Equity Literacy Grant Application

# Introduction

The Agency of Education (AOE) has engaged in multiple initiatives to develop an equity framework for education at the state level. Since beginning our efforts, the AOE has taken a multi-faceted approach -- from the ESSA State Plan development process, to an AOE-wide series of implicit bias trainings for all staff, to developing an Equity Lens Tool by which we examine statute, policy and guidelines we develop to ensure we surface equity gaps. As part of this multi-faceted effort, the AOE also completed the [Supporting Educational Equity (SEE) project](https://education.vermont.gov/documents/summary-of-outcomes-supporting-educational-equity-see-project) – a project whose goals were to ascertain what classroom level and systemic improvements are needed to fully leverage the equity-related changes in Vermont’s ESSA State Plan. Educators who participated in the project made many recommendations, including that Vermont’s PK-12 educators have increased opportunities for professional learning as it relates to equity literacy.

The AOE stands with Vermont educators to improve equity literacy for all learners and to protect Vermont’s most vulnerable populations by reducing disparities and addressing inequities that exist in our state related to race, disability status, poverty status, gender, sexuality, English Language Learner status, religion, cultural literacy, immigrant status, and refugee status. Paul Gorski defines equity literacy:

“. . . as the skills and dispositions that enable us to recognize, respond to and redress (i.e., correct for) conditions that deny some students access to the educational opportunities enjoyed by their peers. Equity literacy also describes the skills and dispositions that allow us to create and sustain equitable and just learning environments for all families and students. [(Gorski, 2014)](https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/imagining-equity-literacy)

To support our schools and educators in this collective effort, the AOE is providing competitive grants to encourage school systems to engage in professional learning opportunities that will lay the foundation for educators to develop and implement strategies to improve equity literacy in their systems. Competitive awards will be granted to SU/SDs that show the greatest promise for positive change. Those that create partnerships regionally and through collaboration with other organizations will be prioritized.

Applicants may apply for grants for up to $50,000. Grant applications will be reviewed by the Agency of Education after the May 17, 2019 application deadline. Approved grants may be fully or partially funded. The final award will be determined by the reviewers.

# Background

It has been twenty years since the Vermont Advisory Committee report to the United States Commission on Civil Rights first described the state of racism within its public schools. Subsequent follow-up reports concluded that while some positive inroads had been made within Vermont public schools, “racial harassment,” as well as the lack of administrative oversight of the issue, was still prevalent.

In 2017, the [Racial Disparity in State Systems Report](https://hrc.vermont.gov/sites/hrc/files/publications/2017-12-15%20%20Report%20and%20Recommendations%20Act%2054%20Final.pdf) elucidated the continuing concerns over racial disparities within Vermont public schools. Three suggestions stemming from the Report were to:

1. *teach children from an integrated curriculum that fairly represents both the contributions of People of Color (as well as indigenous people, women, people with disabilities, etc.) while fairly and accurately representing our history of oppression of these groups;*
2. *educate state employees about implicit bias, White Privilege, White Fragility and White Supremacy; and*
3. *increase the representation of People of Color in the state and school labor forces by focusing on recruitment, hiring and retention, as well as promotion of People of Color into positions of authority and responsibility on boards, commissions, etc.*

The Working Group was to review previously adopted state standards through an ethnic studies and social justice lens, and to make recommendations to areas that were lacking in strength of perspective. While H.794 did not pass during the 2018 session, it was re-introduced in the 2019 session as [H.3](https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2020/Docs/BILLS/H-0003/H-0003%20As%20passed%20by%20the%20House%20Official.pdf), with the intent of enhancing equity literacy within Vermont schools.

As evidenced by recent stories in our local news, there is important work to do in Vermont. Our schools can lead the way. Educators need to represent diverse perspectives when creating curriculum, purchasing instructional materials, and designing learning environments in order to foster the skills and knowledge necessary for all students to become responsible global citizens. Our Vermont students need to understand the perspectives and cultures of others, communicate ideas effectively across diverse audiences, and learn to act as global citizens by:

* Recognizing that our world is an increasingly complex web of connections and interdependencies;
* Understanding and exercising their rights and responsibilities within a pluralistic democratic society; and
* Acknowledging the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of an interconnected world.

Educators will need support to be intentional about providing opportunities to their students that enable them to appreciate diversity, honor multiple perspectives, respect diverse backgrounds, and engage in courageous conversations. The intent of this grant is to provide the professional learning opportunities that will make these goals a reality in Vermont schools.

# Vermont Agency of Education Priorities

This grant will support projects that:

1. Provide professional learning opportunities to educators to improve equity literacy and protect Vermont’s most vulnerable populations by reducing disparities and addressing inequities that exist in our state related to race, disability status, poverty status, gender/gender identity, sexuality, English language learner status, religion, cultural literacy, immigrant status, and refugee status.
2. Directly address topics of race, disability status, poverty status, gender, sexuality, English Language Learner status, religion, cultural literacy, immigrant status, and refugee status;
3. Are led by an interdisciplinary K-12 or secondary school/CTE grant leadership team ideally composed of administrators, staff, students, and community members;
4. Use data such as free and reduced lunch, equity gaps, vulnerable populations, surveys, expulsion rates, etc. to inform the grant request;
5. Include partnerships, either regionally or through collaboration with community organizations;
6. Identify a reasonable timeline for deliverables;
7. Document learning over time in order to share information with other SUs/SDs; and
8. Include a plan for sustainability.

# Project Award and Timeline

Grants will begin on July 1, 2019 and expire on June 30, 2020 with the expectation that program objectives are met and all reporting and monitoring requirements are successfully fulfilled*.* Grantees are expected to provide a plan, timeline, and budget request for the identified grant activity period.

**Timeline:**

Grant Application Released: March 25, 2019

Letters of Intent Due: April 19, 2019

Application Deadline: May 17, 2019

Anticipated Grant Duration: July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Number of Awards: Multiple awards are anticipated.

A Letter of Intent is not required but strongly recommended and should include:

1. Anticipated Partners;
2. Project Goals; and
3. Scope of Project.

Letters of Intent can be emailed to Pat Fitzsimmons at [pat.fitzsimmons@vermont.gov](mailto:pat.fitzsimmons@vermont.gov).

# Project Requirements

1. **Contact Information:** Name, address, phone number, and e-mail information for Lead Grant Contact, Partners, and Business Manager.
2. **Organizational Structure:** Provide a clear description of partnerships and a plan for project structure in order to meet the grant expectations. Define roles and responsibilities for an interdisciplinary K-12 or secondary school/CTE leadership team that ideally includes representation by administrators, staff, students, and community members.
3. **Communication System:** Identify intended strategies for communication with and among the school(s), partners, AOE staff, and any stakeholders. Additionally, explain how the work from this project will be disseminated to a wider group of educators.
4. **Project, Plan, Evidence, Timeline, and Benchmarks of Success:** Provide a clear description, an achievable plan, evidence basis, and timeline for this project, as well as specific indicators of quarterly project benchmarks. This plan and timeline must be developed for the time period between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020.
5. **Budget and Budget Justification:** Include a cost effective budget and justification for line items that reflect the goals and priorities of this project. This budget and budget justification must be for the time period between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020.

# Application Requirements

The narrative sections of the application must be double-spaced and the font must not be smaller than 12-point and shall not exceed 10 pages. Each application must contain the following sections:

1. **Contact Information:** Name, address, phone number, and e-mail information for Lead Grant Contact, Partners, and Business Manager. (Please see Appendices A and B.)
2. **Grant Narrative:**
   1. Project Description and Justification: A detailed description of the professional learning that includes:
      1. The rationale behind this project and how it will benefit their educational system;
      2. The anticipated number of educators who will be served;
      3. A plan with a schedule/timeline for July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020;
      4. Specific indicators for quarterly project benchmarks;
      5. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of participants as well as the Leadership Team;
      6. Intended strategies for communication with and among the school(s), partners, AOE staff, and any stakeholders;
      7. Connections to the Continuous Improvement Plan; and
      8. An explanation of how the professional learning will be integrated into school systems and on-going initiatives.
   2. Project Evidence and Final Evaluation: A detailed description of the project evidence and final evaluation that includes:
      1. A description of the professional learning objectives including a description of the measurements that will be used to determine success including clearly-defined project goals, objectives, and specific outcomes;
      2. Data and/or research that establishes the evidence base;
      3. Documentation of the progress made toward project goals;
      4. A summary of the impact of the professional learning on educator practice;
      5. Description of changes in student outcomes;
      6. An explanation of how the partnership functioned including strengths and challenges; and
      7. An explanation for how this work will be sustained.
   3. Partnerships: A detailed description of the partnerships that includes:
      1. At least one secondary school, but ideally K-12 systems;
      2. Regional or community organizations;
      3. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of partnerships;
      4. Strategies for communication among partners;
      5. A description of how strengths of the partners align with the goals of the grant; and
      6. A commitment to a formal partnership agreement detailing the above if awarded.
   4. Budget and Budget Justification: A detailed description of the budget as well as the budget justification that includes:
      1. A project budget for anticipated funding up to $50,000; and
      2. A budget justification that is clearly tied to the scope and requirements of the project. (Please see Appendix C for the Budget Template.)

# Application Submission and Review

* 1. **Submission:** Applicants must submit an original copy signed by an authorized institutional official as well as an electronic copy to Pat Fitzsimons via email ([pat.fitzsimmons@vermont.gov](mailto:pat.fitzsimmons@vermont.gov)) at the Vermont Agency of Education.

1. To be considered for funding, original signed applications must be received at the Vermont Agency of Education by 4:00 PM on May 17, 2019. Applications should be mailed or delivered to:

Pat Fitzsimmons

Student Pathways

Vermont Agency of Education

219 North Main Street, Suite 402

Barre, VT 05641

1. **Review Process:**
2. A review panel will evaluate the eligible applications in accordance with the required application components. (For support, please see Appendix D.)

**Criteria:**

| **Criteria** | **Points** |
| --- | --- |
| Project Description and Justification | 20 |
| Partnerships | 20 |
| Efficacy of Professional Learning (PL) Model | 20 |
| Budget and Budget Justification | 20 |
| Project Evidence and Final Evaluation | 20 |

The Agency reserves the right to award in full or in part, to reject any and all applications in whole or in part, and to waive technical defects, irregularities or omissions if, in its judgement, the best interest of students would be served. After receiving the application, the Agency reserves the right not to award a grant, to negotiate specific grant amounts and to select certain grantees regardless of points awarded as part of the process to meet federal requirements or State Board of Education priorities.

# VIII. Award Administration

1. **Notification of the Award:** The SU/SD designee will be notified of the status of their application within three weeks after the application deadline.
2. **Reporting Requirements:** The Leadership Team and/or SU/SD designee will provide quarterly updates on progress to a designated staff person at the Agency of Education.

## Appendix A: Lead Organization Contact Information

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Superintendent** |
| Institution or Organization |  |
| Name |  |
| Title |  |
| Address |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Email |  |
| Fax |  |
| Signature |  |
|  | **Lead Grant Contact** |
| Institution or Organization |  |
| Name |  |
| Title |  |
| Address |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Email |  |
| Fax |  |
| Signature |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Business Manager** |
| Institution or Organization |  |
| Name |  |
| Title |  |
| Address |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Email |  |
| Fax |  |
| Signature |  |

## Appendix B: Partner Contact Information

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Partner** |
| Institution or Organization |  |
| Name |  |
| Title |  |
| Address |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Email |  |
| Fax |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Partner** |
| Institution or Organization |  |
| Name |  |
| Title |  |
| Address |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Email |  |
| Fax |  |

**Note:** Additional partners may be added.

## Appendix C: Budget

Budget Template: This form is a required element of the grant application. Justification for each of the categories shall be included in the **budget narrative** portion of the application.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Functions** | **Salaries (100)** | **Employees Benefits (200)** | **Professional and Technical Services (300) Consultants Contracts** | **Other Purchased Services (500) Travel Printing** | **Supplies (600) Food Books Periodicals** | **Miscellaneous Expenditures (800)**  **Subgrants, Dues, and Fees** | **Total** |
| 2213 - Instructional Staff Training |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2219 - Other Improvement of Instruction Services |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2290 - Other Support Services - Instructional Staff |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **UCOA Function** | **Function Name** | **Function Description** |
| **2213** | **Instructional Staff Training** | Instructional Staff Training. Activities associated with the professional development and training of instructional personnel. These include such activities as in-service training (including mentor teachers), workshops, conferences, demonstrations, courses for college credit (tuition reimbursement), and other activities related to the ongoing growth and development of instructional personnel. Training that supports the use of technology for instruction should be included in this code (states may establish a subject code for specific tracking of technology-related training costs). The incremental costs associated with providing substitute teachers in the classroom (while regular teachers attend training) should be captured in this function code. All costs should be charged to this code regardless of whether training services are provided internally or purchased from external vendors. It should be noted that the salary of a teacher who is attending training would still be reported in function 1000. |
| **2219** | **Other Improvement of Instruction Services** | Other Improvement of Instruction Services. Activities for improving instruction other than those classified above. |
| **2290** | **Other Support Services - Instructional Staff** | Other Support Services—Instructional Staff. Services supporting the instructional staff not properly classified elsewhere in the 2200 series. (Used with all programs 100–900.) |

| **Object** | **Object Code Name** | **Object Code Description** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **100** | **Personal Services - Salaries** | Amounts paid to both permanent and temporary school district employees, including personnel substituting for those in permanent positions. This includes gross salary for personal services rendered while on the payroll of the school district. (Used with all functions except 5000 Debt Service.) |
| **200** | **Personal Services - Employee Benefits** | Amounts paid by the school district on behalf of employees (amounts not included in gross salary, but in addition to that amount). Such payments are fringe benefit payments and, although not paid directly to employees, nevertheless are part of the cost of personal services. (Used with all functions except 5000 Debt Service.) |
| **300** | **Purchased Professional and Technical Services** | Services that by their nature can be performed only by persons or firms with specialized skills and knowledge. Although a product may or may not result from the transaction, the primary reason for the purchase is the service provided. Included are the services of architects, engineers, auditors, dentists, medical doctors, lawyers, consultants, teachers, and accountants. It is recommended that a separate account be established for each type of service provided to the school district. Services purchased from another school district or from other government sources should be coded to one of the object codes from 590 through 592. |
| **500** | **Other Purchased Services** | Amounts paid for services rendered by organizations or personnel not on the payroll of the school district (separate from professional and technical services or property services). Although a product may or may not result from the transaction, the primary reason for the purchase is the service provided. |
| **600** | **Supplies** | Amounts paid for items that are consumed, are worn out, or have deteriorated through use or items that lose their identity through fabrication or incorporation into different or more complex units or substances. Refer to appendix E for the criteria for distinguishing between a supply item and an equipment item. |
| **800** | **Debt Service and Miscellaneous** | Amounts paid for goods and services not otherwise classified above. |

Appendix D: Scoring Criteria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Scoring Guide: Each criteria is awarded a score of 1 to 20 – 20 being the highest.**  **We offer the following as a guide to assist you.** |
| 16-20 = Excellent | The proposal demonstrates the highest level of thinking, capacity or impact. The content of the responses is exemplary in this particular criteria area and could be an example to others. |
| 11-15 = Good | Exhibits ideas that will affect positive change. While the criteria are not fully addressed, the responses are thoughtful and striving for effectiveness. |
| 6-10 = Fair | Gaps are apparent. Criteria are not addressed fully. Responses lack detail. |
| 0-5 = Poor | Weaknesses are apparent in the criteria, the question is not addressed or the logic is faulty. |

| **Criteria** | **Best Response** | **Score 0-20** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Description and Justification**  20 Points | A detailed description of the professional learning that includes: The rationale behind this project and how it will benefit their educational system;The anticipated number of educators who will be served;A plan with a schedule/timeline for July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020;Specific indicators for quarterly project benchmarks;Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of participants as well as the Leadership Team;Intended strategies for communication with and among the school(s), partners, AOE staff, and any stakeholders;Connections to the Continuous Improvement Plan; andAn explanation of how the professional learning will be integrated into school systems and on-going initiatives. |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Best Response** | **Score 0-20** | **Comments** |
| **Partnerships**  20 Points | A detailed description of the partnerships that includes:   * Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of partners, participants, and the Leadership Team; * Strategies for communication with and among the school(s), partners, AOE staff, and any stakeholders; * Specific commitments from partners and joint planning activities; * A description of how the strengths of the partners align with the goals of the grant; and * Partners must include at least one secondary school, but ideally K-12 systems. |  |  |
| **Efficacy of Professional Learning (PL) Model**  20 Points | A detailed description of the professional learning model that includes;   * Active engagement of educators in the learning process; * Opportunities for collaboration among educators; * Models of effective, evidence-based practice; * Feedback and time for reflection; and * A plan for sustaining professional learning over time.   Adapted from Linda Darling-Hammond [Effective Teacher Professional Development](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/effective-teacher-professional-development-report).  Additional considerations for Vermont licensing [Core Teaching and Leadership Standards for Vermont Educators](https://education.vermont.gov/documents/educator-quality-licensing-core-teaching-leadership-standards). |  |  |

| **Criteria** | **Best Response** | **Score 0-20** | **Comments** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Budget and Budget Justification**  20 Points | A detailed description of the Budget as well as a Budget Justification that includes:   * A project budget for anticipated funding up to $50,000; * A budget justification that is clearly tied to the scope and requirements of the project. (Please see Appendix C for Budget Template); and * A fiscal agent with the capacity and experience to manage the financial requirements of the grant; |  |  |
| **Evidence and Final Evaluation**  20 Points | A detailed description of the Project Evidence and Final Evaluation that includes:   * the professional learning objectives and the measurements that will be used to determine success, including clearly-defined project goals, objectives, and specific outcomes; * Data and/or research that establishes the evidence base; * A process for documenting the progress made toward project goals; * A summary of the impact of the professional learning on educator practice; * Data regarding student outcomes; and * An explanation of how the partnership functioned including strengths and challenges. |  |  |
|  | Total score: | 100 | * I recommend as a recipient of this grant. * I do not recommend as a recipient of this grant. |