

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (MDE)
Office of Systems, Evaluation, and Technology
Educational Technology Unit
Section 99h: Competitive FIRST Robotics (VEX) Grants**

**Request for Proposal (RFP)
GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS
(10-17-2019)**

DISCLAIMER:

THE FOLLOWING COMPETITIVE GRANT IS ANNOUNCED, AND AWARD IS CONTINGENT ON THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS. GRANT APPLICATIONS WILL BE COLLECTED USING THE MICHIGAN ELECTRONIC GRANTS SYSTEM PLUS (MEGS+). FUNDS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE STATE AID MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SAMS).

INTRODUCTION:

The fiscal year (FY) 2019 State School Aid Act, Section 99h appropriated \$4,700,000 for the 2019-20 school year for competitive grants to districts that provide pupils in grades K-12 with expanded opportunities to improve mathematics, science, and technology skills by participating in events hosted by science and technology development program known as FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) or other competitive robotics programs, including those hosted by the Robotics Education and Competition (REC) Foundation known as VEX, VEX IQ, and RAD.

PURPOSE OF THE GRANT:

The intent of the grant is to increase the number of pupils demonstrating proficiency in science and mathematics on the state assessments and to increase the number of pupils who are college-and career-ready upon high school graduation. The competitive FIRST Robotics (VEX) Grants support the MDE's Top 10 in 10 goals two, three, four, and six through several key activities.

The FIRST Robotics (VEX) Grant programming supports goal two, strategy 2.6 and 2.7 by engaging students in well-rounded learning experiences in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), language, business, culture, and creativity, as well as providing access to personalized learning technologies that support and enhance those learning experiences. The FIRST Robotics (VEX) Grant Program supports goal three by providing coaches and mentors with opportunities to receive additional professional development and access to State Continuing Education Clock-Hours (SCECH). The FIRST Robotics (VEX) Grant Program supports goal four by providing funding to districts with high-risk factors to ensure access to equitable resources. Finally, the FIRST Robotics (VEX) Grant Program supports goal six by requiring the establishment of partnerships between teams and job providers, community colleges, and higher education to assure a prepared and quality future workforce.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

All individual local education agencies (LEAs), public school academies (PSAs), and intermediate school districts (ISDs) that enroll students grades K-12 that provide pupils with expanded opportunities to improve mathematics, science and technology skills by participating in events hosted by FIRST in Michigan and RECF robotics programming are eligible.

At this time, registered nonpublic schools are not eligible applicants for current year's funding, but are eligible applicants for the 2018-19 work project funding (roll over funds from prior year). To register with the MDE, visit: <http://www.michigan.gov/budget/0,4538,7-157-79033---,00.html>. Nonpublic schools must be registered with the MDE prior to the application deadline. Awarding of 2018-19 work project funding to any eligible applicant is contingent upon approval by the State Budget Office. A determination is anticipated by the end of November of 2019.

GRANT REQUIREMENTS:

The grant requirements upon which applicants will be selected and are required to meet are:

- Establish a partnership with at least one sponsor, business entity, higher education institution, or technical school.
- Submit a spending plan.
- Agree to pay at least 25 percent of the cost of the robotics program coach stipend and advancement award.
- Agree to provide matching funds for the Support Award from private or local sources equal to at least 50 percent of the costs of participation in an event.
- Be registered for the current season with a robotics program that is registered as a [STEMWorks](#) program, such as FIRST Robotics or REC Foundation.
- Provide MDE with an electronic student roster. Participation in the Michigan Data Hubs to speed this process will be preferred.
- Have a current robotics program team number and coach in place for the current season.
- Participate in the following number of robotics competitions in Michigan during the current season:
 - Two district competitions for all high school robotics competition teams
 - One qualifying event for all middle school teams and all late elementary teams
 - One expo for all early elementary teams

- Be willing to offer elective high school credits for students who have successfully logged 60 hours, provided the team attends a minimum of two district competitions.
- Be willing to participate in the digital badging program.

Each nonpublic school applicant must also:

- Be registered with the MDE and meet all state reporting requirements for nonpublic schools.

In support of legislative intent, all awards will be distributed to districts in a competitive and equitable manner that will maximize the number of teams that will be able to receive funding. Preference will be given to applicants that support under-represented areas by prioritizing:

- High economically disadvantaged populations (focus schools).
- Schools that serve a high percentage of low-income families (based on Free and Reduced Lunch count data).
- First time teams participating in robotics starting with the high school program and working down to kindergarten.
- Districts that establish feeder teams (teams that generate student populations that will potentially move up to high school or middle school programs).
- Districts in a broad geographical distribution.

TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE:

2019-2020

*****\$4,700,000 for Public Schools*****

Anticipated Work Project Funding from 2018-19

*****\$1,850,000 for Public Schools*****

*****\$175,000 for Non-Public Schools*****

Note: Non-Public Schools are eligible to apply. Funding for non-public schools is dependent upon approval of work project by the State Budget Office.

FIRST ROBOTICS PROGRAMMING GRANT STRUCTURE:

a) Coach’s Stipend Award

A registered FIRST team in the State of Michigan will be eligible for a coach’s stipend award up to:

- \$1,500 for a High School FIRST Robotics Competition team (limit one high school program stipend per school)

- \$1,500 for a Middle School FIRST Tech Challenge team (limit one middle school program stipend per school)
- \$1,000 for an Upper Elementary FIRST LEGO League Team (limit one upper elementary program stipend per school)
- \$ 300 for an Early Elementary FIRST LEGO League Jr. team (limit one early elementary program stipend per school)

A registered RECF team in the State of Michigan will be eligible for a coach’s stipend award up to:

- \$1,500 for a VEX team (limit one stipend per school)
- \$1,500 for a RAD team (limit one stipend per school)
- \$1,000 for a VEX IQ team (limit one stipend per school)

Note: The match on the coach stipend can include payment of coaches’ FICA and social security, if they are employed by the school district, otherwise it can be paid directly to the coach.

***MDE Stipend Award + 25% Match = Total Stipend Amount ***
 FRC Example: \$1,500 stipend + \$375 match = \$1,875

b) Support Awards¹ (Event Registrations, Materials, Travel Costs, Other)

The MDE has made support awards available to FIRST Robotics Teams, FIRST Tech Challenge Teams, FIRST LEGO League Teams, FIRST LEGO League Jr. Teams, VEX, VEX IQ, and RAD robotics team. The support awards will be paid out to eligible districts per team. Awards are limited and will be awarded based on the prioritization of needs that support under-represented areas outlined on page 3. Actual award amounts may be adjusted based on availability of funding. The payment structure is:

- \$9,000 - Rookie High School FIRST Robotics Teams
- \$8,000 - 2nd year High School FIRST Robotics Teams
- \$7,000 - 3rd year High School FIRST Robotics Teams
- \$5,000 - 4th year High School FIRST Robotics Teams
- \$3,200 - 5th year and Beyond High School FIRST Robotics Teams
- \$2,000 - Rookie FIRST Tech Challenge Teams
- \$1,000 - Veteran FIRST Tech Challenge Teams
- \$ 500 - Rookies FIRST LEGO League Teams
- \$ 200 - Veterans FIRST LEGO League Teams
- \$ 150 - FIRST LEGO League Jr. Teams
- \$2,000 - VEX Rookie Teams
- \$1,000 - VEX Veteran Teams
- \$ 500 - VEX-IQ Rookie Teams
- \$ 200 - VEX IQ Veteran Teams
- \$ 500 - RAD Rookie Teams
- \$ 200 - RAD Veteran Teams

¹ Visit www.techplan.org/rdi to review the funding models for FIRST and REC Programming.

c) Advancement Awards ²

Advancement Awards to the state and world championship competitions for FIRST and RECF robotics programs will be awarded in equal amounts per team for those teams that advance to the state championship and a second equal award amount to those teams that advance to the world championship. All advancement awards are contingent upon available funding.

GRANT APPLICATIONS:

Grant applications will be made available via MEGS+ and monitored by the Educational Technology Unit staff within the Office of Systems, Evaluation, and Technology. Public (ISDs, LEAs, and PSAs) districts submitting an application for more than one team in the district - whether for multiple FTC teams, FRC teams, FLL teams, FLL Jr. teams, VEX, VEX IQ, RAD or a combination of programming - shall submit a single district-wide application adding a separate page for each team. Each team is required to submit a team page and a corresponding sponsor page within a single MEGS+ district application.

Nonpublic school districts submitting an application will select either to apply for FIRST Robotics or REC, but not both. Nonpublic schools will also submit a single district-wide application adding a separate page for each team. Step-by-step instructions for completing the MEGS+ application can be found at www.techplan.org/rdi.

Application Requirements:

- Team name and full permanent team number. Teams with a temporary team number at the time of application should enter the full temporary number.
- Name and contact information (email address and phone number) of team coach.
- Agree to contribute a match of at least 25 percent of the Stipend Award and Advancement Award and 50 percent of the Support Award. The required match may be in the form of cash or the fair market value of in-kind donations from any of the following sources, including but not limited to: the school district, other grants, and donations from corporate partnerships or individuals.

² The testing window for the state required summative assessments for 2019-20 have been announced spanning a window from the week of April 13 to the week of May 25. A link to the M-Step Testing Calendar can be found at: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Testing_Schedule_for_Summative_Assessments_635008_7.pdf. These dates overlap with the FIRST Robotics schedule, including the Michigan State Championship and the World Championship. In order to receive the advancement award, it is required for students to participate in the Championships. It is suggested that districts and teams work together to ensure student participation in both testing and the advancement events.

- Name and classification of one robotics team sponsor.
 - Business/Nonprofit
 - Higher Education Institute
 - Technical School
 - Individual
- District-wide cumulative spending plan. A spending plan template can be found at www.techplan.org/rdi.
- Student roster. A student roster template can be found at www.techplan.org/rdi.

OPENING AND CLOSING DATES:

Grant applications will be available in MEGS+ on October 23, 2019 and are due by 11:59 p.m. on November 14, 2019.

ASSURANCE OF ACCURACY:

An assurance must be submitted stating that all information provided within is true and accurate. If, during the implementation of any funded project, the MDE establishes that inaccurate or false information was provided in the application, the grant may be rescinded.

PROCESS FOR THE GRANT COMPETITION:

Key Dates*

October 23, 2019.....Grant RFP is announced via eblast memo
 October 23, 2019.....Application is live in MEGS+
 October 23 & 24, 2019.....Technical Assistance Webinar
<https://zoom.us/j/435229476?pwd=RHcrSlhrZUxqRW1ZZkg5Zm1JaHYwdz09>
 November 14, 2019.....Applications due at 11:59pm in MEGS+
 November 15, 2019.....Grant application review
 December 1, 2019Grants Awards Announced
 December 20, 2019.....Awards made via SAMS

REJECTION OF PROPOSALS:

The MDE reserves the right to reject any applications received as a result of this grant program announcement.

REVIEW PROCESS, CRITERIA, AND REVIEWERS:

The MDE utilizes a review panel when scoring its competitive grants. For this grant program, review teams will be composed of people from within and outside the MDE as needed, with expertise in FIRST Robotics and RECF. The MDE staff will supervise the review process. An administrative review will be conducted by MDE prior to funding and at the end of the season to ensure all teams meet the grant requirements.

*All dates subject to change at the discretion of the MDE.

LENGTH OF AWARD:

All funds awarded as part of FY2019 of State School Aid, Section 99h must be used in full by September 30, 2020.

INDIRECT CHARGES:

State law does not allow indirect charges on State School Aid funds.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

Payments for the Coach Stipend Awards and Support Awards will be scheduled for December 20, 2019, via SAMS. Funding for Advancement Awards will be scheduled for May 2020 at the discretion of the Educational Technology Unit in coordination with members of FIRST and RECF.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

The MDE, FIRST in Michigan and RECF have worked together to provide supplementary resources for grant applicants. They include but are not limited to a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document, a template spending plan, a template student roster, and State Continuing Education Clock Hours instructions and log. These resources can be found at www.techplan.org/rdi. Additional information regarding the continuum of FIRST Robotics programming in Michigan, visit <http://www.firstinmichigan.org/>. Additional information regarding the REC Foundation VEX, VEX IQ, and RAD programming, visit <https://www.roboticseducation.org/>.