

New Hampshire Department of Education
High School Equivalency Testing Discretionary Grant
Bureau of Adult Education
February 21, 2024

Summary: The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) is issuing a request for applications (RFA) for the provision of funding to purchase equipment, supplies, and other technological materials for the purpose of transitioning current high school equivalency testing (HSE) centers from paper-based testing to computer-based testing, as well as expanding testing capacity for HSE centers already providing computer-based testing.

Dates: Application available February 21, 2024. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Awardees will be notified within three weeks of review.

Purpose of the Program: The purpose of this discretionary grant is to target HSE State Fee Revenues to eligible HSE testing centers in support of increasing access to high school equivalency testing through the expanded use of computer-based testing. This will:

- **Prevent delays in test delivery and scoring** that have been reported the past two years with paper-based testing including the delays caused by waiting for the delivery of paper-based tests.
- **Increase turn-around time for students receiving score reports** by allowing for faster scoring of tests. Computer-based results are available within 3-5 days of testing rather than 3 -5 days from the receipt of the paper tests at the scoring center.
- **Reduce storage space** by not having to secure multiple copies of test booklets, answer sheets and shipping materials.
- **Decrease administrator prep time** needed to pull rosters, verify test forms and set up test booklets prior to testing sessions,
- **Improve access to accommodations** by providing the students with computer-based accommodations such as screen magnifiers, line reading tools, and text-to-speech technology.
- **Increase testing capacity** through adding more seats, access to GED testing and/or creating mobile/satellite sites.

Eligibility: State-approved High School Equivalency testing centers who currently provide paper-based testing services only or centers interested in expanding computer-based seat capacity. This may include the addition of GED Testing to HiSET only test centers and the addition of mobile or satellite testing sites.

Total Funding Available: Up to \$35,000.00

Estimated Award Amounts: There is no minimum or maximum award.

Provision of Services: Funds must be obligated by 6/30/2024. An invoice for expenses submitted by 8/15/2024.

For Further Information: contact Sarah Wheeler, Sarah.L.Wheeler@doe.nh.gov or 603-271-6701.

Submission: See attached application.

This grant program has one absolute priority. Applicants must meet the absolute priority.

Absolute Priority:

Expand capacity for High School Equivalency Testing. There are multiple options for test centers to increase capacity including, but not limited to the following:

1. **Transitioning to computer-based testing:** For the past two years, paper-based testing delivery delays have prevented testing from occurring in January 2023 and 2024. Additionally, there have been multiple instances of delayed reporting in paper-based testing due to missing answer sheets, mailing delays, and incorrect information on the answer sheets. A transition to computer-based testing would prevent these delays which would allow for more testing opportunities for students and fewer issues related specifically to paper-based testing.
2. **Expanding seat capacity:** Most computer-based testing centers have a seat capacity set at less than 10 and several only have 1 – 2 seats available. Current capacity is not sufficient to meet the demand for testing services. Additionally, test center reimbursements from PSI and GED Testing Services are based on the number of tests administered at any one time. Increased capacity will lead to increased reimbursement for additional tests administered at the same time. In accordance with test publisher requirements, one proctor may administer up to 25 HiSET test takers or 20 GED test takers.
3. **Offering both tests:** A test center may offer both HSE Test. They may use the same equipment and testing room, but different proctors for each test. This allows for additional test sessions, increasing the availability of testing sessions for test takers as well as increase the opportunity to choose the most appropriate test.
4. **Creating a mobile test center or satellite test center:** Both test publishers allow for the use of a laptops and a local area network under special provisions. GED has specific requirements for a mobile testing center that allows the flexibility of using the same laptops in multiple designated locations. HiSET also allows for the use of laptops that may be made available in more than one location.

Demonstrated Need

Applicants must have a demonstrated need for funding to expand capacity for high school equivalency testing. This may include background information on how the test center is currently supported including access, or the lack of access, to the equipment, furniture, resources and training needed to increase capacity.

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Centers that lack of equipment or IT support for computer-based testing to transition PBT only test centers to computer-based testing or expand seats in existing CBT test centers
- Centers unable to meet the needs of the community including having waiting lists and needing to refer test takers to another test center
- Centers who have experienced issues related to paper-based testing

Applicants must provide details on the necessary supplies and strategies proposed to expand HSE testing capacity through at least one of the four purposes identified in this RFA (see “Absolute Priority” section). Items must meet the test publisher’s technical requirements¹. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Hardware such as computers, keyboards, monitors, routers and modems
- Furniture such as adjustable desks, dividers and chairs
- Equipment including mobile cart, portable dividers and wifi hardware to set up a mobile or satellite computer-based testing center
- Security equipment such as the GED security kit or a closed circuit video system
- Expenses related to the installation of or enhancement of internet connectivity
- Expenses related to the installation of or enhancement of a computer network
- Installation of or enhancement for internet bandwidth, routers, local area networks and other IT set-up services
- Training for new staff to be certified by the test publisher for administering the computer-based test
- IT services and/or paid staff training to complete the required set up for GED testing

¹ [HiSET Technical Requirements](#); [GED Technical Requirements](#)

This RFA is intended to provide one-time funding to build capacity. Awards may not be used for operational support, salaries, rent, training, any ongoing expenses or prior expenses. Under no circumstances shall this funding be used for test taker fees or high school equivalency preparation services.

Performance Measures/Outcomes

Applicants must identify the performance measures and outcomes anticipated from this grant award. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Increase number of available HiSET computer-based test seats each month
- Increase number of test-takers GED computer-based test seats each month
- Increase number of testing dates available to the public

Budget

Any equipment purchased that is valued at more than \$250 must be entered onto the [Adult Education Inventory Sheet](#) and tagged as property of the State of NH. In the event of test center closure the equipment must be returned to be redistributed to another test center. Centers should take the necessary steps to reduce the risk of equipment loss and notify the Bureau if the equipment is longer available.

Scoring Process

Grants will be scored by at least two peer reviewers according to the criteria below. Scores will be averaged into one overall score. Funding will be dispersed for each application of sufficient quality, which may be determined by applications scoring above 70 total points. Awards will be dispersed based upon the order of the applications received until funds are depleted. Therefore, not all applications will be funded unless the total requests are less than or equal to the total amount of funding for this discretionary grant.

In the event that the applicant does not score a minimum of 70 total points, the Bureau has the option to provide technical assistance and request that the application be resubmitted.

Scoring Criteria: NHED Adult Education – High School Equivalency Testing Discretionary Fund

Criteria		Points			
Application meets the requirements of the absolute priority, to expand capacity for HSE testing	24 points Application supports absolute priority completely	18 points Application supports absolute priority to a strong degree	12 points Application supports absolute priority to a moderate degree	6 points Application supports absolute priority to a minimal degree	0 points Application does not support absolute priority
Applicant has identified how proposed funding will address one or more of the four options provided.	24 Points Explanation is clear and compelling with supporting detail; strategies proposed for CBT testing, expanded seat capacity and either GED testing or a mobile test center.	18 points Explanation is clear with some supporting detail; strategies proposed for CBT testing and expanded seats only	12 point Explanation is included; lacks supporting detail; or only one strategy for CBT testing or expanded seats	6 points Explanation does not support the grant activity; minimal strategies provided and may not connect to the stated goals of the grant.	0 points Applicant does not explain how funding will improve outcomes.
Applicant demonstrates a need for funding	24 points Applicant provides solid evidence of how PBT and/or current capacity is not meeting the needs of the community; provides descriptive examples of PBT issues.	18 points Applicant provides solid evidence of how current capacity is not meeting the needs of the community but has encountered limited issues related to paper-based testing.	12 points Applicant provides some evidence of how capacity is not meeting the needs of the community and vague examples of paper-based testing issues.	6 points Applicant provides little to no evidence	0 points Applicant does not demonstrate a need for funding
Performance measures and outcomes align with the program activity	12 points Performance measures are clearly written, and outcomes include substantial increase in the number of seats or testing dates	9 points Performance measures align with the program activity and outcomes include a moderate increase in the number of seats and testing dates	6 points Performance measures show some alignment with the program activity or outcomes; includes an increase in the number of seats or dates	3 points Performance measures are included but are not aligned to the activity or outcomes; does not include an increase in the number of seats or dates	0 points Performance measures and outcomes are not included or are very general.
Budget	16 points The budget is reasonable, necessary and complete; includes a detailed explanation for equipment, furniture, services and training	12 points The budget is complete; includes a basic explanation for any proposed equipment, furniture, services or training	8 points The budget is unreasonable for the activity or includes non-directly related costs; does not include specific costs	4 points The budget is incomplete or inconsistent with activity	0 points The budget is not included, is not reasonable or necessary, and/or does not support the activity
Total points possible	100				

NH Adult Education

Adult Education Federal Funds – HSE Testing Discretionary Grant

Released: February 21, 2024

Email completed application to: AdultEd@doe.nh.gov Awards made on a rolling basis.

Test Center Name:		Date:	
Person Completing Application:		Email:	
Eligibility			
<input type="checkbox"/>	I confirm that this center is an approved HSE Testing Center using paper-based testing or having limited computer-based testing capacity.		
Absolute Priority			
1. Please provide a brief summary of your proposal to meet the absolute priority of expanding capacity for high school equivalency testing through one or more of the four recommended options or another option.			
2. Please describe the strategies for using the proposed funding and how they will address meeting the needs of the community, prevent waiting lists and testing delays, improve scoring times, and increase the availability of testing opportunities through expanded seats and increased test dates.			
3. Please provide data that demonstrates the need for funding including evidence of how paper-based testing and/or the current capacity is not meeting the needs of the community. This may include distance to the nearest CBT test center, the annual number of test takers, current capacity and number of test sessions, description of waiting lists and any past issues with paper-based testing.			
<i>Number of People Testing at this Center Annually</i>		<i>Current Seat Capacity</i>	
		<i>Number of Test Sessions per year</i>	
Past Waiting Lists or Referrals to other Test Centers due to limited capacity			
Past Issues Related to Paper-Based Testing:			

4. Please describe the performance target(s) that the proposed funding is designed to meet by June 30, 2025. Please include how the target(s) align(s) to the proposed activities.

<i>Proposed Number of People Testing at this Center Annually</i>		<i>Proposed Seat Capacity</i>		<i>Proposed Number of Test Sessions per year</i>	
--	--	-------------------------------	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

Budget

5. Please include a detailed budget and budget narrative explaining any calculations using the following Categories and line items as applicable.

The categories and line items are suggested, not required. Please provide a detailed description for each proposed expense.

All equipment purchases must meet the test publishers technical requirements (see link in the footnote under Absolute Priority).

Category	Line Item	Amount	Narrative Description
Equipment	Computers/Laptops		
	Internet Hardware		
	Security Devices		
Furniture	Desks		
	Dividers		
	Mobile Cart		
Services	IT Support		
	Current Staff Training		
	New Staff Training		
Total Amount Requested			