

Pre-ETS Request for Proposal (RFP) Q&A

Question 1: Is the intent of this funding to support direct delivery of Pre-ETS services, or to focus on improving access, coordination, and systems related to Pre-ETS?

Answer: As outlined in the RFP, the intent of this funding is to improve access to Pre-ETS through the special education transition process. The VBPD is primarily seeking projects that focus on systems change, capacity building, and improved coordination, rather than stand-alone direct service delivery.

Question 2: For projects that include activities aligned with Pre-ETS (e.g., work-based learning, job readiness), are those expected to be delivered through the DARS referral and authorization process, or can they be provided independently under the grant?

Answer: The VBPD does not require that activities funded under this grant be delivered through the DARS referral and authorization process. However, applicants must ensure that any such activities are clearly distinct from and do not duplicate or supplant services provided through DARS, and are designed to enhance access, coordination, or system improvements.

Question 3: How should applicants ensure they are not duplicating or supplanting existing DARS-funded Pre-ETS services while still designing meaningful opportunities for youth?

Answer: Proposals should clearly describe how the project will complement existing services and address gaps or barriers in access, rather than replicate services already available through DARS. Applicants should also describe how their approach contributes to sustainable improvements in access and coordination.

Question 4: Is coordination or formal partnership with DARS expected as part of a competitive proposal?

Answer: A formal partnership with DARS is not required. However, proposals should reflect meaningful coordination with relevant partners, including DARS where appropriate, particularly when such coordination supports improved access and long-term impact.

Question 5: For any direct services provided under this grant, are those expected to follow the DARS referral and authorization process, or can they be delivered independently through this funding?

Answer: Please see response to Question 2. In general, activities may be delivered outside of the DARS referral and authorization process, provided they are not duplicative of DARS services and are clearly tied to improving access, coordination, or system-level outcomes.

Question 6: Is it the Board's expectation that projects operate within the existing DARS Pre-ETS structure, or to pilot alternative or complementary models that expand access outside of that structure?

Answer: The VBPD expects projects to align with and strengthen the existing Pre-ETS system, while also allowing for innovative or complementary approaches that address gaps in access identified through the assessment. Proposals should clearly describe how the approach fits within the broader system and supports lasting, sustainable change.