

# Quality Schools Facility Grant Program



## Purpose

The purpose of the Quality Schools Facility Grant Program (Quality Schools Program) is to establish a mechanism to distribute grants to public school districts for school facility and technology projects from the school facility and technology account established in 20-9-516. Program funds are to be used to assist schools in addressing major deferred maintenance, energy efficiency, critical infrastructure needs, emergency facility needs, and technological improvements. Grants must be distributed for projects that:

- o Enhance the quality of life and protect the health, safety, and welfare of Montana's public school students
- o Ensure the successful delivery of an educational system that meets the accreditation standards provided for in 20-7-111
- o Extend the life of Montana's existing public school facilities
- o Promote energy conservation and reduction
- o Integrate technology into Montana's education framework to support student educational needs for the 21st century
- o Are fiscally responsible by considering both long-term and short-term needs of the public school district, the local community, and the state

## Adminstrating Agency:

Department of Commerce

## Statutory Reference:

Title 90, Chapter 6, Part 8, MCA

## Approving Authority:

Final approval is provided by the Legislature

## Eligible Applicants:

- o Public school districts as provided in Title 20, Chapter 6, MCA
  - o Elementary School Districts
  - o High School Districts
  - o K-12 School Districts

## Statutory Evaluation Criteria Include:

- o Projects that solve urgent and serious public health or safety problems or that enable public school districts to meet state or federal health or safety standards
- o Projects that provide improvements necessary to bring school facilities up to current local, state, and federal codes and standards
- o Projects that enhance a public school district's ability to offer specific services related to the requirements of the accreditation standards provided for in 20-7-111, MCA
- o Projects that provide long-term, cost-effective benefits through energy-efficient design
- o Projects that incorporate long-term, cost-effective benefits to school facilities, including the technology needs of school facilities
- o Projects that enhance educational opportunities for students

In applying the criteria, the department shall consider, without preference or priority, the following attributes of a school facility project application:

- o Need for financial assistance
- o Fiscal capacity of the public school district to meet the conditions established in 90-6-812
- o Past efforts to ensure sound, effective, long-term planning and management of the school facility and attempts to address school facility needs with local resources
- o Ability to obtain funds from sources other than the funds provided under this part
- o Importance of the project and support for the project from the community

The department may make adjustments to its ranking of the projects based on the educationally relevant factors established in 20-9-309, MCA. Before making any adjustments, the department may consult with the office of public instruction concerning the educationally relevant factors.

### Types of Projects:

- o Construction of a new school facility
- o Major repairs to an existing school
- o Major deferred maintenance to an existing school
- o Emergency facility repairs
- o Planning for school facilities
- o Information technology infrastructure

### Source of Funding:

Funding is provided through the school facility and information technology account, 20-9-516, MCA. The fund receives income attributable to the difference between the average sale value of 18 million board feet and the total income produced from the annual timber harvest on common school trust lands during the fiscal year, the mineral royalties transferred from the guarantee account as provided in 20-9-622, and the income received from certain lands and riverbeds as provided in 17-3-1003(5), MCA (after 7/1/2014).

### Legislative Appropriations:

Appropriations from the school facility and information technology account include administrative costs, Quality Schools Program emergency grants, Quality Schools Program school facility planning grants, Quality Schools Program school facility project grants, and the state share of school district debt service on public bonds issued for school construction projects. In the 2013 biennium, approximately \$11.1 million was appropriated for Quality Schools Program grants.

### Grant Limits: N/A

### Matching Fund Requirements:

The Quality Schools Program school facility planning grants require a 1:4 match by the applicant school district, and Quality Schools Program project grants are ranked in part on the applicant school district's ability and willingness to provide a local funding match.

### Application Deadline:

For consideration by the 2013 Legislature, Quality Schools Program project grant applications are due by June 29, 2012.

### General Application Requirements:

The submission of a Quality Schools Program grant application must be approved by the district, either through formal resolution of approval by the school board or through delegation of authority to submit the application to an authorized officer or employee of the district. Quality Schools Program grants are a state action subject to the Montana Environmental Policy Act.

### For Further Information Contact:

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