NEW MEXICO
Public Education Department

Guidelines for Request for Application (RFA) for the New Mexico Math Lab Expansion Program SY2026–27 & SY2027–28

I. PURPOSE OF THIS REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)

The 2025 Legislative Session allocated funding for a math labs pilot project for Grades K–6.
The purpose of the request for application (RFA) is to support schools in implementing math lab programs designed to provide students with high quality teaching and practice in mathematics focused on hands-on activities and project-based learning.

II. BACKGROUND

Early mathematics skills serve as the building blocks for all mathematical learning. As students develop a strong conceptual understanding of number sense, fluency with operations, working with fractions and decimals, measurement and data, and geometry alongside the Standards for Mathematical Practices, they build the skills necessary to tackle more advanced topics like algebra, geometry, and calculus. These early concepts are not just isolated facts to memorize but are interconnected ideas that form the basis of all future math learning.

Hands-On Learning with Manipulatives. A math lab would provide students with physical tools to help them visualize and manipulate mathematical concepts for students in all grades, K–6.

Real-World Problem-Solving. A math lab would be designed to mirror real-world scenarios where students can apply their mathematical knowledge. This is a clear pathway to college- or career-readiness.

Collaboration and Peer Learning. Peer-to-peer teaching and collaboration promote a deeper understanding as students are encouraged to articulate their reasoning and approach. Students can share diverse perspectives, ultimately enhancing their problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

Exploration and Inquiry-Based Learning. Students explore mathematical concepts through guided discovery. As students investigate, they deepen their conceptual understanding while building critical thinking and investigative skills and automaticity.

Provide Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Learning Opportunities. By connecting mathematical concepts to students' own backgrounds and experiences, the learning becomes more meaningful.

Build Positive Student Math Identity. How students view themselves in relation to mathematics influences their attitudes, engagement, and ultimately their success in the subject. When students see themselves as "math people", they approach problems with confidence and are more willing to

engage in complex tasks. When a student considers themself as a “math person”, they also develop stronger problem-solving skills.

III. NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (PED) VISION

Provide a culturally, linguistically responsive education to ALL students in New Mexico to prepare them socially, emotionally, and academically for success in college, career, and life.

IV. LEVEL OF FUNDING

Applicants may apply for a two-year grant of up to $200,000.00 per school site. Grants are available through an application process, where total funding shall not exceed three million dollars ($3,000,000.00) for fiscal years 2027–2028. Grant amounts will be determined by each entity's grant application. The full amount may be awarded to multiple applicants or a combination of applicants submitting a single application. Any funds not expended by June 30, 2028, shall be reverted to the PED and shall not be permitted to carry over to subsequent years. Current and continued funding for this project is dependent upon annual legislative appropriations.

V. ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

All budgetary decisions should be directly correlated to implementation data. Allowable expenses include:

- Funds for developing a math lab, including the purchase of supporting supplies, materials (e.g. hands-on manipulative), and aligned intervention programs, including universal math screeners;
- Funds may be used for the hiring of a certified full-time or part-time teacher with an Elementary Math Endorsement (EMS) or working towards an EMS to provide instructional opportunities for students;
- Provide teachers with stipends to collaborate with math lab teachers beyond the contract time to analyze math data or planning for instruction;
- Allocate substitute funding to release teachers to participate in school-level or LEA-level collaboration with math lab teachers during the school day related to planning math instruction or analyzing math data; or
- Funds may be used to contract professional learning providers, mentors, or coaches with the appropriate mathematical skillset and expertise needed to support schools with continuing enhancements to currently existing math labs.

VI. UNALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

Indirect costs are not allowable. The fiscal agent shall bear any indirect costs. Unallowable costs include:

- Programs without significant time engaging in mathematics;
- Infrastructure development;

- Out-of-state travel;
- Student transportation;
- Materials-only projects (i.e., applications with no programming element);
- Compensation-only project (i.e. applications with no programming element); and
- Equipment-only projects (i.e., applications with no program development in mathematics).

VII. LENGTH OF FUNDING

The resulting contract shall begin upon the awarding/execution of award memos to winning applicants and continue through June 30, 2028. The PED reserves the right to terminate any award that does not meet the requirements as defined by the guidelines governing the program or does not demonstrate substantial progress toward meeting the objectives outlined in its approved application or does not demonstrate substantial progress towards meeting performance/outcome-based metrics deadlines.

VIII. ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

Eligible entities are New Mexico public school districts, state-chartered charter schools (LEAs) or locally-chartered charter schools that serve students in Grades K–6. LEAs that wish to apply do not need to include all schools in their application to be eligible for funding. Similarly, not all schools included in an application may be funded. Each school site may apply for up to $200,000.00.

All eligible entities awarded grant funding must sign to agree and adhere to all assurances outlined in the assurance form/Memorandum of Understanding throughout the period of the award.

IX. REQUIREMENTS

The PED requires applicants to:

- Implement a math high-quality instructional material from the PED approved list and are in the "Program Installation" or "Initial Implementation" phase as measured by the NM Instructional Materials Implementation Tool.
- Work with PED staff to conduct site visit(s) as needed, at least once per school year during the grant performance period;
- Participate in a minimum of seven of eight monthly online community of practice sessions with PED staff (at a minimum, participants should include the assigned math lab teacher and program manager);
- Work with the PED to implement an approved early numeracy screener to participating students at least once per year, beginning in year two of grant implementation (unless superseded by state laws;
- Utilize a Level II or III teacher with the Elementary Mathematics Specialist (EMS) endorsement or a teacher working toward earning the EMS endorsement to facilitate instruction in the math lab pilot program as the “teacher of record”;

- Require each participating school to utilize a PED-approved research-based tool, such as the Stages of Concern Questionnaire or Levels of Use to measure change implementation;
- Provide a state-approved interim assessment at the beginning-of-year, middle-of-year, and end-of-year to all students participating in the math lab pilot;
- Require each participating school to report (on a PED-developed template) annually disaggregated demographic and proficiency data to the PED including the following information, by race and ethnicity, tribal affiliation, family income, gender, English proficiency, and disability status;
- Participate in evaluation of the program through a mixed-methods model from pre-/post-surveys of students, teachers, coaches, administrators; interviews with parents, students, teachers, administrators; and analysis of interim and summative assessment data. Including but not be limited to:
    - Pre-/post- summative and interim assessment scores;
    - Formative assessment data: (i.e. curriculum-embedded assessments, student work samples, student discourse, etc.); and
    - Classroom walkthroughs in coordination with PED staff, school building and district administration.
- Continue to follow all students that participate in the math labs for the duration of their K–12 career and report their achievement.
- Submit monthly progress reports towards achievement of program requirements as measured by the following performance/outcomes-based measures with the monthly requests for reimbursement. Failure to meet any of the measures outlined in the Assurances may result in funds being returned to the PED.

X. COMPETITIVE PRIORITIES

The PED will prioritize the distribution of available grant funding based on:

- Proposals from rural entities that serve a student body in which at least 40 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, pursuant to the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act;
- Proposals from rural entities that serve a student body in which at least 50 percent of students are identified as “at-risk,” pursuant to the PED Strategic Plan for Success;
- Direct impact in terms of the number of students who will participate in math lab;
- Entities utilizing High-Quality Instructional Materials in mathematics; and
- Entities that have a teacher or coach currently endorsed, or working toward an EMS endorsement.

XI. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Consortium of schools	A group of public schools across school districts or within a regional education cooperative.
Culturally and linguistically relevant and responsive	Validating and affirming an individual's home culture and language to create connections with other cultures and languages in various social contexts.
Math Lab	A dedicated space with designated time where students engage in hands-on, problem-based learning to explore and deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. This space encourages active participation, discovery, and problem-solving through the use of manipulatives, games, puzzles, technology, and real-world applications. • Activity-Centered: The primary focus is on students actively doing mathematics rather than passively listening. • Hands-on Exploration: Students use concrete materials (manipulatives) like blocks, counters, geometric shapes, measurement tools, and more to visualize and manipulate mathematical ideas. • Problem-Solving Focus: Activities often present problems or challenges that require students to apply their mathematical knowledge and reasoning skills to find solutions. • Collaborative Learning: Math labs often encourage students to work together in small groups, fostering communication, teamwork, and the sharing of ideas. • Differentiated Instruction: The open-ended nature of many math lab activities allows students to learn at their own pace and explore concepts in ways that best suit their learning styles. • Engagement and Motivation: The interactive and often game-like nature of math labs can increase student interest and motivation in mathematics, reducing math anxiety. • Real-World Connections: Activities often connect mathematical concepts to everyday situations, helping students see the relevance and practicality of math. • Flexible Organization: A math lab can be a specific room with various learning stations, or it

	can be a designated time within the regular classroom where these types of activities take place. Resources might be centralized or classroom-based. • Facilitator Role of the Teacher: The teacher's role shifts from direct instruction to that of a facilitator, guiding student exploration, asking probing questions, and providing support as needed.
Professional Learning	Activities that are an integral part of school and local educational agency (LEA) strategies for providing educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the NM Adopted Content Standards. Professional learning: (1) focuses on content and pedagogical approach; (2) incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory; (3) supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts; (4) uses models and modeling of effective practice; (5) provides coaching and expert support; (6) offers opportunities for feedback and reflection; (7) is of sustained duration; and (8) is aligned to one of the three tiers of evidence [ESSA].
Rural	Any part of the state other than Los Alamos County, Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Farmington, Las Cruces, Roswell, Santa Fe, or within a 10-mile radius around those cities.

XI. PROGRAM OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

The PED has assigned the following individuals to oversee and manage the progress of the projects/programs, listed below:

Jacqueline Costales, Ed.D., Executive Manager, Curriculum and Instruction
Jacqueline.Costales@ped.nm.gov

Shafiq Chaudhary, Senior Manager, Math and Science Bureau
shafiq.chaudhary@ped.nm.gov

XII. SCORING GUIDELINES

Each application will be scored across five (5) application sections. A total of 50 points are possible:

I. Summary: (15 points)
II. Justification: (15 points)
III. Budget Overview: (7 points)
IV. Program Timeline: (7 points)
V. Sustainability: (6 points)

Either a score of '0' or 'no submission' of any of the components of the application will result in a disqualification of the application.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Proposed projects will be reviewed and scored based on the criteria below:

Summary

- Do the proposed activities, expected outputs, and outcomes support the goal of this RFA?
- Does the proposed project include all project partners in the design and development of programming?
- Does the proposed project include using NM partners to achieve project goals?
- Does the proposed project include using standard-aligned resources to achieve project goals?
- Do the proposed activities engage a target audience with meaningful opportunities to utilize High-Quality Instructional Materials and High-Quality Professional Learning?
- Does the proposed project include best practices (such as project-based learning, small group, engaging students in developmentally appropriate standards for math practices, standards aligned materials and activities)?

Justification

- Does the narrative describe how the program will meet the eligibility criteria, including student demographics, and how the proposal aligns to the PED Strategic Plan for Success and NM Math Framework?
- Does the proposed project support individuals' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivations to engage in a math lab pilot program?
- Does the applicant address priorities and cite objectives?
- Does the applicant explain the need for program implementation within the identified target audience (grade levels, groups of students)?

Budget Overview

- Is the proposed budget request reasonable and justified?

Timeline

- Does the proposal clearly describe how the project will be executed logistically?

- Does the proposal include details sufficient to determine that it can reasonably be executed in the proposed time frame, with required data and requirements to support the completion of the project?
- Does the project include anticipated professional learning, communities of practice, staff development, programming, and/or other milestones?

Sustainability

- Does the applicant justify the scale-of-program implementation in their proposals?
- Does the applicant commit to collaborating with PED to produce content posted on PED communication platforms?
- Does the applicant demonstrate a plan for best practices learned throughout the project with their stakeholders (i.e. community members)?
- Does the applicant demonstrate how partnerships might continue past the project end date?

XIII. COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

All eligible entities awarded grant funding must participate in a monthly scheduled Community of Practice (CoP) session through the PED during the two-year grant period in order to receive grant funds. Failure to actively participate will result in awarded funds returned to the PED. All eligible entities must enroll in the CoP, share best practices, and problems of practice to support collegial learning among one another. At a minimum, participants should include the assigned math lab teacher and program manager.

Awarded entities will be surveyed to determine the best dates and times to host the monthly CoP.

XIV. CANVAS

Grant applications must be submitted to the designated Canvas module by 4:00 p.m. MST on March 29, 2026. Please ensure the program grant manager has a Canvas account.

You may request a Canvas account by submitting a help desk ticket.

You may access the Canvas course to review and upload the application packet.

XV. TIMELINE

Program managers will make every effort to adhere to the following schedule:

Action	Responsible Party	Due Dates
Request for Application Open	PED	January 29, 2026
Deadline to submit Intent to Apply (Optional)	Potential applicants	February 13, 2026
Deadline to submit questions	Potential applicants	February 27, 2026

Response to questions	PED	March 6, 2026
Application Submissions Due	***Applicants***	***March 29, 2026***
Evaluation of applications	Review Panel	April 1–10, 2026
Selection of grantees	Review Panel	April 13–14, 2026
Finalize award memos	PED/Grantee(s)	June 1–30, 2026
Award Memo(s) Transmission	PED/Grantee(s)	July 1, 2026
Community of Practice #1	PED/Grantee(s)	September 2026

XVI. EXPLANATION OF EVENTS

Issuance of RFA

This RFA is being issued on behalf of the New Mexico Public Education Department on the date specified in the above timeline.

Deadline to Submit Intent to Apply

Potential applicants may submit the Intent to Apply via SurveyMonkey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/56YC3WR by **11:59 pm MST February 13, 2026**. Completing the Intent to Apply Form does not oblige the eligible entities in any way but will provide useful information to the PED in preparing for the grant review process. Entities may continue to apply even if they miss the deadline to submit the Intent to Apply.

Deadline to Submit Questions

Potential applicants may submit questions to the Grant Q&A on Canvas to the intent or clarity of the RFA until **4:00 pm MST on February 27, 2026**, as indicated in the timeline above. Program Managers should have a Canvas Account. Questions shall be clearly labeled and shall cite the relevant sections of the RFA or any other attending documents.

Response to Questions

Responses to questions will be distributed as indicated in the timeline above and according to the order in which the questions were received.

Submission of Application

All applications must be received for review and evaluation through the New Mexico Math Pilot Grant Canvas Portal no later than **4:00 pm MST on March 29, 2026.** Applications received after this time will not be accepted. The date and time of receipt of the application will be noted on the application itself.

Evaluation of Applications

The committee will evaluate applications based on the priorities outlined. The process will take place as indicated in the timeline above depending on the number of applications received. During this time, program staff may initiate discussions with Applicants to clarify aspects of the proposals. However, proposals may be accepted and evaluated without such discussion. Applicants may not initiate discussions.

Selection of Applications

The PED will notify all Applicants of the decision on their application before or near April 15, 2026. Feedback and final application score will be distributed to Applicants not selected for funding. Each application will be scored by the panelists individually and then discussed at a meeting consisting of the entire panel to arrive at final scores and committee feedback for each component.

For more details on the scoring guidelines, see the "Scoring Guidelines" section above.

Finalize Awards

During the window of time stipulated in the timeline above, the PED will work directly with successful grantees to establish assurance terms leading to the awarding/execution of award letters.

Contract Awards

After reviewing the Evaluation Committee Report and the signed contractual agreement, the Agency Procurement Office will award as per the schedule in the timeline above. This date is subject to change at the discretion of the State Purchasing Division or relevant Agency Procurement Office. The award letter(s) shall be awarded to the Applicants whose proposals are most advantageous to the State of New Mexico and the PED, taking into consideration the evaluation factors outlined in this RFA. The award is subject to appropriate Department and State approval, and both entities reserve the right to not fund any of the applications, if none are judged to be advantageous and/or do not score sufficiently.

XVII. EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The committee tasked with the evaluation of applications has a broad level of experience with professional learning programs and content experts collectively, representing a variety of perspectives and experience in the field. Members are highly familiar with professional learning and mathematics in New Mexico.

XVIII. REPORTING

Each successful grantee awarded funding through the NM Math Pilot Grant is required to submit an end-of-year report to include the following information to the PED. Please see Appendix A in the Application for the end-of-year reporting requirements.