

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1740

H.P. 1158

House of Representatives, April 22, 2025

An Act to Establish the Maine Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics Matching Grant Program

Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "R. B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative SAYRE of Kennebunk.

Cosponsored by Representatives: DUCHARME of Madison, GERE of Kennebunkport, KUHN of Falmouth, NUTTING of Oakland, ROBERTS of South Berwick, SARGENT of York, Senator: CURRY of Waldo.

1 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

2 Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA c. 335 is enacted to read:

3 **CHAPTER 335**

4 **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ARTS AND MATHEMATICS**
5 **EDUCATION MATCHING GRANT PROGRAMS**

6 **§9941. Definitions**

7 For the purposes of this chapter, unless context indicates otherwise, the following terms
8 have the following meanings.

9 **1. Grant program.** "Grant program" means the Science, Technology, Engineering,
10 Arts and Mathematics Education Matching Grant Program established in section 9942.

11 **2. STEAM.** "STEAM" means an activity or program of study involving science,
12 technology, engineering, the arts or mathematics.

13 **§9942. Program established; administration; department to develop criteria;**
14 **rulemaking authority**

15 The Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics Education Matching
16 Grant Program is established within the department for the purpose of providing grant
17 funding for activities and programs offering hands-on learning experiences in science,
18 technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics for students in this State in kindergarten
19 to grade 12.

20 **1. Administration.** The department shall administer the grant program. In
21 administering the grant program, the department may consult with:

22 A. A nonprofit organization representing and advocating for manufacturers in this
23 State; and

24 B. A nonprofit organization dedicated to providing opportunities to middle school and
25 high school students to explore robotics in a competitive and supportive environment.

26 **2. Developing criteria; review other state programs.** The department shall develop
27 criteria and procedures for eligibility, the application process, applicant selection and
28 awarding grants consistent with the requirements of this chapter. In developing criteria,
29 the department shall review and evaluate comparable programs in other states.

30 **3. Rulemaking authority.** The department may adopt rules to implement this chapter.
31 Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5,
32 chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

33 **§9943. Eligibility and award selection**

34 The department shall award grants through the grant program to eligible applicants.

35 **1. Eligible applicants.** The department shall award grants through the grant program,
36 for an activity or program as described in subsection 2, to entities and organizations
37 including, but not limited to:

38 A. Schools serving students in any of the grades between kindergarten and grade 12;

1 B. Public libraries;

2 C. Museums;

3 D. Local groups within a nationwide network of youth development and engagement
4 organizations;

5 E. Community groups; and

6 F. Nonprofit organizations.

7 **2. Qualifying STEAM activities or programs.** Grants may be awarded only to
8 support activities or programs that offer hands-on learning experiences in science,
9 technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics for students in this State in kindergarten
10 to grade 12. Grants may support both activities and programs that are noncompetitive and
11 activities and programs that include a competitive component under which a team attends
12 a competition on a specific date and presents a specific completed project. Grant funds
13 may be used to support both formal and informal activities and programs as long as those
14 activities or programs otherwise meet the requirements of this chapter. Activities or
15 programs that may be supported by the grant program include, but are not limited to:

16 A. Robotics competition teams, including those that incorporate robot design and
17 building and other engineering challenges;

18 B. Interconnecting toy-block building competitions designed to guide youth in STEAM
19 learning;

20 C. Competitive teams that promote creativity, problem solving and teamwork and
21 challenge children to think critically and solve open-ended problems with a STEAM
22 focus;

23 D. One-act play competition teams;

24 E. Film competitions with a STEAM focus, including a STEAM film challenge hosted
25 by the University of Maine; and

26 F. Competition programs with a STEAM focus that explore innovation with ocean
27 resources and in the ocean economy.

28 **3. Matching funds required.** A grant recipient is required to match 33% of the
29 amount of the grant received through the grant program. The matching funds must be used
30 for the same purposes for which the grant would be awarded if the applicant is selected.
31 To be eligible for the grant program, an applicant must demonstrate on the application for
32 the grant program the applicant's commitment to providing the required matching funds.
33 An applicant may satisfy the matching requirement by any combination of the following:

34 A. Documentation of funds already raised; and

35 B. Incorporating into the program budget submitted with the application the applicant's
36 intention to provide funding for certain expenses, mitigate certain expenses using
37 existing resources or receive additional funds, including, but not limited to:

38 (1) Payment of insurance, federal payroll taxes and other expenses associated with
39 retaining coaches or other educators or supervisors administering the STEAM
40 activity or program;

41 (2) Provision of travel to competitions via school transportation;

1 (3) Providing a space for the program to operate within an existing space within
2 the applicant's organization; and

3 (4) Sponsorship from a local business.

4 **4. Applicant selection; first priority.** When selecting an eligible applicant for the
5 award of a grant under the grant program, the department must give first priority to:

6 A. Newly established activities or programs; and

7 B. Activities or programs that are based in a municipality or county of greater economic
8 need, as measured by the percentage of households in that municipality or county that
9 have an income below the federal poverty level or the supplemental poverty measure
10 determined by the United States Department of Commerce, United States Census
11 Bureau or are considered asset-limited, income-constrained, employed households by
12 an international charitable fund-raising network.

13 **5. Applicant selection; additional priorities.** After consideration of the factors in
14 subsection 4, the department may consider and give priority to a program that:

15 A. Provides access to STEAM programs to underserved and underrepresented
16 populations;

17 B. Provides STEAM opportunities for students in free or reduced-price lunch
18 programs;

19 C. Has committed supporters, such as businesses, institutions of higher education or
20 parent or teacher volunteers;

21 D. Has a proven sustainability plan; or

22 E. Has a clear and appropriate budget outline.

23 **6. Grant distribution.** Using the criteria as directed in subsections 4 and 5, the
24 department shall award an equal number of grants to applicants from each of the State's 2
25 congressional districts.

26 **§9944. Use of grant funds; recipient reporting requirements**

27 The following provisions govern the use of grant funding received through the grant
28 program and reporting obligations applying to the recipients of those funds.

29 **1. Use of grant funds.** Funds received through the grant program must be used by a
30 grant recipient for the activity or program for which the grant was awarded to cover costs
31 associated with any of the following:

32 A. Operating a competitive team, including supporting the team's advancement in a
33 competition;

34 B. Operating a noncompetitive program;

35 C. Registration fees for events;

36 D. Materials and equipment needed for a specific project;

37 E. Transportation costs associated with travel to and from any competitions;

38 F. Developing a scholarship fund to assist students with the cost of participation;

39 G. Stipends provided to coaches, mentors or other supervisors;

H. Professional development; and

I. Any costs associated with using a space for the operation of an activity or program supported by the grant that are in excess of the cost the grant recipient customarily expends for use of the space.

2. Reporting requirements. A grant recipient must submit to the department, according to a time frame established by the department, a report that includes the following:

A. An outline of the budget of the activity or program for which the grant was awarded, including a report of how the grant funds were used;

B. A written summary of the results of the competition season, if applicable; and

C. Basic demographic information of the students who participated in the activity or program. This paragraph does not require the inclusion of any student's personal identifying information.

Sec. 2. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF

Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics Education Matching Grant Program N520

Initiative: Provides one-time funding for grants to entities and organizations that offer hands-on learning experiences in science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics for students in this State from kindergarten to grade 12. Funds appropriated in fiscal year 2025-26 do not lapse but must be carried forward into fiscal year 2026-27 to be used for the same purpose.

GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$3,000,000	\$0
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$3,000,000	\$0

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics Education Matching Grant Program within the Department of Education to provide grant funding to schools, museums and other entities that apply to support programs that offer hands-on learning experiences in science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics for students in this State in kindergarten to grade 12. Applicants for the grant program are required to demonstrate ability to provide matching funds in the amount of 33% of the grant requested. The bill provides methods by which the matching fund requirement can be satisfied and outlines the types of expenses that a grant recipient can cover with the grant funds.

The bill outlines criteria that the department must apply when awarding grants. The department is required to develop further criteria and procedures for eligibility, the application process, applicant selection and awarding grants. The department is authorized to adopt routine technical rules to implement the program.

1 The bill provides a nonlapsing appropriation in the amount of \$3,000,000 to the
2 program for fiscal year 2025-26, any unused portion of which must be carried forward to
3 fiscal year 2026-27.