



# ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## Application Guidelines for Dropout Recovery Programs

Districts intending to operate a Dropout Recovery Program (DRP) must complete an application on an annual basis. This document is intended to clarify the application process based on the most recent [DRP Procedures](#) and state law [ARS §15-901.06](#).

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) governs approval for LEAs to operate DRP schools, with oversight provided by the [School Support and Improvement](#) unit. LEAs are the responsible parties in all DRP considerations. DRPs are subject to all accountability requirements under [ARS §15-241](#), and [ESSA](#). LEAs are expected to maintain student enrollment and academic progress data, teacher certification and fingerprint records, and all other data as required by [ARS §15-1042](#). DRPs are subject to monitoring, data quality and integrity checks, annual reporting, and other requirements as determined by ADE.

For a guided process, please follow the specific guidelines below. The [Dropout Recovery Program Application Shortlist](#) includes components that meet some of these requirements and should be submitted along with all other required documentation.

### Pre-application Requirements

**Alternative School Status:** All schools operating a DRP must be approved to have alternative school status. Alternative schools are governed by [ARS §15-796](#), and managed by the [Accountability & Research](#) unit at ADE. See their [guidelines for applying and renewing](#) for clarification. If a school submits a valid alternative school application by the deadline and has not received a formal notification of status prior to completing the other requirements in the DRP application process, the LEA may receive *Provisional Approval* to operate the DRP pending the results of the Alternative School application.

**Charter School Approval:** If the DRP is part of or encompasses a Charter School, the [Arizona State Board for Charter Schools \(ASBCS\)](#) must approve an amended or extant charter agreement consistent with the adoption and addition of a DRP. Contact ASBCS for details and requirements. No charter school may operate a DRP without prior approval from ASBCS, and applications will not be processed until receipt of ASBCS approval.

### Procedure and Expectations

While LEAs may apply at any time, those intending to operate a DRP for the full calendar year should submit a complete application to the [DropoutRecovery@azed.gov](mailto:DropoutRecovery@azed.gov) inbox by June 15<sup>th</sup>. For best results, please submit earlier. ADE will consider applications with good-faith expectations of completion of outstanding requirements or amendments. LEAs shall receive notification of approval status within 30 days of receipt of a completed application.



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### Application Submission Requirements:

1. **Documentation of LEA and School information:** Official LEA name and ID/CTDS, school names and IDs/CTDS where the LEA seeks to operate a DRP, and the primary contact for all communication.  
*This requirement is met by submitting a complete [Shortlist](#).*
2. Signed and completed [Dropout Recovery Statement of Assurance](#).
  - a. LEAs should submit one Assurance document for each LEA.
  - b. Each document must be:
    - i. Present-dated (a new one each year); and,
    - ii. Signed by an appropriately empowered LEA official.
3. An example of a student's school-specific **Written Learning Plan (WLP)**. Do not submit unredacted student data, as required by FERPA. The WLP must contain:
  - a. The start date and anticipated end date of the plan.
  - b. Courses to be completed by the pupil during the academic year.
  - c. Whether courses will be taken sequentially or concurrently.
  - d. State competency exams to be taken, as necessary.
  - e. Expectations for **Satisfactory Monthly Progress (SMP)**.
  - f. Expectations for contact with the pupil's assigned mentor.
4. LEA's full definition of **Satisfactory Monthly Progress (SMP)**, on school or LEA letterhead, or with attestation as approved by LEA governing board or leadership.
  - a. SMP definition must expect a full-year student to earn *no less than* 5.5 graduation credits per year, which comes to ½ credit per month.
  - b. No provision of the SMP definition may reduce or minimize the ½ credit per month/5.5 credits per year requirement, for any reason.
5. If receiving services of a third-party provider (educational management organization (EMO)), provide:
  - a. The EMO's current **regional accreditation**, including expiration date.
  - b. Affirmation of verification of **teacher licensure** qualifications.
6. If operated by a Charter District, the LEA must affirm receipt of **Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS)** approval to operate a DRP. ADE will verify directly with ASBCS that the Charter meets the following requirements:
  - a. Charter Districts are required to have a current and valid program of instruction with ASBCS that includes methods of instruction for the DRP.
  - b. If necessary, the charter agreement must be amended by ASBCS to be consistent with the addition of a DRP. Including, but not limited to:
    - i. Expansion requests



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- ii. Charter mission amendment requests
- iii. Instructional days amendment requests

Send application *Shortlist* and all required attachments to [DropoutRecovery@azed.gov](mailto:DropoutRecovery@azed.gov).

Upon receipt, analysis shall determine if the LEA is eligible for to operate the DRP.

Depending on the type of application, approval may be:

1. Tentative Approval may be granted to new entities, pending approval of Alternative School status and/or requirements from ASBCS.
2. Provisional Approval may be granted to existing entities, pending approval of Alternative School status and submission of annual reporting requirements.
3. Full Approval may be granted once all required submissions have been satisfactorily received, and all requirements have been met.

### Requirements After Submission

Additional steps are required after submission to finalize the approval process:

1. Annual Reporting Requirements:
  - a. Existing DRPs and associated EMOs: Prior to receiving Full Approval of a DRP renewal application, schools *and* EMOs must submit an **Annual Report** for the preceding school year in the form and manner determined by ADE, as required by law.
  - b. New DRPs and associated EMOs must commit to submission of an Annual Report by July 31<sup>st</sup> following the school year.
  - c. Failure to sufficiently meet reporting requirements, or failure to correct submitted documents in a timely manner may result in revocation of Approval of DRP status.
  - d. Note for LEAs receiving services from EMOs: EMOs are subject to their own reporting requirements separate from the LEAs. EMOs failing to meet annual reporting requirements may endanger the approval of associated schools to operate a DRP using the EMO's services.
2. School Finance Requirements: LEAs must send proper documentation to ADE School Finance after the start of the fiscal year for the LEA to become active within the payment system. School Finance procedures may take three weeks to activate.