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OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
STATE OF MONTANA

Putting Montana Students First **A⁺**



Montana Office of Public Instruction

INVITATION TO APPLY

ADVANCED OPPORTUNITY ACT FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

ISSUED BY

Montana Office of Public Instruction
1227 11th Avenue, 2nd Floor
Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501

Next Application Period:

1st Monday in December 2022 - 2nd Monday January, 2023

Application Opens: 8:00 a.m. December 5, 2022

Application Closes: 5:00 p.m. January 9, 2023

Questions regarding this application should be directed to:

Montana Office of Public Instruction
1227 11th Avenue, 2nd Floor
Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501
Sharyl Allen, Deputy Superintendent
Sharyl.allen@mt.gov
406-444-7325
Krystal Smith, Program Manager
krystal.smith@mt.gov

OVERVIEW

House Bill 387, The Montana Advanced Opportunity Act, sponsored by Representative Llew Jones, was signed into law on May 9, 2019. HB 387 amends section [20-7-701, MCA](#).

Purpose: The Montana Advanced Opportunity Act:

- Expand personalized career and technical education opportunities for middle and high school pupils.
- Reduce out-of-pocket costs for pupils and families in support of a pupil's postsecondary success.
- Empower pupils to actively engage in forming their postsecondary success path.
- Provide expanded flexibility to districts in supporting each pupil's postsecondary success path to align with each pupil's individual interests, passions, strengths, needs and culture.

Definitions:

Advanced Opportunity means any course, exam, experiential, online, or other learning opportunity that is incorporated in a district's advanced opportunity plan and is designed to advance each qualifying pupil's opportunity for postsecondary career and educational success.

Advanced Opportunity Aid means for fiscal years 2021 and beyond.

Advanced Opportunity Plan means a plan adopted by a board of trustees of a district that provides advanced opportunities for the pupils of the district.

Specific requirements for the district of the application:

- District Development of an Advanced Opportunity Plan
- Include a strategic plan, with appropriate planning horizons for implementation - measurable objectives to ensure accountability, and planned strategies to:
 - Develop an advanced opportunity plan for each participating pupil grades 6-12 that fosters individualized pathways for career and postsecondary opportunities that honors individual interests, passions, strengths, needs and culture and is supported through relationships among family, teachers, businesses, peers, post-secondary, and the larger community.
 - Embed community-based, experiential, online and work-based learning opportunities and foster a learning environment that incorporates both virtual and face-to-face connections.
 - Ensure equality of educational opportunity to participate by all pupils of the district.
- The local school district's application must be formally approved by the district's board of trustees and signed by the district board chair.

Key Dates:

- Opening and closing dates for the Fiscal Year 2024 application:
1st Monday of December 2022 - 2nd Monday of January 2023 (December 5 - January 9)
- **Annual report** submission window is: 1st Monday December 2022 - 2nd Monday January 2023. (This applies to districts that received funds for FY 2023.)
- The application is available on the OPI website. (This page also has a submit button where all applications will be digitally submitted to the OPI.)

Note:

All applications will be submitted from the OPI Transformational Learning Page.

All applications received by the OPI will be submitted to the Board of Public Education for qualification.

FUNDING

For fiscal year 2023, \$2,505,479 was available for distribution of advanced opportunity aid to qualified districts. Applying and qualifying districts used \$1,759,628.06 of these allocated funds. The FY 2023 payment will be distributed no later than October 1, 2022. When districts are funded, these state payments are deposited into the school district flexibility fund.

An elementary district would receive 3% of the total quality educator payment as defined in 20-9-306, MCA, in the prior year; a high school district would receive 20% of the total quality educator payment as defined in 20-9-306, MCA, in the prior year; and a K-12 district would receive 8.5% of the total quality educator payment as defined in 20-9-306, MCA, in the prior year.

Advanced opportunity aid may be expended by the district for any pupil from grades 6-12, subject to certain conditions specified in the bill. **At least 60%** of the advanced opportunity aid payment must be used to address out-of-pocket costs for pupils or pupil's family, as specified in the bill. The remaining funds of the district's advanced opportunity aid may be spent by the district to provide personalized K-12 career and vocational/technical education course offered by the district.

A qualified district may supplement state funding of advanced opportunity aid with matched expenditures from its adopted adult education budget, not to exceed 25% of the district's advanced opportunity aid payment. These funds must be used in the same manner the advanced opportunity aid payment is expended.

The following table shows the calculation to derive the appropriations for FY 2022, FY 2023 and FY 2024.

FISCAL YEAR	Quality Educator Payment (prior year)	Elementary - 3%	High School - 20%	K-12 - 8.5%	Anticipated Appropriation
2022	\$3,335	\$100.05	\$667.00	\$283.48	\$1,649,057
2023	\$3,378	\$101.34	\$675.50	\$686.40	\$2,505,479
2024	\$3,482	\$102.96	\$686.40	\$291.72	\$3,394,042

Funding is provided on a “first come – first served” basis per HB 387 Section (3)(d).

ANNUAL REPORT OF PROGRESS

A district's annual report window of submission is: the first Monday in December through the second Monday in January. The following are the minimum annual report requirements for continued qualification:

- The number of pupils benefitting from advanced opportunity aid.

Updated July 2022

- The number and type of credits and certifications or credentials earned by pupils who have been paid for by the program.
- Projected growth of pupil participation.
- Issues, experiences, and how issues are being addressed.
- **A report of progress towards measurable objectives under the district’s advanced opportunity plan and updates to the plan.**

ASSISTANCE

Superintendent Arntzen has hired a Transformational-Personalized Learning Manager to administer the program. Technical assistance is available to any school district that has a need and is planning to apply for transformational learning and/or Advanced Opportunity funding. When emailing for assistance, be sure to include your timeline and phone number. Krystal Smith, the program manager, is ready to support and assist your efforts: krystal.smith@mt.gov.

The OPI participates in various conferences with Q&A sessions for districts. In addition, regularly scheduled ZOOM webinars are offered for district staff. Finally, on-site technical assistance is also available.