

**R277. Education, Administration.**

**R277-731. Catalyst Center Grant Program Policy.**

**R277-731-1. Authority, Purpose, and Oversight Category.**

(1) This rule is authorized by:

(a) Utah Constitution Article X, Section 3, which vests general control and supervision over public education in the Board;

(b) Subsection 53E-3-401(4), which allows the Board to make rules to execute the Board's duties and responsibilities under the Utah constitution and state law;

(c) Section 53E-3-507.1, which establishes the Catalyst Center Grant Program; and

(d) Section 53F-9-204, which describes legislative appropriation for the program.

(2) The purpose of this rule is to establish standards and procedures for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to qualify for and administer funds from the Catalyst Center Grant Program to create new or expand existing catalyst centers to enhance career readiness and align students' skills with Utah's workforce needs.

(3) This Rule R277- 731 is categorized as Category 3 as described in Rule R277-111.

**R277- 731-2. Definitions.**

(1) "Advisory board" means a group of individuals composed of industry, postsecondary, and community representatives that review program direction and ensure alignment with workforce needs.

(2) "Consortium" means two or more LEAs located within the same CTE geographic planning region.

(3) "First Credential" means the statewide initiative established under Utah Code Section 53E-10-310 for the purpose of creating and supporting clear educational pathways from high school to higher education and the workforce, ensuring students can earn a valuable, employment-aligned credential.

~~[(2)]~~ (4) "Profession based learning center" means a Catalyst Model Center as defined in Utah Code Section 53E-3-507.1.

~~[\_\_\_\_ (3) "Consortium" means two or more LEAs located within the same CTE geographic planning region.]~~

~~[(3)]~~ (5) "Program" means the Catalyst Center Grant Program defined in Utah Code Section 53E-3-507.1.

~~[(4)]~~ (6) "Unwarranted duplication" means the overlap of resources that lead to inefficiencies, wasted resources, or a lack of coordination in providing comprehensive CTE programs.

### **R277-731-3 LEA Grant Requirements.**

\_\_\_\_ (1) An LEA or LEA consortium may annually apply for grant funding beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.

\_\_\_\_ (2) An LEA or LEA consortium may not apply for an additional grant that would overlap with an existing award.

\_\_\_\_ (3) An LEA shall apply for a grant by submitting an application to the state board that includes:

\_\_\_\_ (a) a general plan, including a proposed timeline for the project;

\_\_\_\_ (b) a detailed budget, identifying proposed expenditures and any matching funds used for the project;

\_\_\_\_ (c) justification for any capital expenditures, including plans for building use, cost analyses, and estimates;

\_\_\_\_ (d) a description of how the grant will be used to improve student outcomes;

\_\_\_\_ (e) evidence of any existing partnerships with industry, including letters of collaboration;

\_\_\_\_ (f) evidence of alignment with the LEA's strategic plan;

\_\_\_\_ (g) evidence of alignment with local labor market and industry needs;

\_\_\_\_ (h) an explanation of how awarded funds will be used within the defined performance period without unnecessary carryforward;

(i) If requesting a portion of the grant as a lump sum payment, the LEA shall work with the Superintendent to establish a payment timeline requiring milestones and documentation;

(j) as applicable, a description of how the catalyst center programming will align with or enhance programs funded by the weighted pupil unit add-on described in Section 53F-2-311;

(k) for applications submitted by a consortium of LEAs, a description of:

(i) which LEA will be the fiscal agent;

(ii) how the catalyst center will serve students across the consortium;

(iii) how costs and resources will be shared; and

(iv) how economies of scale will be achieved;

(l) a description of any proposed planning activities, including expected timelines and outcomes; and

(m) evidence of collaboration with the LEA CTE Director.

(4) Grant funding shall not be used for the unwarranted duplication of existing resources, including physical assets and programmatic offerings, provided by other state or local entities.

(5) To maximize resources and impact, LEAs may apply for funding as a consortium.

#### **R277-731-4 Superintendent Responsibilities and Award prioritization**

(1) Beginning with the 2026-2027 fiscal year, dependent on available funds, the Superintendent shall make the application available beginning May 15.

(2) Prioritization for grant funding will be given to an LEA that:

(a) proposes innovative programming supported by local labor market data;

(b) collaborates with local postsecondary institutions and industry;

(c) aligns with the First Credential program;

(d) demonstrates the ability to sustain the catalyst center after the grant period;

(e) demonstrates a strong focus on student outcomes and workforce alignment;

- 87 (f) addresses gaps in high-demand, high-skill career pathways;  
88 (g) ensures funds are used to enhance programming quality before expansion;  
89 and  
90 (h) provides for a large number of students to participate in catalyst center  
91 programs without limiting participation to students based on socio-economic challenges.  
92 (3) Grant funds may be distributed through smaller planning grants to bring  
93 existing career and technical education (CTE) programs to CTE Quality Standards and  
94 larger multi-year grants for capital expenditures and program expansion.  
95 (4) The Superintendent may use up to one percent of the funds appropriated by  
96 the Legislature to administer the program.

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98 **R277-731-5 Program Requirements.**

- 99 (1) An LEA receiving a grant shall utilize funds to create, establish, enhance, or  
100 expand profession-based learning programs that:  
101 (a) provide learning experiences and instruction that:  
102 (i) replicates professional environments and workplace practices;  
103 (ii) utilizes student projects that address the specific needs or objectives of  
104 industry partners;  
105 (iii) incorporates industry-standard tools, technologies, and methods;  
106 (iv) builds durable professional skills;  
107 (v) provides opportunities for students to develop a product or presentation that  
108 is shared with an audience; and  
109 (vi) facilitates mentorship by industry professionals to guide and evaluate the  
110 student's work;  
111 (b) align programming with labor market needs and local industry demands;  
112 (c) establish or enhance partnerships with:  
113 (i) local industries and employers to ensure workforce relevance; or  
114 (ii) technical colleges, degree-granting institutions, or other postsecondary  
115 entities to support postsecondary transitions for students;

- \_\_\_\_\_ (d) address gaps in regional workforce training or opportunities;
- \_\_\_\_\_ (e) incorporate:
- \_\_\_\_\_ (i) career and technical student organizations as the LEA determines relevant;
- \_\_\_\_\_ (ii) advisory boards with representation from local industries and workforce  
experts;
- \_\_\_\_\_ (iii) professional learning opportunities for instructors to improve workforce-  
focused skills; and
- \_\_\_\_\_ (iv) strategies for using labor market data to refine and improve program  
offerings;
- \_\_\_\_\_ (f) establishes formal collaboration mechanisms between the catalyst center  
administrator and the LEAs career and technical education director to align catalyst  
center initiatives with existing career and technical education programs; and
- \_\_\_\_\_ (g) align with CTE Quality Standards.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) LEAs or LEA consortiums shall use any equipment or capital purchased with  
awarded funds for the purposes outlined in the application.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) Catalyst centers may be colocated on the campus of an institution of higher  
education with an agreement between the LEA and the institution of higher education.
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- R277-731-6 Oversight, Monitoring, and Reports.**
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) An LEA that receives a grant shall submit an annual report to the state board  
no later than September 15.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) The annual report shall include:
- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) the use of grant funds;
- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) progress in meeting proposed goals and benchmarks;
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c) updates on partnerships with industry and postsecondary institutions;
- \_\_\_\_\_ (d) a demonstration of the alignment of programming with labor market data; and
- \_\_\_\_\_ (e) a description of student participation and outcomes, including
- \_\_\_\_\_ (i) secondary and postsecondary credentials earned; and
- \_\_\_\_\_ (ii) CTE pathway completers.

\_\_\_\_ (3) An LEA receiving funds will be monitored to ensure that awarded funds are used in accordance with an LEA's application.

\_\_\_\_ (4) If requesting a portion of the grant as an initial lump sum payment, the LEA must provide evidence of achieved benchmarks before receiving the remainder of the awarded funds on a reimbursement basis.

\_\_\_\_ (5) Annually, funds that are not used within the defined performance period will be recaptured for reallocation.

\_\_\_\_ (6) An LEA that does not comply with the requirements of this Rule R277-731, including not providing evidence of adherence to program standards or misuse of funds, may be subject to a corrective action plan and potential reduction of funds or penalty in accordance with Rule R277-114.

**KEY: Catalyst Center, Grant Program, Career Readiness, Workforce Development, Profession-Based Learning**

**Date of Enactment or Last Substantive Amendment:**

**Authorizing, and Implemented, or Interpreted Law: Art X Sec 3; 53E-3-401(4); 53E-3-507.1; 53F-9-204**