



Funding Career Preparation and Launch Grants

2027-29 Biennial Capital Budget Decision Package

Agency: 3500 Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Budget period: 2027-29 Biennial Budget

Budget level: PL

PROJECT SUMMARY

School district Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs career preparation and launch grant funding to purchase necessary tools and equipment when creating STEM based learning spaces. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) requests \$10 million to support career preparation and launch grants for CTE programs statewide.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

OSPI requests \$10 million in continued funding for the competitive career preparation and launch grants initiated in the 2017-19 Biennial Capital Budget. The Legislature appropriated \$4 million in the 2025-27 Biennial Capital Budget for competitive grants. As of April 2026, OSPI received over \$9.9 million in project requests from school districts statewide, demonstrating a significant need for this grant program. In response to this need, OSPI requests that funding for this program be increased to \$10 million. In addition, the current grant award limit per district needs to be increased from \$200,000 to \$250,000 to help keep up with the rising costs of inflation.

As directed by the Legislature in the 2019-21 Capital Budget, OSPI consulted with school districts and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to develop grant criteria for the program. The proposed competitive grant program would continue to use these criteria to administer the program.

What will the request produce or construct? Who or what will be impacted by the budget request and how will they be impacted?

This competitive grant program will fund school districts to prepare students for postsecondary career pathways by purchasing materials and equipment when establishing STEM CTE programs. By strengthening students' career readiness, the program will expand the local skilled labor pool and help employers access qualified workers. Grants will be awarded to multiple school districts. Project timelines will vary; each awardee will have its own start and end dates.

Identify the problem or opportunity addressed by this request. Why is the request a priority? What would be the result of not acting?

Washington employers need highly skilled workers to fill vacant positions. The Career Preparation and Launch Grants program addresses that need by developing a skilled labor force aligned with employer demand.

The program supports students in launching rewarding postsecondary career pathways while helping employers gain access to qualified talent. Grants target initiatives that build career-ready skills and smooth transitions from school to work.

For new funding requests for programs or projects that have received previous appropriations (either a phase of construction or previous grant rounds), how much has been spent or put under contract?

All funds appropriated in past biennia have been granted to school district projects.

Does this project or program leverage non-state funding? If yes, how much by source?

Non-state funds will not be used to complete the project.

For major construction projects, describe the viable alternative solutions you considered. Why was this alternative chosen?

The Career Preparation and Launch Grants consolidate the former CTE Equipment Grant Program and the STEM Classrooms and Labs grant program from prior biennia. Following direction in the Legislature's 2019–21 Capital Budget, OSPI consulted with school districts and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to develop program criteria.

These consultations concluded that a single, comprehensive competitive grant is more effective for supporting career preparation and launch activities across the state.

For major construction projects, what project delivery method has been or will be selected and why?

N/A

Location

- Address: N/A
- Zip Code: N/A
- County: Statewide
- City: Olympia
- Legislative District: 098

Grant recipient organization

Local School Districts.

RCW that establishes grant

28A.525

Application process used

OPSI will continue to use the competitive grant program criteria established in collaboration with WA STEM and other stakeholders.

Describe the Growth Management Impacts

None.

Funding Requested

- 2027-29 \$10,000,000
- 2029-31 \$10,000,000
- 2031-33 \$10,000,000
- 2033-35 \$10,000,000
- 2035-37 \$10,000,000

STRATEGIC AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Provide context on how this request fits into the agency's work. Describe how this project supports the agency's strategic plan or would improve agency performance.

This project supports Superintendent Reykdal's K-12 Education Vision of his goal for Washington's public education system to prepare every student who walks through our school doors for post-secondary aspirations, careers, and life.

How is your proposal impacting equity in the state? Which communities are impacted by this proposal? What are the measurable outcomes that would result from the project?

STEM and career preparation are closely connected. The Career Preparation and Launch Grants help school districts purchase equipment and improve facilities so students gain experience in realistic work environments. This grant request supports under-resourced districts so students statewide have equitable access to career-ready STEM learning and facilities.

OTHER SUPPORTING MATERIALS

If this project is linked to the Puget Sound Action Agenda and/or the Governor's Salmon Strategy, please follow the instructions in Chapter 14 of the operating budget instructions and Chapter 3 of the capital budget instructions.

This project does not impact the Puget Sound Action Agenda or the Governor's Salmon Strategy.

Is there additional information you would like decision makers to know when evaluating this request?

No.