# Specialized Secondary Programs Request for Applications Cohort 10 2023–24

**California Department of Education**



**Application Due Date: Friday, May 12, 2023**

Administered by the:

High School Innovations and Initiatives Office

Career and College Transition Division

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**Table of Contents**

[Application Instructions 3](#_Toc101952851)

[Specialized Secondary Programs (SSP) Timeline 3](#_Toc101952852)

[Overview 4](#_Toc101952853)

[A. Purpose 4](#_Toc101952854)

[B. Grant Opportunities Available 4](#_Toc101952855)

[C. Funding 5](#_Toc101952856)

[D. Eligibility Requirements 5](#_Toc101952857)

[E. Allowable Uses of Funds 6](#_Toc101952858)

[F. Administrative Indirect Cost Limits 6](#_Toc101952859)

[G. Program Requirements 6](#_Toc101952860)

[H. Application Review 7](#_Toc101952861)

[I. Inclusion of Remote, Smaller LEAs, and Consortia 7](#_Toc101952862)

[J. Notification of Funding 8](#_Toc101952863)

[K. Appeals Process 8](#_Toc101952864)

[L. Grant Application and Fiscal Contacts 8](#_Toc101952865)

[Application Format Requirements 9](#_Toc101952866)

[Program Application: Sections for Submission 10](#_Toc101952867)

[Application Package Instructions 11](#_Toc101952868)

[Program Narrative Questions 11](#_Toc101952869)

[Section 1: Curriculum Development 11](#_Toc101952870)

[Section 2: Local Work-based Learning Opportunities Provided for SSP Students 12](#_Toc101952871)

[Section 3: Professional Development 12](#_Toc101952872)

[Section 4: Sustainability 13](#_Toc101952873)

[Section 5: Grant Budget and Budget Narrative 13](#_Toc101952874)

## Application Instructions

### Specialized Secondary Programs (SSPs) Timeline

#### SSP Cohort 10 Planning Grant Period:

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

#### SSP Planning Grant Activities:

| **Activity** | **Date** |
| --- | --- |
| Release of Request for Applications (RFA) | March 30, 2023 |
| RFA Technical Assistance Webinar | April 19, 2023 |
| Applications Due by Email | May 12, 2023 |
| Applicants Notified (Grant Award Letter or Letters of Regret) | June 30, 2023 |
| 2023–24 End-of-Year Report Due | April 12, 2024 |
| SSP Planning Grant Funds Expended | June 30, 2024 |
| End-of-Project Financial Expenditure Report Due | July 31, 2024 |

#### 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

April 19, 2023. Individuals who wish to participate in the webinar should send an email to SSPs at [ssprograms@cde.ca.gov](mailto:ssprograms@cde.ca.gov) requesting the login information by April 14, 2023. 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](mailto: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 independent 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 2023 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, 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 **21** planning grants may be awarded this year through the selection process.

Successful planning grant applicants may qualify for three years of implementation funding. 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 July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. 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 10 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 independent 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. 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. 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 identify 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 California Educators Together (CET) SSP Group Page. 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 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 the 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 CET “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 CET 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 allow 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, CET Course Outlines, unit plans, lesson plans, instructional videos, assessments, answer keys, projects, and rubrics appropriate for the 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 approval prior to implementation of 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,

May 12, 2023.

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

The ability to plan and 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, school geography/locale classification (city/suburban/town/rural), size of the LEA, as well as curricular area addressed. High schools and LEAs located in “Town” or “Rural” locales (School Information and Community Description – Form B) will receive five (5) points towards the total application score. Locale classifications may be found on the National Center for Education Statistics website at https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/Geographic/LocaleBoundaries.

### 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 June 30, 2022. Funding is only for the planning grant period and must be fully expended by June 30, 2023.

### Appeals Process

Appeals are limited to the grounds that the CDE failed to correctly apply the standards for reviewing the application as specified in this RFA. Appeals based on a disagreement with the professional judgment of the grant reader will not be considered.

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. Appeal letters should be sent to:

Pete Callas, Director

Career and College Transition Division

California Department of Education

1430 N Street, Suite 4202

Sacramento, CA 95814

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.

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 Sarah Barnett, Staff Services Analyst, High School Innovations and Initiatives Office, by email at [ssprograms@cde.ca.gov](mailto: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. Footnotes or resource pages are not needed nor 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 RFA web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/r17/sspc10rfa23.asp>. 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 2022–23:** The LEA superintendent or an authorized representative of the LEA must review the General Assurances 2022–23.

General Assurances are available on the CDE website at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/fo/fm/ff.asp>. Do not submit the General Assurances document with the application.

* **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 besubmitted by email to [ssprograms@cde.ca.gov](mailto:ssprograms@cde.ca.gov) on or before May 12, 2023. The application must be submitted as a 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.

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**.** All SSP curriculum developed must be posted and stored on the CET SSP Group Page and comply with copyright laws. Schools/districts may not copyright the developed curriculum.

1. Explain how the proposed sequenced courses are new and innovative. Identify the proposed names of the two courses and provide a thorough 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. In a narrative/paragraph format, describe the instructional/academic content of the two new, sequenced courses to be planned and developed. A list of topics or standards is not a description. Include the 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. Identify who will plan the new, sequenced, innovative curriculum? At what site and time of day will the courses be taught? Two teachers from the school must be named as part of the team. The two teachers identified 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 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 what is proposed in the SSP represents current practices. Include the name, company or organization, and job title for each of the outside expert(s).

Explain the qualifications of the outside expert(s) that demonstrate their knowledge and experience to address the content of the identified target area of instruction. By definition, outside experts are not from within an applicant’s organization. The explanation must specifically identify how recent the professional/field experience is. **(*5 points possible*)**

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

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. Letters must identify the specific services to be provided and the specific number of SSP students that can be 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 and be unique to the SSP, not from a partner that is already providing the same service for existing programs at the school. Letters of commitment should be addressed to site or district personnel, written on official letterhead, and contain original signatures. Letters that appear to be form letters, in part or in whole, will not be considered for scoring. **(*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, CET 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 addressed in this section if applicable.

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, related to the SSP targeted area of instruction, must be provided to justify all conference attendance.

1. Identify the two 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. Two teachers from the SSP school site must be identified to receive any points. **(*5 points possible*)**
2. What is the specific professional development needs to ensure the SSP teachers are adequately prepared to plan, develop, and eventually implement the SSP? **(*5 points possible*)**
3. What specific professional development activities are proposed to meet the needs of the SSP teachers identified in question number two? **(*5 points possible*)**

### Section 4: Sustainability

Describe 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 and be unique to the SSP, not from a partner that is already providing the same service for existing programs at the school. Letters of commitment should be addressed to site or district personnel, written on official letterhead, and contain original signatures. 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. 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*)**