Offered Services: Accountability Pathways

Introduction

The Accountability Pathways is intended to support Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and schools with planning for and implementing the statutory options, or pathways, for persistently low-performing schools and LEAs. For those nearing the end of the Accountability Clock, the grant can support exploring the pathways, taking thoughtful action, and increasing readiness for discussions with the State Board of Education. For those who receive a directed action from the state board, the grant can support implementation of the approved pathway plan.

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Eligibility & Prioritization

Eligibility. LEAs that meet the following criteria are eligible to apply:

- A school that is in Year 4 or 5 of Priority Improvement or Turnaround on the current School Performance Framework or a school that currently has an action directed by the State Board of Education; or
- A LEA that is in Year 4 or 5 of Priority Improvement or Turnaround on the current District Performance Framework currently has an action directed by the State Board of Education.

Eligible schools and LEAs are strongly encouraged to apply for the Accountability Pathways route in Year 4 in anticipation of state board hearings during Year 5. If a school or LEA transitions to Year 4 On Watch or Year 4 On Hold, funds may be used to support early action activities. Schools or LEAs who advance to Year 5 plus shall use funds for activities associated with State Board-directed action.

All schools with active state board directed actions are eligible for accountability pathways funding. If a site with state board directed action successfully exits the clock and has existing accountability pathways funding, the site is eligible for funding through the academic year in which they successfully exited directed action but is ineligible for subsequent funding. For example, if a site was granted pathways funding and on the 2026 SPF received a second performance or improvement plan type that ended its state board directed action and allowed the site to exit performance watch, the site would still be eligible for its previously awarded accountability pathways funding for the 2026-27 school year, but would be ineligible for pathways funding in subsequent years.

Schools and LEAs with active Accountability Pathway funds for 2026-27 or 2027-28 may be deemed ineligible for funding and guided to apply, if eligible, in a future EASI grant cycle. Schools and LEAs are limited to one award per fiscal year across all active EASI cohort grant cycles. An eligible school or LEA with active

Accountability Pathways funding should contact the assigned CDE School Transformation Specialist to determine when it is appropriate to apply for additional Accountability Pathways funding.

Prioritization. If not all EASI proposals can be funded; proposals that meet grant expectations will be funded in the order of the EASI school-level prioritization list. Schools with the highest number of prioritization points will be funded first. District-level supports will use the average prioritization of all EASI eligible schools. Accountability Pathways is funded first out of state grant funds. Details on how prioritization points are calculated and the points for each EASI eligible school are available on the EASI Resources and Technical Assistance webpage.

Program Considerations & Fit

Program Considerations. The proposed budget and use of Accountability Pathway funds should be done in partnership with the assigned CDE School Transformation Specialist.

Program Fit. Accountability Pathways is specifically designed to support nearing the end of the Accountability Clock or with directed action by the State Board of Education. Accountability Pathways is a good fit for schools or LEAs with current or potentially new EASI supports including Exploration Supports, School Turnaround Leadership Development, or Facilitated Board Training for School Improvement. Accountability Pathways may not be a good fit for schools currently supported with Connect for Success or School Transformation Network. Schools and LEAs should discuss program fit with their assigned CDE School Transformation Specialist.

Active EASI Accountability Pathways may be taken into consideration in determining the appropriate timing and need for additional Accountability Pathways funds. A school or LEA may be eligible for Accountability Pathways, but it may not be the appropriate year to reapply for additional funding based on the accountability status of the school or LEA.

Sequence of Program Support.

The sequence of the work is determined in partnership with Accountability Pathways program lead and the assigned CDE School Transformation Specialist. The sequence of the work should support the design and implementation of a pathways plan, but will be customized to the specific needs of the school and/or LEA.

Available Funds & Duration

Available Funds. Applicants may request up to the maximum award amount for a school or LEA for eligible sites. Award may be:

School

- Up to $100,000 per school per year for up to 2.5 years of support for schools under directed action
- Up to $100,000 per school in 2026-27 and 2028-29 for schools in Year 4 on 2025 School Performance Frameworks
    - *Note: Awards for 2028-29 are contingent on the schools progressing accountability clock. If a school moves off the clock on the 2028 School Performance Frameworks, the award for 2028-29 will not be released.*

District/LEA

- Up to $100,000 per district per year for up to 2.5 years of support for districts under directed action
- Up to $100,000 per district in 2026-27 and 2028-29 for districts in Year 4 on the 2026 District Performance Frameworks

- *Note: Awards for 2028-29 are contingent on the district progressing on the accountability clock. If the district moves off the clock on the 2028 District Performance Frameworks, the award for 2028-29 will not be released.*

Note: Total Accountability Pathway awards per district/LEA may not exceed $400,000 per year.

Note: If the action directed by the State Board of Education for management at either the school and/or district level, award amounts may be increased beyond the maximum award amounts to account for the costs associated with contracting with an Accountability Pathways Partner. Any increase exceeding the award maximum is at the discretion of CDE staff, contingent on funding availability, and must include notable cost sharing on the district's behalf.

Duration. Program support is designed to support schools or districts in preparation for a potential state board hearing and those sites under state directed action (1.5 to 2.5 years). For schools and districts in Year 4, Accountability Pathway awards are awarded in Year 4 to make funds available for preparation and intervention prior to a potential state board hearing. Funds are intended to support activities in 2026-27 and 2027-28. Year 4 sites will also receive a contingent award for up to the maximum amount in 2028-29. Schools and districts under directed action in Year 5 and beyond will receive up to the maximum allowable amount per fiscal year while under directed action and may apply for up to 2.5 years of additional pathways support.

Allowable Use of Funds

Funds are intended to support development or implementation of a pathways plan, continuation of early action activities, or to support the implementation of directed action by the State Board of Education. Allowable use of funds includes costs associated with:

- Consulting and technical assistance for pathway plan
- Visiting other sites with successful or promising implementation of a pathway option
- Diagnostic reviews for the purpose of identifying systemic issues and determining pathway fit
- Events, facilitated meetings, or community gatherings regarding pathways
- Translation services
- Stipends for teachers and support staff to attend pathways activities
- Travel to CDE-led convenings or meetings regarding grant activities
- Technical assistance on strategic resource allocation for pathways
- Costs incurred during the recruitment of and negotiations with an innovation partner, management partner, and/or a charter school operator. Such costs may include stipends for staff time or legal fees incurred during the establishment of contracts with partners
- Fees for third-party providers contracted to implement the state board directed action
- Activities associated with early action or early implementation of pathways plan

Budget Recommendations. For the application, a draft budget should include how the funds may be used as aligned to the pathways plan or directed action by the State Board of Education. It is acceptable, however, to use a general placeholder in the budget if approved by the assigned CDE School Transformation Specialist or if the site is in the initial stages of pathway plan development. Any expenses related to an external provider must be supported by a scope of work (draft version acceptable) that clearly outlines timelines, deliverables, and costs for the eligible school.

Indirect Costs. Indirect costs should not be entered into the budget for Accountability Pathways. If eligible and funded, grantees will receive state funded awards. State grants are not eligible for indirect costs.

Fund Considerations.

- Funds from this opportunity must be used to **supplement and not supplant** any federal, state, and local funds currently being used to provide activities.
- Post-award revisions must be submitted and approved in the online system prior to incurring expenses. Any expenses incurred prior to approval are the responsibility of the LEA. All post-award revisions must be approved by 06/30.
- For federal awards, funds must be obligated by 09/30 and requested by 11/1 of each respective fiscal year.
- For state awards, funds must be obligated by 06/30 of the final year of the grant cycle.
- A school or district may carry funds forward in alignment with funding source restrictions and with CDE approval. At the end of the grant performance period, any non-requested federal funds are reverted and any unspent state funds must be returned to the state.
- CDE may terminate a grant award upon thirty days' notice if it is deemed by CDE that the applicant is not fulfilling the requirements of the funded program as specified in the approved project application, or if the program is generating less than satisfactory results.
- Multi-year or future award year amounts are contingent on allocations of state and federal funds to CDE in each respective fiscal year.

Important Program Dates

Program Dates	Activity
September- December	Meet with CDE School Transformation Specialist to discuss interest in applying for support and outline a proposed budget
December	Application due
January	Award notifications

Evaluation and Reporting

Each grantee of the program must, at a minimum, agree to the following evaluation, reporting, and/or progress monitoring components:

- Integration of pathways work within the school or LEA's Unified Improvement Plan (UIP), if year 4 or pathway plan if a site with active state board directed action.
- If the school or district reaches the end of the Accountability Clock, the LEA will be expected to present its pathway plan— developed with CDE support—to the State Board of Education prior to any end-of-clock statutory deadlines. LEAs using grant funds for implementation activities will be required to comply with all progress monitoring requirements requested by CDE staff and the state board.
- Any school or district contact working with an approved external provider funded through the EASI grant may be asked to serve as a reference for provider approvals as part of the CDE School & District Support RFI process in the following year.
- Final Expenditure Report (FER) in GAINS each fiscal year by 09/30.
- *Note: All data collected will protect personally identifiable information (PII) protected and is only reported on an aggregate level for purposes of evaluating the EASI support and/or supporting future program improvements.*

Program Assurances

LEA Commitments:

- The LEA will invest a portion of its own budget to support implementation of its state board directed action (if applicable).
- Ensure the LEA and staff will not discriminate against anyone regarding race, gender, national origin, color, disability, or age.
- LEA will be required to submit Final Expenditure Reports (FER) the end of each fiscal year.
- LEA understands that unobligated funds state funds will be returned to CDE and unobligated federal funds will be rescinded at the conclusion of the grant cycle.
- Funds will be used to supplement and not supplant any federal, state, and local moneys currently being used to provide services and grant dollars will be administered by the appropriate fiscal agent.
- Funded projects will maintain appropriate fiscal and program records and fiscal audits of this program will be conducted by the grantees as a part of their regular audits.
- If any findings of misuse of these funds are discovered, project funds will be returned to CDE.

District Leadership Commitments:

- Identify a point person with decision-making authority who will lead the process for the school(s) being served by the grant. This person must be an LEA employee who sits on the Superintendent's leadership team and has the authority to work with the local school board.

School Leadership Commitments:

- School leader will participate on the LEA team in all grant activities.
- School leadership team and staff representatives attend events, meetings, and community gatherings.
- School leader collaborates with LEA and CDE on developing a timeline for pathways.

Related Resources & Information

CDE: Accountability Pathways: www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/accountability_clock