2 of the Targeted Grants take place, and what is the process of applying for Phase 2?**
 - Phase 2 will occur after educators complete the initial training but prior to the start of the 2019-20 school year. Additional information on Phase 2 will be sent to awardees as part of the award process. No additional application is required.
- 4. Do I need to submit a budget for the Target Grants application?**
 - A budget is not needed to apply for the Targeted Grant application. Budget information will be required at a later date.

Advancing Grants

- 1. What is the difference between a partner, fiscal agent, and lead applicant?**
 - For Advancing Grants, only an LEA may serve as the fiscal agent. The fiscal agent is responsible for receiving, managing, and disbursing grant funds. Fiscal agents may use funds to pay partners in the consortium for their services.
 - Lead applicants serve as the primary point of contact for the application and responsible for completing and submitting the application.
 - Partners assist lead applicants in developing and implementing the grant proposal and meeting program goals.
 - Eligible lead applicants and partners for Advancing Grants are listed in [Request for Proposals](#).
- 2. Who is eligible to be the fiscal agent?**
 - Only a local education agency (school district, charter school, career and technical center, intermediate unit) may serve as the fiscal agent.
- 3. Is there a cap on the fee that fiscal agents may charge?**
 - No more than 5 percent of the total grant amount may be used for administrative costs.
- 4. Can we submit multiple proposals to serve the needs of each region?**
 - There is no limit to the number of proposals that eligible applicants may submit for Advancing Grants.
- 5. What are unallowable funds?**
 - Only items directly related to eligible programs and activities covered in this request for proposals will be funded by the PAsmart grant. Grant funds may not be used for the direct salaries, fringe benefits, or operational rates. All budgets will be reviewed to evaluate appropriateness and connection to proposed grant activities and goals.
- 6. Can matching funds include in-kind or do matching funds have to be a financial contribution?**
 - Matching funds may be in-kind or monetary.

- 7. What is eligible funding for Advancing Grants, and is it the same for Targeted Grants?**
- Eligible funding is not the same for Advancing and Targeted Grants.
 - Funding from Targeted Grants is limited to programs and activities related to professional development in computer science for educators and the purchase of related computer science hardware and software.
 - For the Advancing Grants, funding is expected to align to the priorities identified in the [Request for Proposals](#) and [PAsmart Framework](#). A list of Funding Priorities is found on page 13 of the [Request for Proposals](#). Applicants are encouraged to think big and take an ecosystem approach to expanding access to CS/STEM opportunities for all students.
- 8. Do proposals have to address computer science along with STEM to be eligible? Or can a proposal focus on expanding a STEM program without addressing educator expansion or computer science?**
- Priority will be given to proposals that address the goals of the [Governor's PAsmart Grant Initiative](#), demonstrate the highest leverage expansion of access and equity of access to computer science and/or STEM education and programming, and proposals that expand access in areas with the highest need.
- 9. Are there document templates for the Budget Form, Timeline/Workplan Document, or Letters of Support?**
- There are no templates for the Advancing Grants.
 - At minimum, a Letter of Support should include the name of the partner organization, a point of contact and contact information at the organization, the organization's relationship to the lead applicant, the partner's relevant experience, role, responsibility, and commitment to the project. Only one document may be uploaded to the application. Therefore, all letters of support (one per partner) should be compiled into a single PDF.