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Study Grants

Generic Scope of Work Eligible for Reimbursement

Exploratory Investigations, § 706b Study Committees, and Other Study Groups

Grants are available to reimburse the costs of eligible legal and other consulting services incurred in connection with (1) the exploration of potential merger or other joint activity among school districts and (2) the development of proposed articles of agreement and other work connected to potential creation of a union school district. In addition, grants are available to reimburse (3) the costs associated with analyzing the advisability of joint activity and for transitioning to and implementing agreements for that activity.

1. Exploratory Investigation (3714) – up to \$5,000

This grant is available to reimburse eligible costs of facilitation, legal, and other consulting services incurred by two or more school districts or supervisory unions to explore the value of providing services or performing duties jointly, including whether to pursue more formal discussions regarding potential creation of a union school district:

- a. Determining allowable configurations of participating entities
- b. Determining necessary district and/or supervisory union adjustments required to achieve an allowable configuration
- c. Reviewing current and anticipated configurations of other entities to develop recommendations for joint activity, including consolidation or re-configuration of governance structures
- d. Coordinating study group meetings
- e. Serving as the communications leader for a study group
- f. Preparing informational materials for boards and communities
- g. Facilitating public engagement activities
- h. Assembling and synthesizing relevant data to inform decisions
- i. Identifying educational opportunities and other educational benefits and costs of joint activity
- j. Identifying cost savings and/or increases associated with joint activity

2. § 706 Study Committees (3718) – up to \$20,000

This grant is available to reimburse the eligible legal and consulting services fees incurred by districts that have formed a formal study committee to analyze whether to create a union school district and prepare a final report under § 706b(b).

Consulting Services:

- a. Exploring and determining allowable merger scenarios
- b. Determining the costs of proposed new construction and/or renovations
- c. Determining the indebtedness that the new union school district would assume
- d. Determining the real property of which the new union school district would acquire ownership
- e. Assembling and synthesizing relevant data to inform decisions
- f. Analyzing the potential benefits and costs of creating a new union school district, including:
 - Identifying potential educational opportunities and increases in equity
 - Identifying potential operational efficiencies
 - Identifying potential cost savings and increases
- g. Preparing informational materials for boards and communities
- h. Facilitating public engagement activities
- i. Preparing the study committee's final report and proposed articles of agreement

If an expense is incurred for an activity that is not listed above and is not explicitly included in 16 V.S.A. § 706b(b), then the Agency of Education will only provide reimbursement under this grant if it approves the cost as an eligible expenditure.

Legal Services: The grant may be used to reimburse legal services performed on behalf of a § 706b study committee related to the proposed creation of a union school district.

3. Act 156 Joint Services Analysis and Implementation (3715) – up to \$10,000

This grant is available to reimburse the eligible legal and consulting services fees incurred by two or more districts or supervisory unions to analyze whether the provision of joint services would measurably improve student opportunities and decrease costs. Reimbursement is available for services comparable to those outlined for § 706 study committees (3718) above.

The grant is also available to reimburse transitional costs associated with entering into and implementing joint service agreements. Entities intending to seek reimbursement for transitional costs are encouraged to obtain the Agency's advance written approval that the costs are eligible expenditures for purposes of this grant.