Note: This is a reposting of the RFA, if you have been awarded in the first round, you do not need to reapply.

# Specialized Secondary ProgramsRequest for Applications2021–22 Cohort 8A

**California Department of Education**



**Application Due Date: Friday, January 14, 2022**

Administered by the

High School Innovations and Initiatives Office

Career and College Transition Division

California Department of Education

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## Application Instructions

### Specialized Secondary Programs (SSP) Timeline

**SSP Cohort 8A Planning Grant Period:**

**March 1, 2022–March 1, 2023**

**SSP Planning Grant Activities**

| **Activity** | **Date** |
| --- | --- |
| Release of Request for Applications (RFA) | November 29, 2021 |
| RFA Technical Assistance Webinar | December 15, 2021 |
| Applications Due by Email | January 14, 2022 |
| Applicants Notified (Grant Award Letter or Letters of Regret) | March 1, 2022 |
| 2021–22 End-of-Year Report Due | December 1, 2022 |
| SSP Planning Grant Funds Expended | March 1, 2023 |
| End-of-Project Financial Expenditure Report Due | April 1, 2023 |

**Effective Strategies for Applicants**

1. Read the entire RFA and follow all guidance and instructions provided throughout.
2. Participate in the RFA Technical Assistance webinar scheduled for

**December 15, 2021**. Individuals who wish to participate in the webinar should send an email to SSPs at ssprograms@cde.ca.gov requesting the login information by **December 10, 2021**. Multiple individuals from each site are encouraged to participate in the webinar.

1. Refer to the rubric (Appendix A) before responding to each question.
2. After completing steps 1–3 above, contact by email at ssprograms@cde.ca.gov if additional guidance or clarification is required.
3. Have a colleague, who is not familiar with the grant, review and perform a mock scoring of your application prior to submission.

## Overview

### Purpose

The SSP is authorized by the California *Education Code* (*EC*) sections 58800–58806, that provide start-up funds for the establishment of a new, innovative specialized program or school for pupils in grades nine through twelve in high schools. The SSP faculty is expected to develop new standards-based model curriculum that provides enhanced learning opportunities in a specialized content area related to a specific career technical education (CTE) pathway as identified in the *California Career Technical Education Model Curriculum Standards.* The Legislature intends for the SSP to benefit the state economy by having SSP schools located in close proximity to related industries.

All California public high schools, county offices of education, consortium of local educational agencies (LEAs), and charter schools are eligible to apply. Alternative education schools of any kind should apply only if they are structured to support the development, and sustaining of a cohort of students for the proposed SSP. Simply being a new school does not automatically equate to a higher innovation score. **New schools opening in fall of 2021 and schools without a full complement of grade levels** must thoroughly explain how the proposed sequence of courses is different from what would traditionally be offered in typical high school course offerings. This explanation should be included in the response to question number one under Section 1: Curriculum Development. The SSP grant is not intended to supplement the basic funding for opening a new, traditional high school.

As a result, the California Department of Education (CDE) expects high-quality, innovative approaches to curriculum and instruction. Programs selected for funding are structured for participating students to engage in areas of study in a deeper, practical, and integrated way. Additionally, programs are designed for students to develop knowledge and skills that will prepare them for postsecondary education and careers. Funded programs are expected to plan two new, sequenced courses in two consecutive grade levels. Not only does the SSP approach often lead to recognizable benefits for the entire school, LEA, and local community, this approach can also serve as a model for effective educational practices for other schools in the state.

### Grant Opportunities Available

The SSP grant provides funding opportunities for planning grants up to $35,000.

Planning grants provide start-up funds for the planning of a new, innovative, specialized program as described in Section A: Purpose. The SSP planning funds must be used to plan and design the new SSP or school, visit other California school sites with related programs or instructional methods, write new curriculum, and/or obtain professional development for the identified SSP teachers who will plan and implement the program. Grantees are required to plan two new, sequenced courses in two consecutive grade levels. Up to **9** planning grants may be awarded this year through the selection process.

Successful planning grant applicants may qualify for three years of implementation funding. Typically, implementation grants are funded for approximately $100,000 during the first year of implementation, $75,000 for the second year, and $35,000 for the third year.

### Funding

This SSP grant provides funding for the grant period beginning March 1, 2022, through March 1, 2023. Continued funding after the grant period is not guaranteed. Grantees will be eligible for continued implementation funding based on the annual progress in implementing the proposed program as determined by the End-of-Year Report, End-of-Project Financial Expenditure Report, and the evaluation of all submitted and posted curriculum. All grant requirements, including reporting requirements, must be met to ensure consideration for future funding. **Continued funding for Cohort 8A grantees may be competitive. Future implementation grants may be awarded based on the quality of meeting ALL SSP grant requirements.**

### Eligibility Requirements

All California public high schools, county offices of education, consortium of LEAs, and charter schools are eligible to apply for SSP planning grants.

Applicants must clearly identify and describe the two new, yearlong, sequenced courses in two consecutive grade levelsthat are to be planned with SSP funding (proposals of three or more courses are not fundable). Each course in the proposed sequence of courses must be identified for a single grade level and not a range of grade levels. Courses identified for a range of grade levels resemble elective options more than a definite sequence of courses. This does not prevent a student from beginning the sequence of courses a year later than originally planned or anticipated. In addition, grant applicants must identify oneCTE industry sector and oneCTE career pathway, as described in the *California Career Technical Education Model Curriculum Standards*, that best align with their proposed SSP (see Appendixes B and C). If integrating multiple pathways, applicants must identify the pathway that contains the majority of the CTE standards specific to the SSP course content. The SSP funds may not be utilized to revise an existing course or expand an existing pathway or program.

The SSP funding cannot be used to supplement an existing California Partnership Academy, Linked Learning pathway, career academy, or other existing pathways, programs, competitions (on or off campus), or clubs at the school. High schools that currently have these types of programs may apply for the SSP grant if the focus of the SSP is significantly different from the existing programs (e.g., an unrelated/different pathway). The SSP funding is for new and innovative programs.

Although valuable offerings for any school, exploratory, survey, work experience, and internship courses typically lack the specificity and focus to be considered innovative. The fact that a course may be considered a capstone course does not ensure that it is part of a definite sequence of study as defined in this grant application. The development and dissemination of curriculum is the only deliverable required of this grant. Therefore, applicants should propose courses that only require the development of a significant amount of innovative curriculum.

The two proposed courses must be taught by district employees. The courses must be taught during the regular school day at the same school site. County offices, Reginal Occupational Programs (ROPs), and other LEAs applying for an SSP grant must be clear regarding the proposed site(s) where the courses will be taught. If a county office of education/LEA or ROP applies for a grant on behalf of a consortium of schools, then all courses in the sequence of courses must be offered at each site.

All curriculum developed with these grant funds will serve as models for other high schools in the state, as prescribed in *EC* Section 58802. All SSP curriculum must comply with copyright laws for posting on the CTE Online SSP Group Page. Therefore, programs that require the purchase or use of previously developed or proprietary curriculum and/or training in the use of such curriculum, are not eligible to apply for this SSP grant. Since the curriculum development is state funded, schools/LEAs or ROPs may not copyright the developed curriculum.

### Allowable Uses of Funds

Funds are to be used in accordance with the *California School Accounting Manual*. The expenditure of funds must be clearly tied to the activities described in the application. Expenditures may include, but are not limited to, ongoing curriculum development and professional development. Supplies directly related to and necessary for planning activities are limited to a maximum of $3,500. Expenditures for capital outlay are not permitted.

### Administrative Indirect Cost Limits

The grantee must limit administrative indirect costs to the rate approved by the CDE for the applicable fiscal year in which the funds are expended.

### Program Requirements

Each grant recipient is expected to fulfill the following sixrequirements:

1. Plan for a new, innovative SSP as described in Section A. The proposed SSP must identify oneCTE industry sector and oneCTE career pathway as described in the *California Career Technical Education Model Curriculum Standards* that best align with their SSP (see Appendixes B and C).
2. Funded programs must plan only two new, yearlong, sequenced courses in two consecutive grade levels. For the purpose of this grant, a sequence of courses consists of two courses where the knowledge and skills in one course are related to and dependent on the knowledge and skills in the previous course. Planning grantees must develop and post a course outline for each proposed new course utilizing the CTE Online “Outline Planner” tool. Each course outline must be completed through the “unit” level. The development of lesson plans is not required for planning grantees. When **developed**, all curriculum must be posted and **stored** on the CTE Online SSP Group Page and must comply with its requirements and copyright laws. All developed curriculum must be posted in a format that is accessible to all schools (e.g., Microsoft Word, PowerPoint) and provide the opportunity for editing and customization without requiring the purchase or use of any additional specialized software.
3. If implementation funding is awarded, grantees will be required to develop all curriculum necessary for another teacher in the state to fully implement the new courses. The necessary curricular components may include, but are not limited to, CTE Online Course Outlines, unit plans, lesson plans, instructional videos, assessments, answer keys, projects, and rubrics appropriate for their SSP.
4. Submit all required reports and curriculum according to the reporting timelines.
5. Grant recipients may not make any significant changes to the SSP, as it was described in the original grant application, unless a request is submitted in writing and approved by the CDE. The request must be submitted to the CDE and receive its approval **prior** to implementation of the proposed changes.
6. Grant recipients are required to send at least one SSP teacher to the annual statewide SSP convening and training sessions held in conjunction with the Educating for Careers Conference each year funding is received.

### Application Review

The CDE will not accept applications, or portions thereof, **emailed after Friday,**

**January 14, 2022**.

Applications will be scored by a minimum of two reviewers using a common rubric located in Appendix A.

The ability to plan and eventually implement a new program must be evident. An application must follow the RFA guidelines and be presented with clarity, so reviewers can easily understand the proposed new, innovative program.

Reviewers may utilize every available resource to verify information provided or inferred in an application.

### Inclusion of Remote, Smaller LEAs, and Consortia

To include high schools and LEAs of different sizes and from more regions of California, selection of participating high schools and LEAs will include consideration of factors related to the geographic diversity, type (urban/rural), and size of the LEA, as well as curricular area addressed. When all these factors are considered, the highest scoring proposals will be recommended for funding.

### Notification of Funding

Projects selected for funding will receive a Grant Award Notification (CDE Form AO-400). Each grantee must return a signed notification before any funds can be disbursed.

Applicants approved for funding will be notified by March 1, 2022. Funding is only for the planning grant period and must be fully expended by March 1, 2023.

### Appeals Process

Applicants who wish to appeal a grant award decision must submit a letter of appeal to:

Pete Callas, Director

Career and College Transition Division

California Department of Education

1430 N Street, Suite 4202

Sacramento, CA 95814-5901

The CDE must receive the letter of appeal, with an original signature by an authorized person, no later than 10 calendar days following the posting of the Grant Award List on the SSP Funding Results web page. Faxed appeals or letters submitted via email will not be accepted.

Appeals shall be limited to the grounds that the CDE failed to correctly apply the standards for reviewing the application as specified in this RFA. The appellant must file a detailed and complete written appeal, including the issue(s) in dispute, the legal authority or other basis for the appeal position, and the remedy sought. The CDE will not consider incomplete or late appeals. The appellant may not supply any new information that was not originally contained in the original application.

The Director of the Career and College Transition Division will make the final decision in writing within 30 calendar days from the date that appeals are due to be submitted to the CDE. That decision shall be the final administrative action afforded the appeal.

### Grant Application and Fiscal Contacts

Grant application and fiscal questions should be directed to Alicia Aguirre, Associate Governmental Program Analyst, High School Innovations and Initiatives Office, by email at ssprograms@cde.ca.gov.

## Application Format Requirements

Applications must adhere to the following formatting requirements:

* Application and included forms may not be altered in ANY way.
* 8 ½ “ x 11”.
* 12 point Arial (normal) font.
* Double (2.0) line spacing.
* One-inch margins on sides, top, and bottom (except appendix and pre-formatted forms).
* No handwritten entries are acceptable.
* The grant application is restricted to **24 single-sided pages**. All pages, including forms contained in the application and appendix count toward the page limit. Pages exceeding the 24 page limit will not be considered for scoring. Excessive pages will be omitted from scoring based upon the communicated submission requirements (not the order documents are submitted). Do not submit any unused material (guidance and instructions) included in the RFA with the application, as all submitted pages count toward the page limit. **Do not number the pages as CDE personnel will verify the page count.**
* All emailed applications submitted must comply with the formatting and submission requirements.
* An appendix, consisting of letters of commitment from partners, is included in the page limit**. Letters of commitment may utilize 10 point Arial or Times New Roman font and single spacing with less than one-inch margins.**
* Any **originally** developed tables inserted into the narrative sections of the application must conform to the narrative formatting requirements (font size, character, and spacing).
* This is not a research grant. No research is required or considered in scoring. Therefore, no footnotes or resource pages are needed or acceptable.
* Do not include links or web page references in the narrative or elsewhere in the application as embedded links cannot be followed or considered for scoring.

## Program Application: Sections for Submission

In order to be competitive, all applications must adhere to the required format and include all of the requested information and completed forms. All documents and forms required for submission may be found on the Request for Applications web page (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r17/ssp21rfa.asp>). **In order to minimize any potential technical issues, applicants should complete the PDF fillable forms utilizing a Windows based computer**. Only complete applications will be considered for scoring. To be considered a complete application, the packet must include the following components **in the order listed**:

* **Form A (Parts 1 and 2):** *Signature Page*. This is the application cover page. The form must be signed by the LEA superintendent (or designee) and the high school principal. Form Amust appear as the first page of the application. Applicants must follow all included instructions.
* **Form B:** *School Information and Community Description*. This form provides information about the school’s geographic location and a one page narrative about the community served by the high school. Form B and the one page narrative must be the **third and fourth pages** of the application.
* A 150-word **Overview of the Proposed SSP**.
* **Form C:** *Grant Budget*. The Grant Budget must be signed by the site principal/designee, the SSP lead teacher, and the LEA fiscal person who has reviewed the proposed Grant Budget and Budget Narrative.
* **Form D:** *Budget Narrative*. The Budget Narrative describes the proposed expenditures for the year.
* **Program Narrative Responses:** The responses to the *Program Narrative Questions* that are provided in the RFA instructions.
* **General Assurances 2021–22:** The LEA superintendent or an authorized representative of the LEA must review the General Assurances 2021–22.

It is available on the CDE website at General Assurances 2021–22 (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/fm/generalassurances2021-22.asp>). Please do not submit the General Assurances 2021–22 document with your application.

* The complete digitally signed grant application submitted to the CDE is a commitment to comply with the assurances, certifications, terms, and conditions associated with the grant.
* **Attachments:** Additional material may be included in the appendix of the application. Only the following attachments are acceptable for scoring:
* Letters of commitment from program partners. The letters of commitment must be originals, not form letters, and must specifically state the services, funds, and other support to be provided. Letters must contain original signatures and be written on **official letterhead** to be considered for scoring.
* The complete SSP Grant application may not exceed **24 pages**.

## Application Package Instructions

Applications must be **emailed on or before January 14, 2022.** The **complete** **digital signed copy** of all attached documents as a PDF must be submitted by email to ssprograms@cde.ca.gov. The digital copies must be submitted as continuous PDF document.

## Program Narrative Questions

The applicant must respond to the following questions using the ***Program Narrative Response Form.***

### **Section 1: Curriculum Development**

The development of new and innovative curriculum is the essential component of the SSP. The proposed SSP must design two new, yearlong courses that provide a definite sequence of study to a cohort of students in two consecutive grade levels. For the purpose of this grant, a sequence of study consists of courses in which the knowledge and skills in one course are related to and dependent on the knowledge and skills in the previous course. For example, a tenth-grade integrated English course and an eleventh-grade integrated social studies course do not typically represent a sequence of courses. Drone Technology I and Drone Technology II would more likely represent a definite sequence of study. In addition, there are varying degrees of integration in curriculum development. A core course with minimal integration (e.g., one or two new integrated projects) does not constitute a new course.

The sequence of courses must be taught during the regular school day and conducted at the same site. The described course content in the sequence of courses must align with the standards within the CTE industry sector and career pathway identified on the *Signature Page* (Form A–Part 1). If integrating content from two or more CTE career pathways, applicants must identify the SSP with the pathway that contains the greatest number of standards included in the courses.

All curriculum developed with these grant funds will serve as models for other high schools in the state, as prescribed in *EC* Section 58802. All **developed** SSP curriculum must be posted and **stored** on the CTE Online SSP Group Page and must comply with copyright laws. Since the curriculum development is state funded, schools/districts may not copyright the developed curriculum.

1. Clearly and convincingly, explain how the proposed sequenced courses are new and innovative. Include the proposed names of the two courses and a thorough and detailed discussion regarding the extent the proposed courses may currently be available to other students throughout the state. If applicable, clearly identify whether the proposed courses and CTE career pathway are available to other students throughout the state, but are new to your school. (*5 points possible*)
2. Clearly and thoroughly **describe** the instructional/academic content of thetwo new, sequenced courses to be planned and developed. The description should be presented in a **narrative/paragraph** format. A list of topics or standards is **not** a description. Includethe proposed course names and specific (**not multiple/range**) grade levels that the courses will be offered. Explain how a cohort of students will be established and maintained. (*35 points possible*)
3. Who will plan the new, sequenced, innovative curriculum? At what site and time of day will the courses be taught? **At least two teachers from the school** must be named as part of the team. The two required teachers **must have teaching duties assigned at the school** during this grant period. Both courses must be conducted at the same site and taught by **district paid personnel** during the regular school day. Site- and district-level administrators, teachers on special assignment, and counselors may support the SSP team but will not count toward the two-teacher requirement. Identify any outside expert(s) (outside experts have specificrecent professional/field experience, knowledge, and skills in the identified targeted area of instruction) who have been, or will be, consultedto ensure that what is proposed in the SSP represents current practices and theory in the targeted area of study. **Include the name, company/organization, and job title for each of the outside experts.**

Clearly explain the qualifications of the outside expert(s) that demonstrate their knowledge and experience to **specifically** address the content of the identified target area of instruction. **The explanation must certainly go beyond identifying a person as the owner or manager of a company in describing their expertise**. By definition, outside experts are not from within an applicant’s organization. The explanation must specifically identify how **recent** the professional/field experience is. Teaching a college level-course in the targeted area of instruction does not, in and of itself, qualify a person as an outside expert. However, those persons would be a valuable asset to the teachers writing the curriculum. The outside expert brings the practical experience to the team. **The SSP teachers are the curriculum writing experts**. The qualifications of the teachers do not need to be addressed in this question. (*5 points possible*)

### **Section 2: Local Work-based Learning Opportunities Provided for SSP Students**

1. Thoroughly describe the local work-based learning (WBL) opportunities that will be provided for students who participate in the SSP sequence of courses. WBL opportunities may include, but are not limited to, student internships, school/district funded field trips (to WBL partners), guest speaking, apprenticeships, job shadowing, and mentoring.

Letters of commitment from community partners **must** accompany any reference included in this section, **in order to receive points**. In order to be considered for the highest score, letters must identify the specific services to be provided and the specific number of SSP students that can be accommodated/served within **each identified WBL opportunity**. Letters of Commitment should **avoid using “all students”** in lieu of identifying a specific number of students. The SSP must be identified in the narrative of the letter. Qualified letters of commitment must be unique to the SSP, not from an existing partner that is already providing the same service for existing programs at the school. Letters of commitment from partners should be addressed to site or district personnel, written on official letterhead, and contain original (not electronic) signatures. Letters must be entirely original in order to be considered for scoring. **Letters that appear to be form letters, in part or in whole, will not be considered for scoring**. **It is possible to receive the highest score with one well written letter from a strong, supportive partner that will provide a number of WBL opportunities.** (*15 points possible*)

### **Section 3: Professional Development**

The creation of an SSP requires teachers at the school site, who will be key to the success of the SSP, and be committed to designing and implementing the sequence of courses. The **professional needs of SSP teachers must be identified, and activities to meet those needs must be described**. Issues such as adequate planning time, CTE Online training, opportunities to observe other programs with a similar focus, externships, opportunities to explore innovative instructional strategies, and staff development, both on site and off, should be thoroughly considered and addressed in this section if applicable.

Remember, the goal of the SSP is to develop curriculum for two new, innovative, yearlong courses. Although an SSP may elect to serve as the basis for the development of a career pathway or academy in the future, that is not the intention of this grant. Therefore, professional development needs and activities **must not** include activities focused on the development of pathways.

Applicants should avoid identifying needs and activities for Common Core State Standards or Next Generation Science Standards implementation, as those needs are general in nature and not specific to the unique needs of an SSP. **All conference attendance must specifically meet the needs for the SSP teachers to develop and implement the proposed courses**. Specific, identified goals (knowledge and skills) **must** be provided to justify all conference attendance. Available training, knowledge acquisition, and skills specifically related to the SSP targeted area of instruction is encouraged.

1. Identify the SSP teachers at the school and their duties within the SSP. List only the teachers, with current teaching assignments at the site, who will actively participate in the planning and curriculum development activities for the SSP during the current grant period. Some names may be repeated from question number three in Section I. Do not include possible recruits for future years or potential growth of the SSP. An extensive list does not automatically result in receiving maximal points. However, **two teachers** from the SSP school site must be identified to receive any points. (*5 points possible*)
2. What are the specific major professional development **needs** to ensure that the SSP teachers are adequately prepared to plan, develop, and eventually implement the SSP?

(*5 points possible*)

1. What specific professional development **activities** are proposed to meet the major **needs** of the SSP teachers **identified in question number two**? Conference attendance should not be suggested unless accompanied by a discussion of the specific knowledge and skills that are to be enhanced through attending and their specific relationship to the SSP. (*5 points possible*)

### **Section 4: Sustainability**

Clearly demonstrate how the proposed SSP will be sustained financially beyond the funding period (after the planning year and three years of implementation funding). Include funds and in-kind support provided by partners, LEA and school site level funding. Do not include support in the form of WBL experiences in this section of the application. Statements referring to “the development of pathways will not be considered as a commitment to specifically sustain the SSP. If specific SSP funding is identified at the district and/or school-site level, a letter of commitment from the site principal must be provided indicating the amount. Letters of commitment from partners must accompany any reference included in this section in order to receive points. The SSP must be identified in the narrative of the letter. Qualified letters of commitment must be unique to the SSP, not from an existing partner that is already providing the same service for the school. Letters of commitment from partners should be addressed to site or district personnel and written on official letterhead. Letters with digital signatures are accepted. Letters that appear to be form letters, in part or in whole, will not be considered for scoring.(“Partners” do not receive **any form of payment** for their contributions or services. Vendors are not considered partners.) (*5 points possible*)

### **Section 5: Grant Budget and Budget Narrative**

Each applicant must submit a signed Grant Budget (Form C), accompanied by a Budget Narrative (Form D). **The expenditure of funds must be clearly tied to the activities described in the narrative sections of the application**. Budget priorities must be centered on curriculum development, professional development, and other planning activities. Expenditures for books and supplies are limited to $3,500. Income from other sources, including in-kind support from district or the community that may demonstrate long-term sustainability, should be indicated even though not mandated.  Please note that the grant funding is for planning costs only, not for program implementation or to supplant current fixed costs.

The Budget Narrative must include a detailed description that justifies each expense. The following requirements will be considered in scoring this section:

1. The budget must reflect **appropriate** use of the SSP funds. Grant funds should be focused primarily on costs related to curriculum development and professional development. (*5 points possible*)
2. A strong correlation between the activities identified in the narrative sections of the application and the budget items discussed in the Budget Narrative should be clear. (*15 points possible*)