

# PrepareRI Career Exploration Grant

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**RIDE** Rhode Island  
Department  
of Education

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# PrepareRI Career Exploration Grants

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is requesting Career Exploration Grant applications from interested local education agencies supporting Rhode Island middle school students, to support embedded career exploration opportunities for all students, grades 6-8.

Application materials can be downloaded from the PrepareRI website at <https://www.prepare-ri.org/exploration>. The Rhode Island Department of Education reserves the right to accept or reject, without prejudice, any or all submissions to promote the best interest of the State of Rhode Island.

## Section I: Introduction and Overview

### *About Prepare RI*

Career Exploration Grants are part of Rhode Island's larger statewide career education strategy: Prepare Rhode Island (PrepareRI). PrepareRI is the statewide career education initiative that unites many partners — including Rhode Island government, private industry leaders, the public education system, universities, and non-profits — around a common strategic plan to improve youth career readiness. PrepareRI began in 2016 after Rhode Island was awarded a New Skills for Youth grant from JPMorgan Chase and the Council of Chief State School Officers.

PrepareRI aims to close the gap between what students learn in school and what is needed for future success in high-demand jobs. The initiative was built on the belief that all young people, regardless of their previous background or intended career, will need some form of postsecondary credential and practical work experience to be successful.

PrepareRI's goals for 2020 are:

- All career pathway programs will be aligned to Rhode Island's high-demand career fields
- All high school students will graduate with college credit or an industry credential
- All high school students will have access to a work-based learning experience, such as an internship in a relevant career field
- All students will have career awareness and exploration opportunities beginning in elementary and middle school, and Individualized Learning Plans based on their unique strengths and interests

To learn more about PrepareRI, visit [www.prepare-ri.org](http://www.prepare-ri.org).

### *Additional PrepareRI Opportunities for Career Exploration*

Career Exploration Grants are one of a suite of resources available to schools in order to support and increase career education for middle school students. For more information about additional opportunities, please see:

- [Real Skills for Youth Grants](#)
- [www.prepare-RI.org/exploration](http://www.prepare-RI.org/exploration)

## Section II: Career Exploration Grants

A goal of PrepareRI's strategic plan is to support Rhode Island middle schools in embedding both comprehensive and industry-specific career exploration into students' 6-8 experience. The backbone of career exploration in grades 6-12 is each student's Individual Learning Plan. Through the curriculum and experiences that are driven by the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) students gain broad exposure to many industries and future career opportunities. Schools are currently in various stages of implementing revised ILP programs. As schools continue to implement the ILP as a foundational experience for all students, it will be important that connected career exploration activities, informed by industry, are integrated into core content areas ensuring the sustainability of career exploration activities in each middle school. To further support schools in implementing strong programs beginning in middle school, PrepareRI is announcing grants for Career Exploration in middle school.

### *Purpose*

Career Exploration grants are intended to accelerate the integration of career exploration activities with existing learning experiences in middle school (grades 6-8). RIDE will award grants on a competitive basis to local educational agencies (LEAs) for new or existing middle school career exploration activities in an effort to create a portfolio of career exploration models that are integrated into core content areas, which are developed and/or adapted in partnership with industry representatives. Successful Career exploration grants will:

1. embed hands-on career exploration activities into existing curriculum allowing for students to see increased relevance of their education;
2. create the development of and/or adapt activities in partnership between school and industry representatives,
3. ensure the sustainability of career exploration efforts in a school by integrating into the school curriculum rather than establishing separate career exploration time - this may include the integration of afterschool time if there are clear and sustainable connections to student coursework; and,
4. provide trusted peer-to-peer resources that increase school buy-in for adoption.

Career Exploration grants are intended to accelerate the integration of career exploration activities with learning experiences in middle school (grades 6-8). Grant applicants may apply to one of two grant tracks: Curriculum Development or Implementation.

### ***Curriculum and Activity Development Career Exploration Grants***

Rhode Island seeks to support partnerships between employers or trade associations and schools to develop high-quality materials and curriculum for career exploration. In applying for this grant track, schools must identify an employer partner with which to develop and pilot a new, or adapt an existing, career exploration activity. The products, modules and/or activities developed with grant funds are intended to be models for continued use in middle schools across the state. As such, activities may include: simulations, guided discussions, videos or other replicable activities that could be used in other schools across the state in the future. Portions of the grant (requests can be made for up to \$5000 per school) can be used to offset school and partner expenses, as well as activity materials.

### ***Implementation Career Exploration Grants***

Rhode Island seeks to support implementation of high-quality career exploration activities and curriculum. In applying for this grant track, schools must identify either an employer or a nationally-recognized curriculum or career exploration organization provider with which to partner to implement existing, high-quality career exploration program or curriculum. The programs, modules and/or activities implemented with grant funds are intended to be models for continued use in middle schools across the state. As such, these activities may include: programs, curriculum, simulations or other replicable activities that could be used in other schools across the state in the future. Portions of the grant (requests can be made for up to \$5000 per school) can be used to offset school and partner expenses, as well as program start-up materials and expenses.

## **Section III: Application Process, Submission and Evaluation**

### ***Timeline***

<b>Process</b>	<b>Date</b>
Grant application released	January 11, 2019
Deadline for application submission	February 28, 2019 (5:00pm EST)
RIDE announces grant winners	March 2019
Grantee Planning Time	Spring & Summer 2019
Grantee Pilot Materials	Fall 2019
Grantee Provides final deliverables	Spring 2020

### ***Grant Duration and Amount***

The maximum grant size for a Career Exploration Grant is up to \$5,000 per school, with schools able to pool their money to partner, through January 2020. This grant may be used for a variety of career exploration activities at the middle school level that deepen or broaden exposure to industry sectors or career fields. RIDE anticipates awarding a minimum of 35 Career Exploration Grants; the total number of grants awarded will be determined by the number of schools that apply and meet the criteria.

### ***What Entities are Eligible to Apply?***

All Rhode Island public schools serving middle school students (grades 6-8) are eligible to apply. Middle schools that apply require sign-off from the superintendent or the equivalent. A partnership between or among local education agencies (LEAs) to support a single career exploration activity is allowed, provided that one LEA is designated as the lead applicant and fiscal agent. All partnering LEAs must be identified and provide the designated lead applicant with a notice of intent to participate.

Community-based organizations, such as those that provide after-school programming, may apply as the lead applicant, only in partnership with a middle school(s). All partnering schools and LEAs must be identified and provide the designated lead applicant with a notice of intent to participate.

LEAs are encouraged to partner with local industry partners, employers, employer associations, or nationally-recognized career exploration organizations for the development of career exploration activities. LEAs are encouraged to explore partnership with local, small businesses to either establish a partnership, or to formalize an existing partnership. All employers interested in developing career exploration modules or activities must partner with one or more middle schools.

## *Application Requirements*

Career Exploration Grants will fund activities that provide exposure to and deepen middle school students' experience in a particular industry sector or career field. Activities should include career awareness and exploration opportunities beyond those for which students experience as part of the Individual Learning Plan curriculum and program in middle school.

In the development of applications, schools should consider the following:

- All funded activities will expose the students to and deepen their experience in particular industry sector or career fields.
- Priority will be given to activities that promote high-demand, high-wage industries or STEAM fields. However, RIDE encourages applications from a variety of disciplines and sectors.
- Funded activities should address current equity gaps and create opportunities for students who have not traditionally participated in high-quality career exploration opportunities.
- Proposals must include co-development or partnership with a local or national employer, trade associations, or a nationally-recognized career exploration activity/curriculum organization.
- All recipients will be required to either present or showcase their developed career exploration activities at the Spring 2020 PrepareRI Summit, date to be announced.

## *Grant Deliverables*

Each grantee will be responsible for delivering their final resource alongside an implementation plan by May 2020 that will be available for schools across Rhode Island to utilize. Grantees will be required to present their resources and implementation plans at the Spring 2020 PrepareRI Summit or other professional development experience. RIDE will provide a template for the submission of the resource details and implementation plan.

## Section IV: Application Components

Applicants must submit all sections of the application using the online form at [www.prepareri.org/exploration](http://www.prepareri.org/exploration). The list below is provided for planning purposes.

### **Section A: Cover Sheet**

1. Authorized Signature for Middle School

2. Authorized Signature for District
3. Agreement to present or showcase career exploration activity at Spring 2020 PrepareRI Summit and submit materials in the template requested.

#### **Section B: Vision and Rationale**

1. Vision and rationale for applying for the Career Exploration Grant
2. Current status of Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and career exploration programs in your school
3. Chosen Individual Learning Plan vendor partner, if applicable.

#### **Section C: Proposed Activity and Partnership: Curriculum/Activity Development or Implementation Track**

<b>Curriculum Development: Proposed Activity and Industry Partnership</b>	<b>Implementation: Proposed Program and Partnership</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overview of Proposed Activity/Activities</li> <li>2. Target Audience/Student Population - Addressing Equity Gaps: Students with Disabilities, Gender, English Language Learners, Race, and Poverty</li> <li>3. Overview of Proposed Delivery Methods</li> <li>4. Alignment to Chosen Industry</li> <li>5. Anticipated Timeline</li> <li>6. Anticipated Goals</li> <li>7. Plan for Progress Monitoring and Accountability</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overview of Proposed Program/Activities</li> <li>2. Target Audience/Student Population - Addressing Equity Gaps: Students with Disabilities, Gender, English Language Learners, Race, and Poverty</li> <li>3. Overview of Proposed Delivery Methods</li> <li>4. Alignment to Chosen Industry</li> <li>5. Anticipated Timeline</li> <li>6. Anticipated Goals</li> <li>7. Plan for Progress Monitoring and Accountability</li> </ol>

#### **Section D: Proposed Expenses**

1. School and Partner Expenses
2. Activity and Materials Expenses

### *Grant Proposal Submission Requirements*

Applications must be submitted using the online form at [www.prepareri.org/exploration](http://www.prepareri.org/exploration) by 5 pm on Wednesday, February 28, 2019. At this time, applications will be distributed to the selection committee.

Any questions relative to your submission shall be directed to Onna Holland ([Onna.Holland@ride.ri.gov](mailto:Onna.Holland@ride.ri.gov)).

Upon receipt, all Grant Applications shall become the property of the State without compensation to the proponent, for disposition or usage by the State at its discretion. The State assumes no responsibility or obligation to the proponent and will make no payment for any costs associated with the preparation or submission of any Grant Applications.