



Pandemic Recovery Office

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AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)
CORONAVIRUS CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND (CPF)
COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS MUNICIPAL GRANT

CPF : LEARN365RI

OCTOBER 3, 2023

Based on questions and feedback from several municipalities involved in the ARPA Capital Projects Fund Community Learning Centers (CLC) municipal grant, the Rhode Island Pandemic Recovery Office is providing the following guidance to clarify the CPF grants and distinguish the CLC grant from the Learn365RI grant.

- A. **Learn365RI** – In his 2023 State of the State address, Governor Daniel McKee announced a goal of reaching Massachusetts education levels by 2030. To achieve this goal, the Governor launched the Learn365 RI initiative. All 39 cities and towns in Rhode Islands are welcome and encouraged to join this initiative. Municipal leaders interested in Learn365RI sign the Rhode Island Educational Compact, committing to improving educational outcomes and contributing to the initiative’s collective goal of adding one million hours of out-of-school learning time per year and expanding the culture of learning from the 180-day school year to a full 365-day calendar year.

The first tranche of Learn365RI grants was released by the Governor and the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) in August 2023, with \$3.8 million distributed to 24 municipalities. Another six municipalities are eligible to access standard grant funding after being provided with technical assistance and support from RIDE.

An additional \$4 million in funding was approved as part of Governor McKee’s #RIReady FY 2024 budget and will be made available by the State in the coming months to provide additional support for extended learning opportunities statewide.

Signing the Learn365RI compact makes a community eligible to apply for the ARPA Capital Projects Fund Community Learning Centers Municipal Grant and additional pools of money that support this initiative.

- B. **Capital Projects Fund (CPF)** – U.S. Treasury has allocated \$112.3 million to Rhode Island through the American Rescue Plan Act’s **Capital Projects Fund (CPF)**. The State proposed and received approval to use \$25 million for broadband and \$81.7 million for multipurpose
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community facility projects which the Governor has directed towards creating Community Learning Centers.

- i. **ConnectRI Broadband Deployment Program, \$25 million:** On behalf of the State, the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation will administer a grant program for last mile connection between the state's middle-mile fiber optic network and businesses and households. The implementation framework and process for this grant is currently being developed. The grant will be open to applications through an RFP process in which all 39 municipalities will be eligible to participate.
- ii. **Community Learning Centers Municipal Grant, \$81.7 million:** This is a formula-based grant available to all municipalities who meet the eligibility criteria and complete and application process to acquire, construct, and/or renovate a Community Learning Center. Eligibility criteria for application are:
 - Signing the Learn365RI compact.
 - Signing the Community Centers addendum to the Learn365RI compact.
 - Committing to grassroots community engagement through the period of performance.
 - Demonstrating data or evidence supporting the critical need for the project.

Listed below are responses to some questions that the Pandemic Recovery Office (PRO) has received about these grants and their relation to each other:

Q. **Does a municipality have to choose between applying for either the ConnectRI Broadband or the Community Learning Centers (CLC) Municipal grant?**

A. No. Municipalities can apply to either or both grants. All municipalities who sign the Learn365RI compact are eligible to apply for the CLC grant. Any of the 39 municipalities in Rhode Island can also apply for the ConnectRI Broadband grant.

Q. **Can the CLC grant be used for broadband infrastructure?**

A. The CLC grant can be used for broadband infrastructure work within the Community Learning Centers i.e., the work is part of the capital project funded by the CLC grant. The CLC grant is not appropriate for laying last-mile fiber leading up to the Community Learning Center or other households or businesses in a municipality. If a municipality is interested in developing last-mile broadband infrastructure, then they should apply for the ConnectRI Broadband grant.

Q. **Which programs are required through the Learn365RI compact and the CLC grant?**

A. The Learn365RI compact and its addendum, the Community Centers compact, simply indicate the municipality's commitment to improving work, education, and health outcomes in their community without offering prescribed requirements. Signing the Learn365RI compact also enables municipalities to apply for programmatic funds to support educational programming in their community.

The CLC grant requires that the capital asset that results from the Community Learning Centers Municipal Grant directly and jointly enable work, education, and health monitoring for a minimum of five years after the CLC project is complete. This can be achieved through a mix of active programming such as:

- a. Service providers operate out of the facility and provide targeted intervention to improve individual participants' outcomes in the areas of work, education, and health monitoring, and
- b. Providing appropriate spaces, technology, and equipment for users to remotely access education, work, and health monitoring related services such as online tutoring, remote interviewing, online certification courses, tele-health appointments etc.