

Massachusetts Middle School Career Exploration

Request for Proposals

Application Deadline: February 28, 2019

About ASA:

At American Student Assistance® (ASA), we empower kids to find and pursue their own education and career paths, and provide them with the support and tools they need to get there. ASA® approaches its mission from multiple angles—innovating products, partnering, and funding programs and services—that deliver significant impact to kids on a broad scale.

We all want our children to lead happy and successful lives. To set students on that path, ASA is committed to helping kids know themselves, know their options, and make informed choices to achieve their education and career goals.

Purpose of Grant:

Students need tools and information to help them make informed choices about life after high school. The path to discovery should begin as early as middle school so students can learn about all the educational and career possibilities ahead of them. At ASA, we believe that career exploration at an early age can help students develop a clear plan for their future that lessens the financial burden of postsecondary education, and increases their chance of success in their careers.

To expand this work directly into school districts, ASA is looking for proposals for career and interest exploration programs in middle school (6th-8th). The grant will support the development and execution of new programs, or the expansion of existing career exploration programs, that will expose middle school students to different career pathways.

Grant Usage:

Grants are open to all Massachusetts public middle schools. Grants will be awarded directly to schools and districts and must be used specifically for middle school programming. Funding from the grant can be used for the planning and development of the program, development of curriculum, professional development, hiring of a teacher for the course/program, any technology needs, and field trips.

Data Collection Requirements:

Recipients of the grant should be prepared to work with ASA's Insights & Outcomes Group to obtain pre- and post- survey information regarding participation of students within the program being designed, relevant performance/grading data for those students, and other data collected by the school. School Administration must be prepared to work with ASA to secure the appropriate permissions for the data and/or remove personally identifiable information to comply with any existing agreements, regulations, policies, etc.

ASA seeks to gain insight into the participating students' education and career decisions and the influences on those decisions, especially as they relate to the impact of the programs, curriculum and/or resources provided by ASA or as a result of ASA sponsored grants and funding. As such, ASA's Insights & Outcomes Group, with the cooperation of School Administration, will develop a mechanism to collect anonymized data on the students participating in the program which may include but not be limited to data in the Student Information System (SIS), such as gender, age, race and grade point average. ASA's Insights & Outcomes Group will also develop, with the assistance of the school administration, surveys to be completed by students pre and post the program, to evaluate any changes in attitudes or awareness of education and career pathways, likelihood to pursue additional exploration in high school, etc. In addition, ASA may periodically observe the programs in the actual setting it is being delivered. ASA's Insights & Outcomes Group will only use data that is provided and/or collected pursuant to the program to prepare analysis, reports and abstracts about the program for program refinement, effectiveness and optimization purposes and/or to publicize these programs (with acknowledgement of School Administration/Organization Management). ASA and school administration will, except to the extent disclosure is required by federal, state, and/or local laws, maintain the confidentiality of all personal information provided.

ASA's Insights & Outcomes Group should also be allowed to review reports on the program to be published by the school administration.

Grant amount:

Districts will be awarded up to \$100,000 over 3 years. Amount awarded each year will be determined based on submitted proposed budget for program.

Application requirements:

1. **Proposal of intended program (Max 3 pages):** Proposals should include the goals and intentions of the program and answer the following questions:
 - a. What is the class/program you will implement at your school(s)?
 - b. How will the class/program help middle school students with career/interest exploration?
 - c. How will it be implemented at schools? (Will this be a mandatory program? Please include any plans for staffing for this program/class)
 - d. What evidence/research exists that supports success through your program model?
 - e. How will this work be made sustainable in your district?
 - f. Why is this work worth doing? How will your community be impacted?
2. **Background (Max 1 page)**
 - a. Include description of school(s) where program/class will be implemented
 - b. Provide information on team that will carry out program planning and implementation at each school
3. **Budget and Budget Justification**
 - a. Include itemized budget, presented in line-item table format
 - b. Brief justification for each item
 - c. Please provide details on how funds will be used over 3 years

Selection Criteria:

Programs should:

- Include experiential learning opportunities for students. Program should allow for students to visualize themselves and experience various career and educational opportunities in real life
- Provide development of 21st century skills
- Provide students with connections between skills, different education paths and careers
- Be integrated into school culture and curriculum
- Preference will be given to programs that occur during the school day and to programs that are instituted as a requirement for all middle school students (6th-8th) at participating school(s)

Application Timeline:

- **Applications Due: February 28, 2019**
 - The proposal (as one PDF document) is to be submitted electronically to Liliana Ornelas, Program Development Manager, at Lornelas@asa.org, by February 28, 2019
- **Application Review: March 2019.**
 - Proposals will be reviewed by ASA staff and finalists will be asked to host a site visit and interview/more detailed discussion with our review committee.

Grants will be awarded by April 1st and programs should be implemented by Fall 2019.

Questions? Please contact Liliana Ornelas, Program Development Manager at lornelas@asa.org