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VISSTA

VIRGINIA SCHOOL SCREENING TESTING for ASSURANCE

K-12 COVID-19 Screening Testing Program
Information for House Appropriations
September 20, 2021

ELC Reopening Schools Grant

Support for Screening Testing to Reopen Schools and Keep Operating Safely

The ELC Reopening Schools grant intends to **support safe, in-person instruction in K-12 schools** by providing resources for schools to implement COVID-19 screening testing as a layer of prevention to protect students/staff/teachers and slow the spread of COVID-19.

- Grant acknowledges the **importance of keeping schools open** for academic, social, and emotional benefits, as well as the importance of doing so safely
- Goal is to **establish comprehensive programs of weekly screening in public and private schools across the state**
- Other considerations include **ensuring equitable access** to the resources provided by the grant and utilizing screening testing as **one tool to monitor disease burden** in a given community
- **Eighty-five percent of the award must directly fund school divisions** or provide materials and services to increase screening testing

ELC grants are administered by the CDC. **Virginia was awarded \$257M in April 2021.**

CDC issued revised grant guidance on August 2, 2021. Activities now explicitly include **both detection and prevention** of COVID-19 in schools, with a continuing focus on screening testing as a mitigation strategy.

Expansion of allowable costs, in addition to *required* screening testing activities, include:

- Support for **diagnostic testing**
- **Testing events** that may also involve other mitigation activities (e.g., promotion of vaccination) to limit the spread of COVID-19
- The **promotion of vaccinations** as part of testing/contact tracing activities, and when characterized as a mitigation strategy to prevent widespread COVID-19 within the school and the community
- **Public health events that include students and other community members** and are aimed at providing opportunities for increased detection of COVID-19
- Costs related to prevention may also include **portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems** or other small items that may allow for improved air circulation

ViSSTA Program Overview

VDH/VDOE are partnering to provide testing vendors, supplies, and staffing with the goal of **maximizing resources available to schools** as they navigate full in-person instruction and **minimizing added work to existing school staff**.

The ViSSTA (Virginia School Screening for Testing Assurance) program will offer:

- **Contractors to conduct pooled testing** at least weekly and provide end-to-end support (e.g., supplies, staff to conduct testing, PPE, biohazard waste removal, reporting tools). Contractors will also support confirmatory testing.
- **Self-test kits** that can be administered at home for diagnostic, close contact, or special event testing
- **Special event support:** staff and testing supplies to help schools add testing as a layer of prevention when extracurricular activities (e.g., athletics, performing arts) and events (e.g., school dances, graduation/awards ceremonies) are held*
- **Containment and mitigation support:** VDH will continue to assist schools in responding to school-based cases and make resources available to advise on case-specific questions

The program is open to public and private schools. In addition to the resources above, **public schools will have access to funds to acquire:**

- **School-based and regional staff:** funding for additional staff to support the testing program (e.g., school-based nurses to advise on medical matters and mitigation/containment, administrative staff to support coordination)
- **Technology and supplies:** funding for supplies utilized to implement the program, including technology resources and infrastructure (e.g., outdoor tents)

All COVID-19 testing must be voluntary; only individuals who consent will be tested.

*During high transmission, schools should strongly consider limiting large gatherings or postponing high risk extracurriculars

School vs. Vendor Responsibilities

Testing vendors will provide end-to-end testing services with the intent that only limited responsibilities fall to the school.



Schools will be responsible for:

- **Coordinating/liasing with testing vendors**
- **Communicating to school community**
 - Encourage participation
 - Facilitate consent process
 - Notify families/community of positive test results and appropriate containment/mitigation measures
- **Determining schedule and testing population**
 - Work with testing vendor/VDOE/VDH staff to design schedule and determine testing cohorts
 - Provide time and space to conduct testing
- **Record keeping**
 - Maintain records of consent

VDH will fund school-based positions to assist with these responsibilities for public schools.

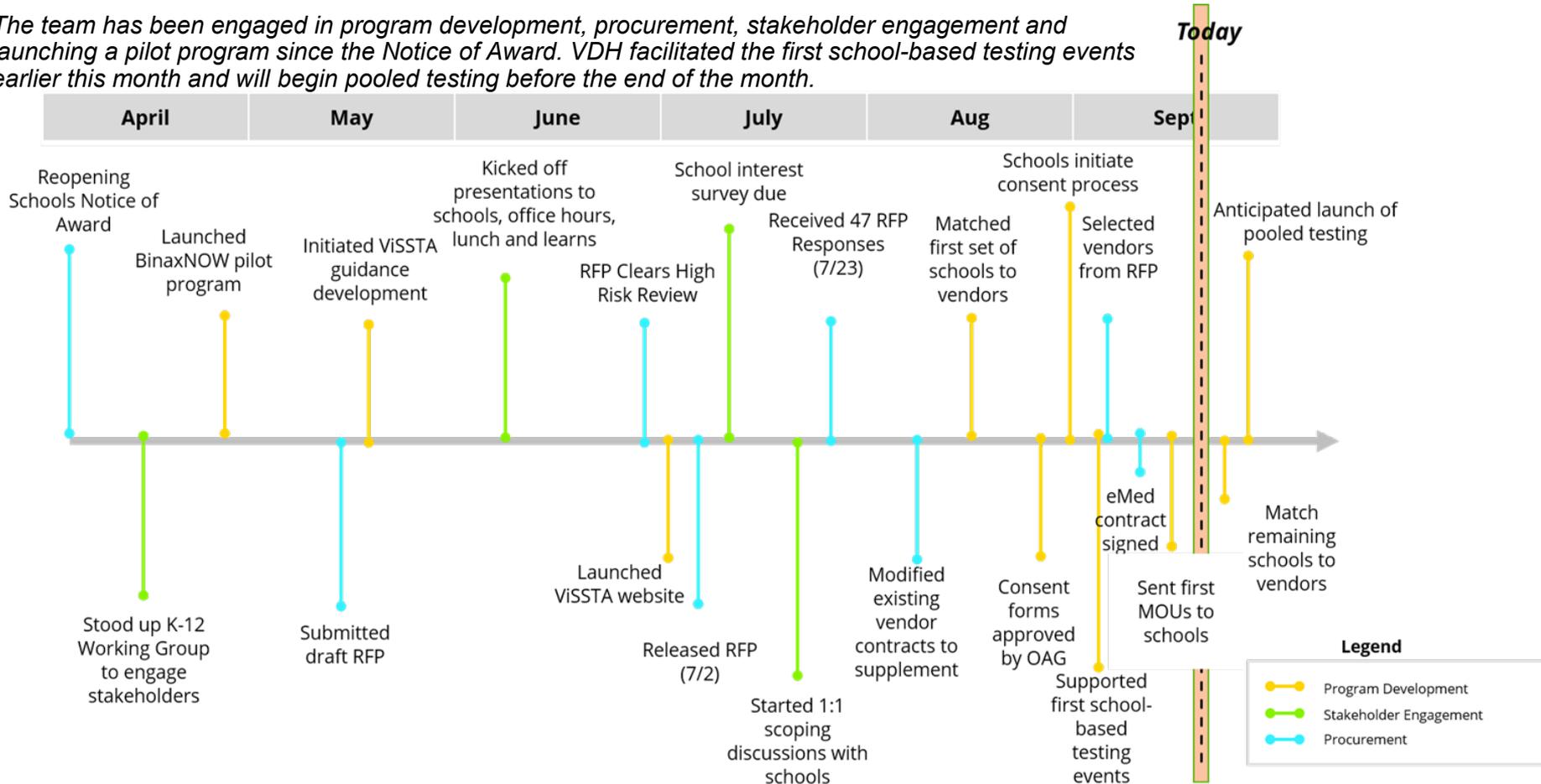


Testing vendors will be responsible for:

- **Providing testing staff and supplies, including:**
 - Trained staff to conduct specimen collection
 - Test kits
 - PPE and hazardous waste removal
 - All documentation necessary to conduct testing (e.g., CLIA waiver)
- **Conducting testing**
 - Conduct testing on-site according to the school's testing schedule or needs
 - Notify school/tested individuals of test results and identify any follow-up testing needed
- **Adhering to standardized program procedures**
 - Report results to VDH as required by state law
 - Collaborate with VDH/VDOE to ensure testing is consistent with VDH policies

Implementation Timeline

The team has been engaged in program development, procurement, stakeholder engagement and launching a pilot program since the Notice of Award. VDH facilitated the first school-based testing events earlier this month and will begin pooled testing before the end of the month.



ViSSTA Program Budget

Full Award: \$257,085,647	
Budget Submitted to CDC: \$257,085,636	
VDH Budget	
Turnkey Testing Vendors	\$130,000,000
Flexible/At-Home Testing Supplies	\$60,152,284
Petersburg MOU to support continuation of Spring 2021 program	\$54,000
VDH Staff, Infrastructure, Other	\$13,818,650
VDOE MOU	\$515,000
MOUs to Individual School Divisions (to fund school-based staff and supplies)	\$52,545,702
Total	\$257,085,636

Throughout summer 2021, VDH and VDOE conducted extensive outreach to local health departments, public schools, and private schools. Presentations included:

- All **public school divisions** in the state
- Private schools (organized by **Virginia Council for Private Education**)
- **Largest school divisions** in the state
- **Small and Rural Schools Coalition**
- **Select group of schools determined to have especially high need** based on Social Vulnerability Index, case rates, and availability of testing in the community
- **Overview from State Superintendent** at multiple Superintendents Meetings in June, July and August. Most recently presented at 9/14 Sup Meeting.
- **Lunch and learn sessions** with schools in the spring BinaxNOW Testing Pilot Program
- **Weekly office hours** staffed by VDH K-12 Testing team

Summary of School Participation

Approximately 25% of all interest survey responses were submitted to VDH within the past two weeks (after declining to submit by the 7/15 deadline).

Approximately 19% of the public school divisions in VA have committed to participating in the program, as of 9/15.

Status	Public	Private	Total
Committed	25	13	38
Interested	38	1	39
Matched	11	3	14
Hosting CTEs	5	1	6

VDH is currently working with a **total of 77 school divisions/schools**, including 38 school divisions/schools who have committed to the program and 39 additional who have expressed interest. Of these, 14 have been matched with a vendor and 6 are holding school-based testing events.

Schools who have committed are geographically dispersed across the state; the following slides contain a detailed list of schools.

Schools Participating in ViSSTA

Twenty-five public school divisions and thirteen private schools have formally committed to the ViSSTA program:

Public School Divisions			Private Schools	
Alexandria City	Giles	Pulaski	Benjamin & Lillian Rochkind Yeshiva of VA	StoneBridge School
Bath County 	Grayson County  	Richmond City 	Church Hill Academy	Strelitz International Academy
Buchanan  	Harrisonburg City	Rockingham County	Community High School	Tandem Friends School
Carroll County  	Hopewell City  	Sussex 	Gesher- JDS 	The Siena School
Charlottesville City 	Lancaster	Suffolk	Mountaintop Montessori	Veritas School 
Chesapeake 	Loudoun	Tazewell County	Rudlin Torah Academy 	Washington International Academy
Clarke County	Madison County 	Williamsburg- James City County 	Springhouse Community School	
Colonial Beach	Prince William County	Wise County		
Dickenson County 				

*Petersburg is also continuing the ICATT program, a federal program they began in spring 2021.



MOU in process



Vendor assigned

Updated 9/15

Additional Schools Interested in ViSSTA

An additional **38 public school divisions** and **one private school** have indicated interest in ViSSTA, and VDH is conducting planning conversations with these schools.

Public School Divisions			
Amherst County	King George County	Portsmouth	Staunton City
Brunswick County	Maggie Walker Governor's School	Powhatan	Surry County
Buchanan	Manassas City	Prince George County	Sussex County
Colonial Heights	Mecklenburg County	Radford City	Warren
Craig County	Montgomery County	Richmond County	Waynesboro
Dinwiddie	Newport News	Roanoke City	West Point 
Falls Church City	Norfolk	Russell County	Westmoreland County
Fredericksburg County	Page County Schools	Smyth County 	Wythe County
Greensville County	Petersburg City	Southampton County	
King and Queen County	Poquoson City	Spotsylvania County	

Private School
Dominion

 Vendor assigned

MOUs With Public Schools

Public schools may request **funding for staff and supplies to implement ViSSTA**. To date, VDH has developed MOUs for the following eight school divisions (including support for Petersburg to sustain ICATT). An additional 18 MOUs are in the pipeline.

School Division	Funding Amount
Bath County	\$28,800
Buchanan	\$185,000
Carroll	\$89,879
Charlottesville	\$126,000
Dickenson	\$96,716
Grayson	\$157,263.80
Hopewell	\$320,000
Petersburg (ICATT program)	\$54,000
TOTAL	\$1,057,658

Update on Procuring Screening Testing Vendor Services

VDH released an RFP to acquire services from vendors that conduct pooled testing:

- VDH submitted an initial draft of the RFP to procurement staff in April 2021 with an initial anticipated release date of May 17, 2021. However, due to the high dollar amount (\$130M), the procurement had to undergo OAG and DGS review prior to release, which delayed issue.
- The RFP was issued on July 2, 2021 and was closed on July 23, 2021 at 2:00 pm.
- Forty-seven proposals were submitted.
- The Review Team met on August 23, 2021 after individual evaluation of all proposals.
- Awards are expected to be announced after the High Risk review by OAG and DGS in late October.

In parallel, VDH is pushing forward with program implementation by:

- Executing four possible emergency contracts with testing vendors; goal is that these will be signed by 9/22/21.
- Executed a contract with eMed for proctored rapid BinaxNOW Home Test kits to be used on persons in K-12 settings who are symptomatic or who are identified as close contacts
- Supporting outbreak testing and school-based community testing events utilizing vendors already under contract, in partnership with local health departments

At-Home Self-Test Kits to Support Schools

- VDH **executed a contract with eMed** for virtually-guided (proctored) Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag Card Home Test Kits.
- **eMed will ship BinaxNOW Home Test kits to school divisions and provide on-demand telehealth sessions** to guide individuals in taking a COVID test. Results are available in approximately 15 minutes.
- These kits are intended to **complement the pooled screening testing program**, for use on persons who become symptomatic at school or for those who are a known close contact to a case.
- A survey was sent to school divisions the week of 9/13 to ascertain interest and ensure storage capability. The **first shipments to schools are expected the week of 9/20.**
- Schools that have committed to the screening testing program will be sent enough kits for up to 5% of their total enrollment for the first allotment of test kits. Future shipments will be based on need.

Immediate Support Available

While VDH is in the process of awarding the additional contracts, schools may still access support by:

- Requesting a school community testing event. As of 9/15, 22 school-based testing events were scheduled through mid-October.
- Submitting the commitment survey to submit necessary planning information to VDH
- For schools that previously participated in the BinaxNOW pilot program in Spring 2021, those “legacy” schools can request BinaxNOW Kits as resources remain.
 - Schools have been advised to visit our [website](#) for what needs to be in place prior to receiving BinaxNOW. VDH will consider limited requests for schools that were not previously participating in the pilot program; those entities will be directed to the ViSSTA program.