Connections for Classrooms

ROUND 3

An education technology grant facilitated by
the Governor's Office of Student Achievement

A Grant Serving E-rate Funding Years 2015 & 2016

Grant Application Instructions & Program Procedures

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1.0 Executive Summary

Connections for Classrooms (CFC) originated in 2014 as a $36.7 million grant program joining multiple state agencies around the common goal of ensuring Georgia schools and classrooms have the high-speed broadband access required for digital and blended learning. A follow-up round of funding was provided in April 2015.

A new, competitive round of funding ("Round 3") is opening in July of 2015 as a continuation of the Connections for Classrooms program. Approximately $8.5 million are available to local educational agencies (LEAs) across Georgia to further increase accessibility of advanced technologies to K-12 students. Awarded funds are eligible for use throughout the period of E-rate Funding Years 2015 and 2016.

As a competitive grant, an application process will evaluate proposals to leverage funds to achieve the goal of providing broadband access and related technologies to Georgia students. The funds are designed for use as "local matching funds," which help local agencies secure federal E-rate funding by serving as required matching funds for E-rate Category 2 expenditures.

Connections for Classrooms – Round 3 is managed by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA), and this document provides guidelines to LEA representatives for applying to the program and securing reimbursement funds should an award be made.

Additional information on the grant may be found online at GOSA's website (http://gosa.georgia.gov/2015-cfc-program-information), and questions may be directed to the grant program manager, Steve Korwan (skorwan@georgia.gov, 404-463-2399).

Thank you for your interest and support for Georgia education!

1.1 Definitions and References

2014 Connections for Classrooms – A $36.7 million dollar state-sponsored grant program that originated in 2014 with the purpose of building and enhancing broadband systems in the state's K-12 schools. This program included funds managed by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA).

Applicant – An entity that submits a new application for the Connections for Classrooms – Round 3 grant program.

Award Recipient / Recipient – An Applicant that has been approved for full or partial funding of a request made to the Round 3 program.

Category Two Eligible Services – The Universal Service Program for Schools and Libraries (E-rate) defines an Eligible Services List with qualifying Category One and Category Two items, where Category Two Eligible Services includes internal connections needed to enable high-speed broadband connectivity within schools and libraries, specifically LAN/WLAN-focused components (local area networks/wireless local area networks), basic maintenance of eligible broadband internal connections components, and managed internal broadband services. Visit http://usac.org/sl for more information on Category Two Eligible Services. E-rate Category Two services are essentially equivalent to Connections for Classrooms Tier 2 and Tier 3 equipment, services and materials.

Connections for Classrooms – Round 3 / Round 3 – A third phase of grant funding under the Connections for Classrooms grant, which provides up to an additional $8.5 million to Georgia educators to fund the local portion of Category Two E-rate allocations for the purpose of building and enhancing broadband systems in the state's K-12 schools.

Connections for Classrooms – Round 3 Website / CFC Website – A publicly accessible online area containing information related to the Round 3 program, found at http://gosa.georgia.gov/2015-cfc-program-information.

E-rate Funding Year 2015 / E-rate FY 2015 – The Universal Service Program for Schools and Libraries (E-rate) defines funding year 2015 as the period beginning July 1, 2015 and ending June 30, 2016.

E-rate Funding Year 2016 / E-rate FY 2016 - The Universal Service Program for Schools and Libraries (E-rate) defines funding year 2016 as the period beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2017.

Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) - A letter that contains USAC's funding decisions on an applicant's funding requests. This is a key piece of documentation needed to receive a Round 3 award.

Local Educational Agency / LEA – A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within the State of Georgia for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of the State *(Adapted from the U.S. Department of Education)*.

Universal Service Administrative Company / USAC – An independent, not-for-profit corporation created by the FCC in 1997 to administer the four universal service programs which help provide communities across the country with access to affordable telecommunications services.

Universal Service Program for Schools and Libraries / E-Rate – Commonly known as the E-rate Program, this program helps ensure that schools and libraries can obtain telecommunications and Internet access at affordable rates.

2.0 Program Overview

2.1 Program Intent

Despite the periodic availability of state and federal funding programs for education-based technology, some schools and LEAs are not able to access these funds because they often require supporting or matching dollars that the school or LEA does not have allocated to this purpose. The Connections for Classrooms – Round 3 program intends to help schools and LEAs secure FCC E-rate funds by providing its dollars to cover the cost of non-discounted products and/or services (i.e., local matching funds) for school- and classroom-level network infrastructure needs. This minimizes or frees many LEAs from having to pledge local money in order to receive federal money.

Round 3 intends to continue progress toward the goal to fund economically self-sustainable broadband facilities that:

- Serve LEAs around the State of Georgia,
- Leverage technology to transform our educational system by providing students, parents, and educators more flexibility over the time, place, path, and pace of learning,
- Increase statewide broadband capacity to schools, ensuring that Georgia's schools are able to utilize 21st century technology in classrooms, and
- Increase the LEA's ability to expand wireless connectivity and device availability within schools, allowing them to fully leverage increased broadband capacity.

By removing obstacles to collecting E-rate funds, Connections for Classrooms – Round 3 helps LEAs build the infrastructure needed to provide advanced learning capabilities to Georgia K-12 students.

2.2 Eligibility and Funding Considerations

An LEA is eligible to apply for Round 3 funding if it has not already received Connections for Classrooms funding to meet the total of its maximum local matching funds for E-rate Category Two Eligible Services for the current E-rate funding cycle. An LEA that has a Priority 2 E-rate commitment letter for a funding year prior to FY15 for which it has been unable to provide the required local match may apply for Round 3 funding to pay for the required local match. However, this amount will be subtracted from the maximum local matching funds remaining for FY15 and FY16 funding requests.

GOSA used the following steps to determine the Round 3 LEA eligible funding amounts:

1. GOSA calculated each LEA's maximum local match funding eligibility for E-rate Category 2 funding using E-rate guidelines. The match percentage was determined using E-rate guidelines and was verified with the University System of Georgia's (USG) E-rate support team. GOSA also verified the full calculation with USG's E-rate support team.
2. GOSA subtracted any Round 2 eligible funds from LEAs' Notice of Intent submitted in June 2015 from the amount calculated in Step 1. For LEAs that received Tier 3 funds in the 2014 grant program (the six LEAs that scored 87.0 or higher), GOSA also subtracted that amount from the amount calculated in Step 1.

3. LEAs with local match funding remaining after Step 2 are eligible for a Round 3 award for up to that amount. LEAs with no local match funding remaining are ineligible for Round 3.

Please refer to the Round 3 Eligibility spreadsheet ("Round 3 Eligibility.xls") at this link to determine your funding eligibility: http://gosa.georgia.gov/2015-cfc-program-information.

2.3 Applicable Award Expenditures

Round 3 funds are intended for the exclusive use towards non-discounted costs for E-rate awards granted for Category Two Eligible Services, approved and expended in E-rate FY 2015 and 2016, or if an eligible LEA currently has a Priority 2 E-rate commitment letter for a previous funding year for which it has been unable to provide the required local match, it may elect to use Round 3 funds toward that match. LEAs may apply for these programs at their sole discretion, based upon the program requirements set and awarded through the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). Information on the program can be found on the organization's website (http://usac.org/sl).

USAC sets the parameters for the E-rate program and oversees its award decisions. Connections for Classrooms administrators have used the E-rate program guidelines and awards to establish award amounts provided to Round 3 program applicants. Other than those set by USAC for the E-rate program, there are no additional requirements regarding Category Two eligible expenses for Round 3 award eligibility. Any funds not used to support the E-rate local matching funds as outlined in this document will be rescinded.

2.4 Important Dates

LEAs that plan to participate in Round 3 should note the following key dates:

- **Mid - July, 2015:** GOSA will publish a grant notice on http://gosa.georgia.gov/2015-cfc-program-information and will open the online application for Round 3.
- **October 29, 2015:** The application window closes as of 5:00 PM ET on this day.
- **December 2015:** Award announcements will be made.
- **January 29, 2016:** The last date to submit the LEA's Notice of Intent to GOSA for Connections for Classrooms – Round 3 funding. Notices of Intent for any E-rate funding year will not be accepted after this date, and funds will be reallocated for other purposes.
- **December 31, 2017:** The last day to submit a request for reimbursement of expenses related to Round 3 awards.

These dates may be revised by GOSA as deemed necessary. If these dates are revised, GOSA will post a notice on the link identified above.

3.0 Applying for Round 3

3.1 Application Overview

Round 3 is a competitive grant which requires LEAs to submit an application to obtain funding. The award of funds is based on the quality of the grant proposal and the compliance of the proposal with the grant requirements, which are outlined in the Round 3 Rubric. Applications will be reviewed and scored by a team of external reviewers, and the scores will determine funding decisions.

The application process and the requested data elements are described in this section. The Round 3 Rubric is found in Appendix A located in this document.

3.2 Application Process

The Round 3 application process is described fully in this section. Please know in advance of starting the online application that the application must be completed in one session – it is not possible to save a partial application and return later to complete and submit it. It is recommended that the Round 3 Planning document is downloaded and, once complete, its information is copied into the online application.

ⓘ The Round 3 online application **must be completed in one session**. Please download the Round 3 Planning document and, once complete, transfer its information into the online application.

3.2.1 Application Planning

The first step to planning your application is to download the Round 3 Planning document titled “Round 3 Planning.docx” found at http://gosa.georgia.gov/2015-cfc-program-information. The document includes each of the informational elements requested in the application. It is a convenient way to collect the necessary information so that the online application can be easily completed in one session.

3.2.2 Accessing the Online Application

The online application is available at https://gosaga.wufoo.com/forms/round-3/. When you reach this location from your Internet browser you will see the first step in the application process (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

ⓘ While completing the online application you may progress through the steps and you may return to prior steps, however the application **must be completed in one session**. It is recommended that you download the Round 3 Planning document and, once complete, transfer its information into the online application.

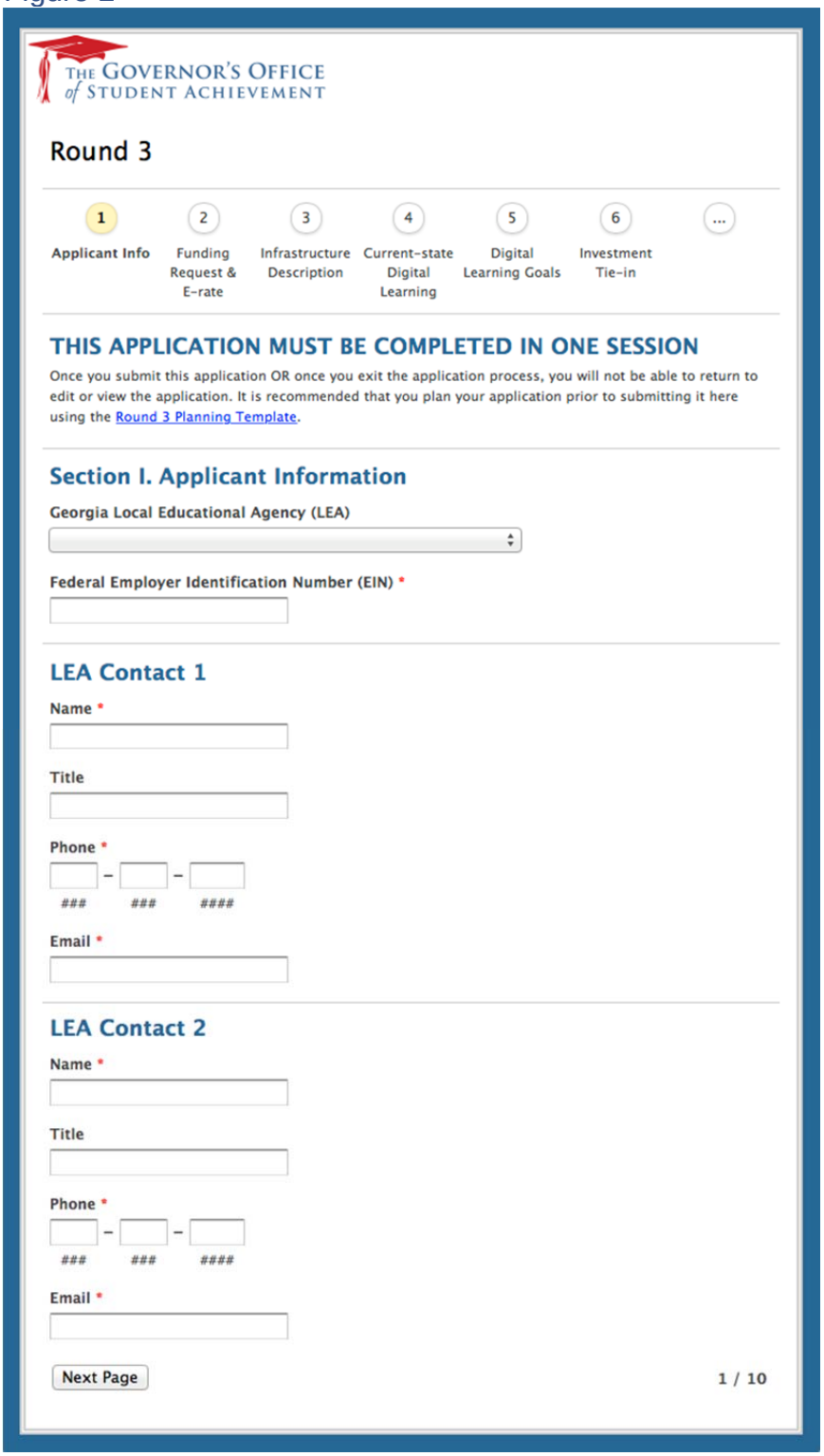
3.2.3 Completing the Online Application

There are three sections of information requested in the application for funds for Round 3. This information is entered through a multi-step application process. Each article of information is described below. Please see Section 3.2.2 of this guide to learn how to access the online application.

Section 1. Applicant Information

The Applicant Information section requests information about the LEA that is submitting the grant application as well as contact information for local representatives who may be reached in relation to application questions and subsequent grant communications.

Figure 2



Georgia Local Educational Agency (LEA): Choose the appropriate LEA entity from a dropdown box listing of all eligible districts. If you do not see your district listed, please contact Steve Korwan at skorwan@georgia.gov.

Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN): Enter the district's federal employer number in the format NN-NNNNNNN.

LEA Contact 1: In the event that questions arise about a grant application, it is helpful to know which LEA representative to reach and how to do so. Please enter the name, title, phone number and email address of the person who is completing the online application.

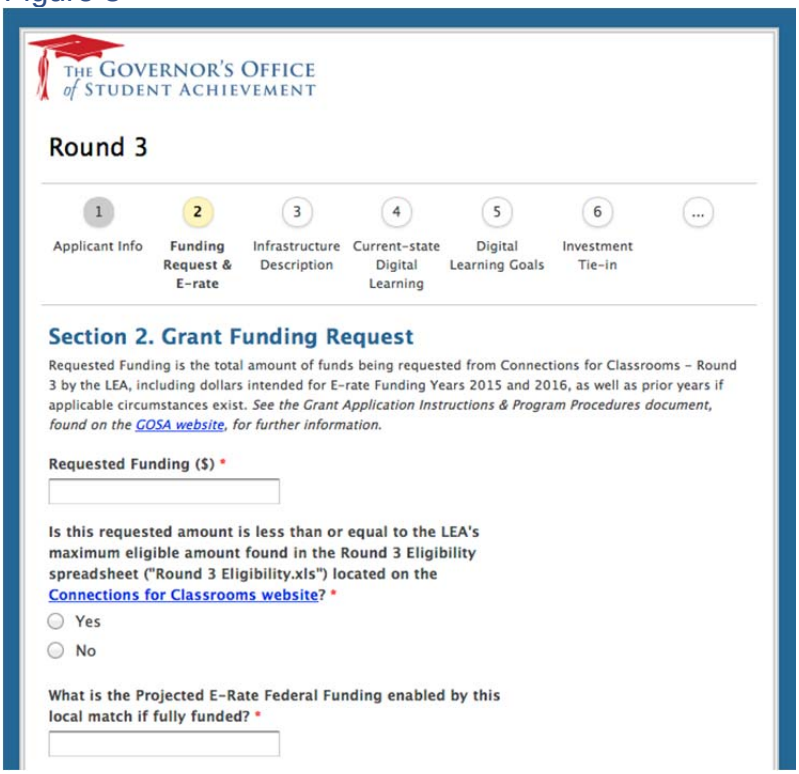
LEA Contact 2: Enter contact information for a secondary LEA representative who could be reached with application questions. Please enter the name, title, phone number and email address of this person.

When this page of information is complete, click the [Next Page] button.

Section 2. Grant Funding Request

The Grant Funding Request section of the application asks for the total amount of funding that the LEA is requesting in Round 3, including amounts related to E-rate required local matching funds for Funding Years 2015 and 2016, as well as prior years in the event that the LEA has a qualifying scenario. The appropriate level of funding is unique to each LEA, and information about the level is found in Section 2.2 Funding Considerations which appears earlier in this guide.

Figure 3



Requested Funding ($): Enter the total dollars being requested by the LEA in Round 3 of the Connections for Classrooms in the format $xx,xxx. This total should include requests related to E-rate Funding Years 2015, 2016 and prior years if applicable.

Is this requested amount is less than or equal to the LEA's maximum eligible amount found in the Round 3 Eligibility spreadsheet ("Round 3 Eligibility.xls") located on the Connections for Classrooms website?: Select “Yes” or “No” to answer this question as appropriate.

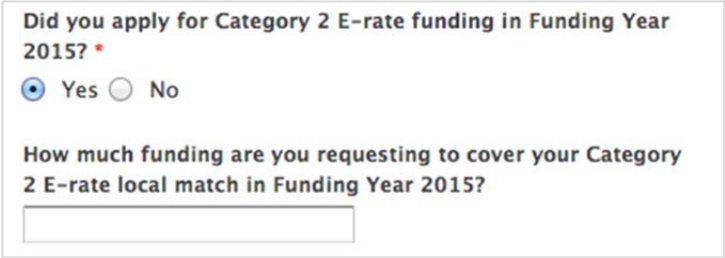
What is the Projected E-Rate Federal Funding enabled by this local match if fully funded?: Enter the dollar amount of the estimated E-rate funding that will be supported by these funds if the entirety of this request for local matching funds is granted, in the format $xx,xxx.

Section 3. E-rate Participation (see Figure 3)

Because Round 3 funding works in conjunction with the E-rate program, Section 3 of the application requests information about the LEA's request(s) for E-rate funding. The amounts entered in this section should equal the total amount of the grant request that was entered in "Section 2. Grant Funding Request" of the application.

Did you apply for Category 2 E-rate funding in Funding Year 2015?: Select "Yes" or "No" to answer this question as appropriate. If "Yes," a follow-up prompt appears (see Figure 4).

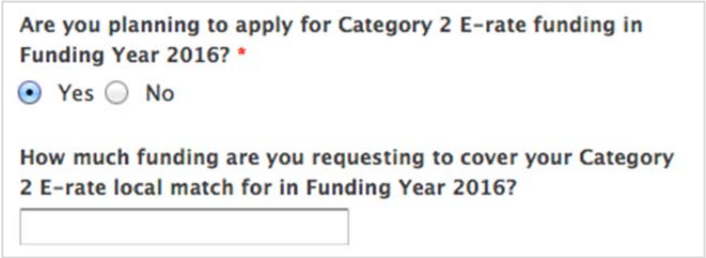
Figure 4



How much funding are you requesting from Connections to Classrooms to cover your Category 2 E-rate local match in Funding Year 2015?: Enter the dollar amount related to the LEA's 2015 request in the format $xx,xxx.

Are you planning to apply for Category 2 E-rate funding in Funding Year 2016?: Select "Yes" or "No" to answer this question as appropriate. If "Yes," a follow-up prompt appears (see Figure 5).

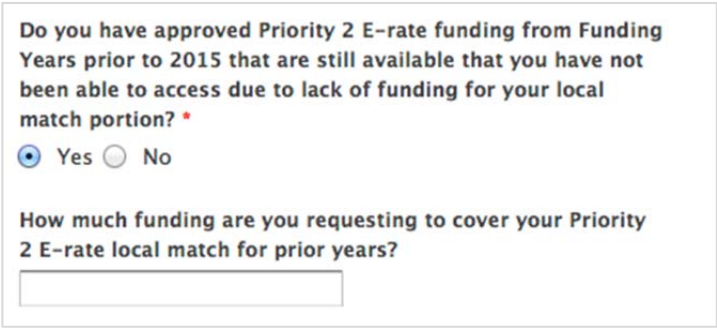
Figure 5



How much funding are you requesting from Connections to Classrooms to cover your Category 2 E-rate local match in Funding Year 2016?: Enter the dollar amount related to the LEA's anticipated 2016 request in the format $xx,xxx.

Do you have approved Priority 2 E-rate funding from Funding Years prior to 2015 that are still available that you have not been able to access due to lack of funding for your local match portion?: Select "Yes" or "No" to answer this question as appropriate. If "Yes," a follow-up prompt appears (see Figure 6).

Figure 6


Do you have approved Priority 2 E-rate funding from Funding Years prior to 2015 that are still available that you have not been able to access due to lack of funding for your local match portion? *

Yes No

How much funding are you requesting to cover your Priority 2 E-rate local match for prior years?

How much funding are you requesting from Connections to Classrooms to cover your Priority 2 E-rate local match for prior years?: Enter the dollar amount related to the LEA's request in the format $xx,xxx.

When this page of information is complete, click the [Next Page] button.

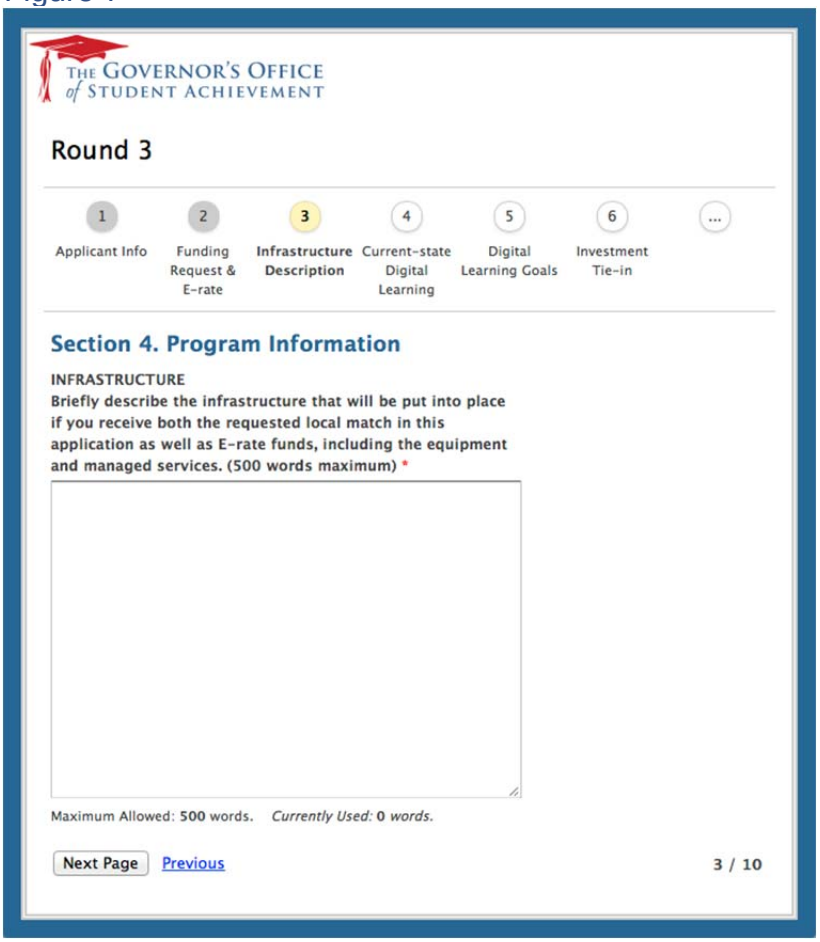
ⓘ You may click [Next Page] to progress to the subsequent page in the application or you may click [Previous] to return to the prior page. The information you entered on the current page will be saved, as long as you do not exit the application completely.

Section 4. Program Information

The Program Information section of the application asks the LEA to describe its plans for the E-rate and Round 3 funding, including the technology changes that are outlined, digital learning methods that are currently used, digital learning goals, alignment with state and local technology plans, etc. Narrative descriptions are requested that have a maximum word count of 250-500. Each information element is described below.

INFRASTRUCTURE: Briefly describe the infrastructure that will be put into place if you receive both the requested local match and the E-rate funds, including equipment and managed services, in 500 words or less (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

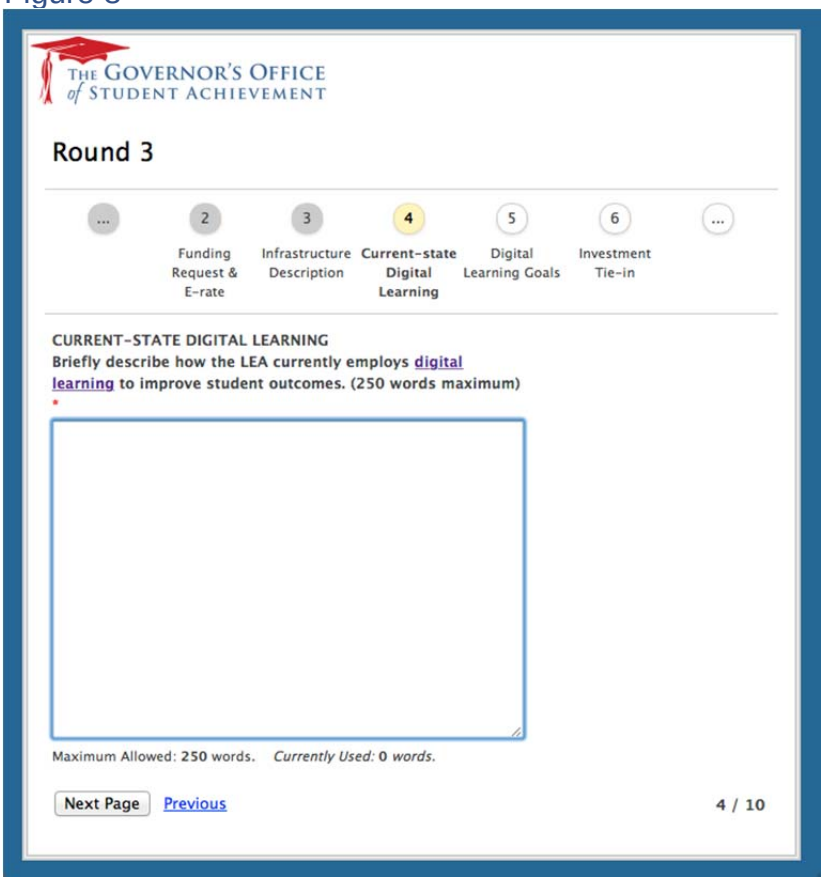


When this page of information is complete, click the [Next Page] button. Click [Previous] to return to the prior page. The information you entered on the current page will be saved, as long as you do not exit the application completely.

CURRENT-STATE DIGITAL LEARNING: Briefly describe how the LEA currently employs digital learning to improve student outcomes, in 250 words or less (see Figure 8).

A description of "digital learning" is found on the GOSA website.

Figure 8

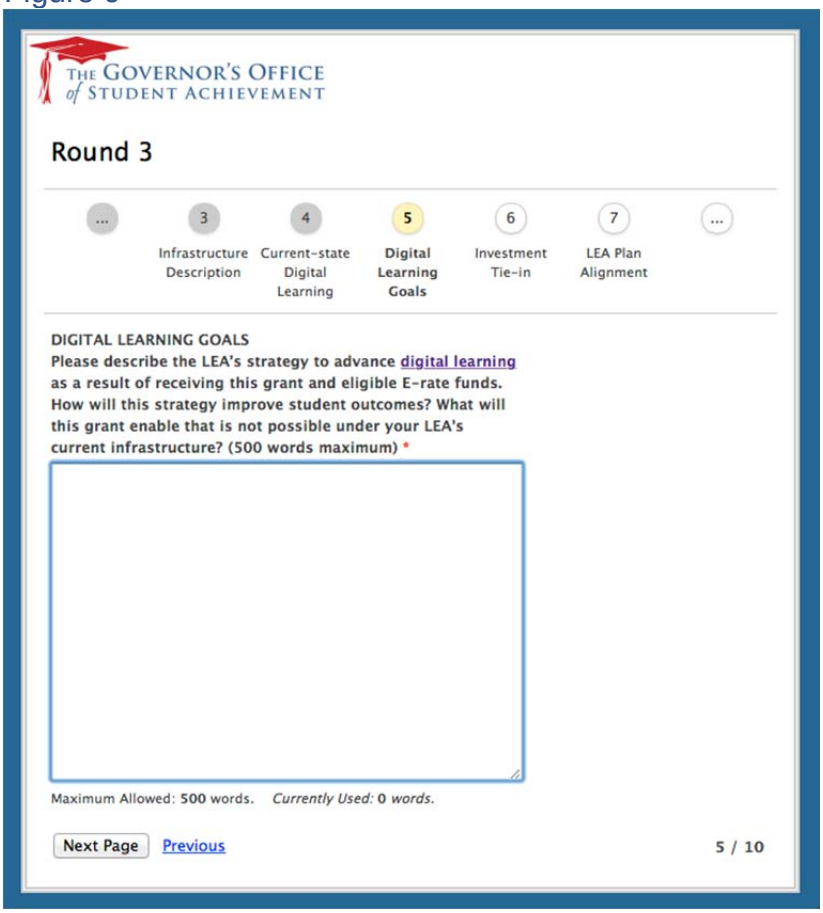


When this page of information is complete, click the [Next Page] button. Click [Previous] to return to the prior page. The information you entered on the current page will be saved, as long as you do not exit the application completely.

DIGITAL LEARNING GOALS: Please describe the LEA's strategy to advance digital learning as a result of receiving this grant and eligible E-rate funds. How will this strategy improve student outcomes? What will this grant enable that is not possible under your LEA's current infrastructure? Compose this description in 500 words or less (see Figure 9).

A description of "digital learning" is found on the GOSA website.

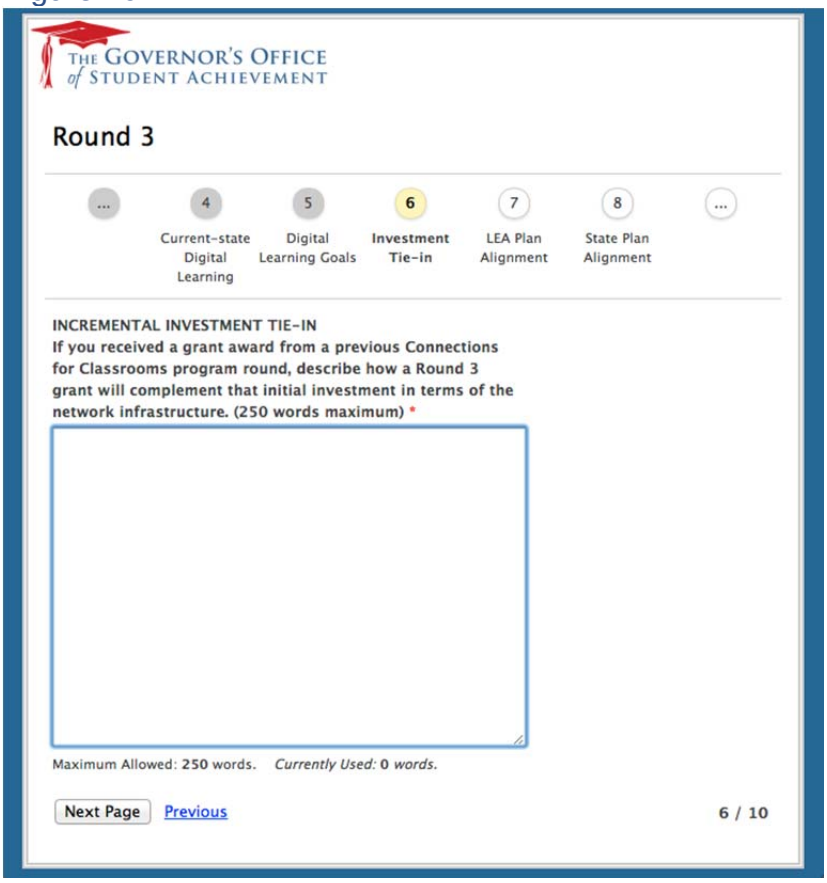
Figure 9



When this page of information is complete, click the [Next Page] button. Click [Previous] to return to the prior page. The information you entered on the current page will be saved, as long as you do not exit the application completely.

INCREMENTAL INVESTMENT TIE-IN: If you received a grant award from a previous Connections for Classrooms program round, describe how a Round 3 grant will complement that initial investment in terms of the network infrastructure, using 250 words or less (see Figure 10). If you did not receive a grant award from a previous Connections for Classrooms round or did not apply for the initial round of funding, simply indicate "N/A" in the answer box.

Figure 10

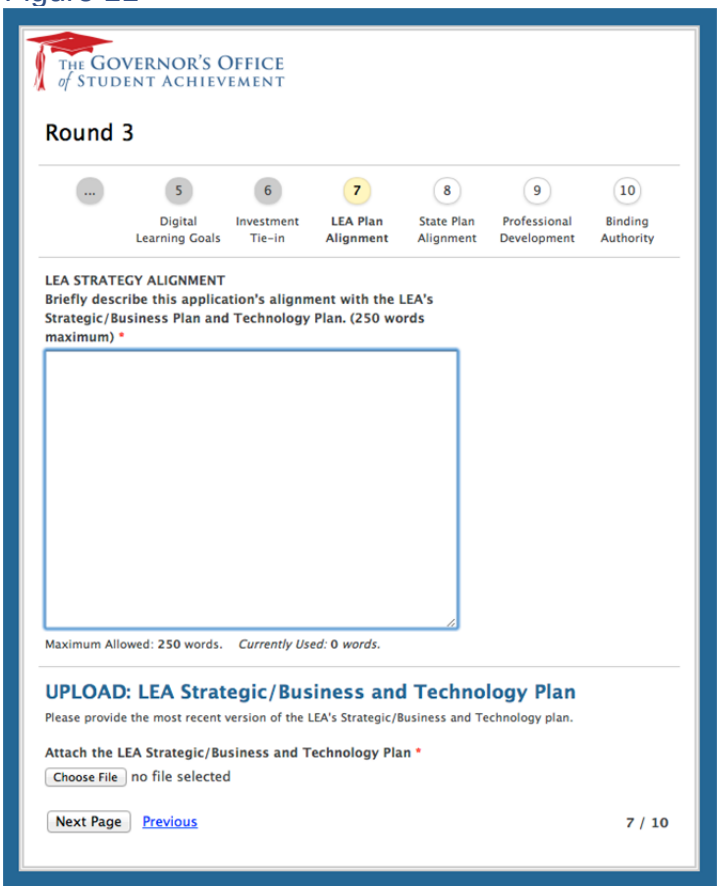


When this page of information is complete, click the [Next Page] button. Click [Previous] to return to the prior page. The information you entered on the current page will be saved, as long as you do not exit the application completely.

LEA STRATEGY ALIGNMENT: Enter a brief narrative describing the grant program's alignment with the local plans, and for ease, reference areas within existing plans that are aligned with and supported by the grant request, using 250 words or less (see Figure 11).

UPLOAD: LEA Strategic/Business and Technology Plan: Using the" Attach a File" function, submit the LEA's most recent Strategic/Business and Technology plan in MS Word or PDF format. To do so, click the button [Choose File], which opens a window where you can choose a file from your computer's local hard drive.

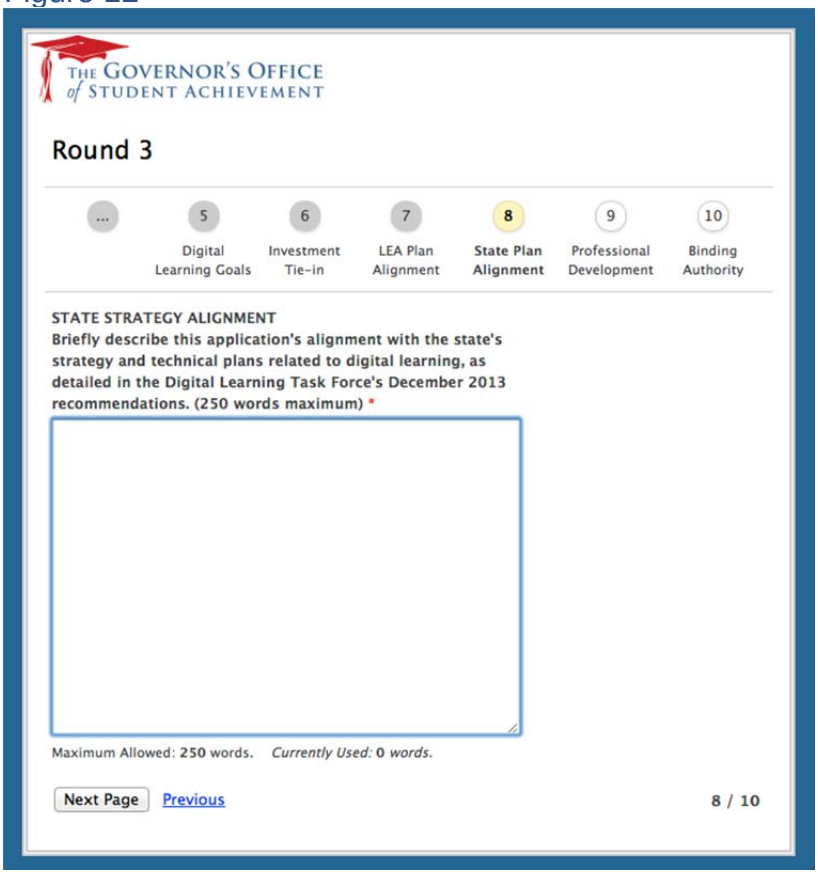
Figure 11



When this page of information is complete, click the [Next Page] button. Click [Previous] to return to the prior page. The information you entered on the current page will be saved, as long as you do not exit the application completely.

STATE STRATEGY ALIGNMENT: Briefly describe this application's alignment with the state's strategy and technical plans related to digital learning, as detailed in the Digital Learning Task Force's December 2013 recommendations, available at the following link: http://gosa.georgia.gov/digital-learning-task-force (see Figure 12).

Figure 12

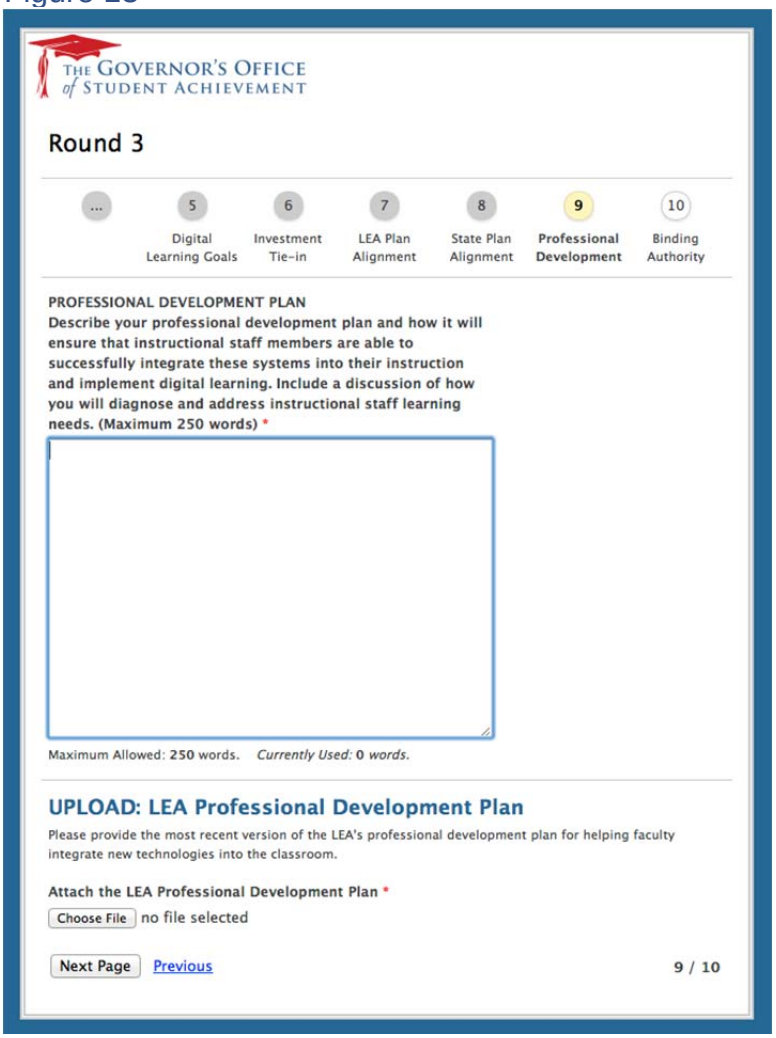


When this page of information is complete, click the [Next Page] button. Click [Previous] to return to the prior page. The information you entered on the current page will be saved, as long as you do not exit the application completely.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: Describe your professional development plan and how it will ensure that instructional staff members are able to successfully integrate these systems into their instruction and implement digital learning, using 250 words or less (see Figure 13). Include a discussion of how you will diagnose and address instructional staff learning needs.

UPLOAD: LEA Professional Development Plan: Using the" Attach a File" function, submit the LEA's most recent Professional Development Plan related to integrating classroom technology in MS Word or PDF format. To do so, click the button labeled [Choose File], which opens a window where you can choose a file from your computer's local hard drive.

Figure 13



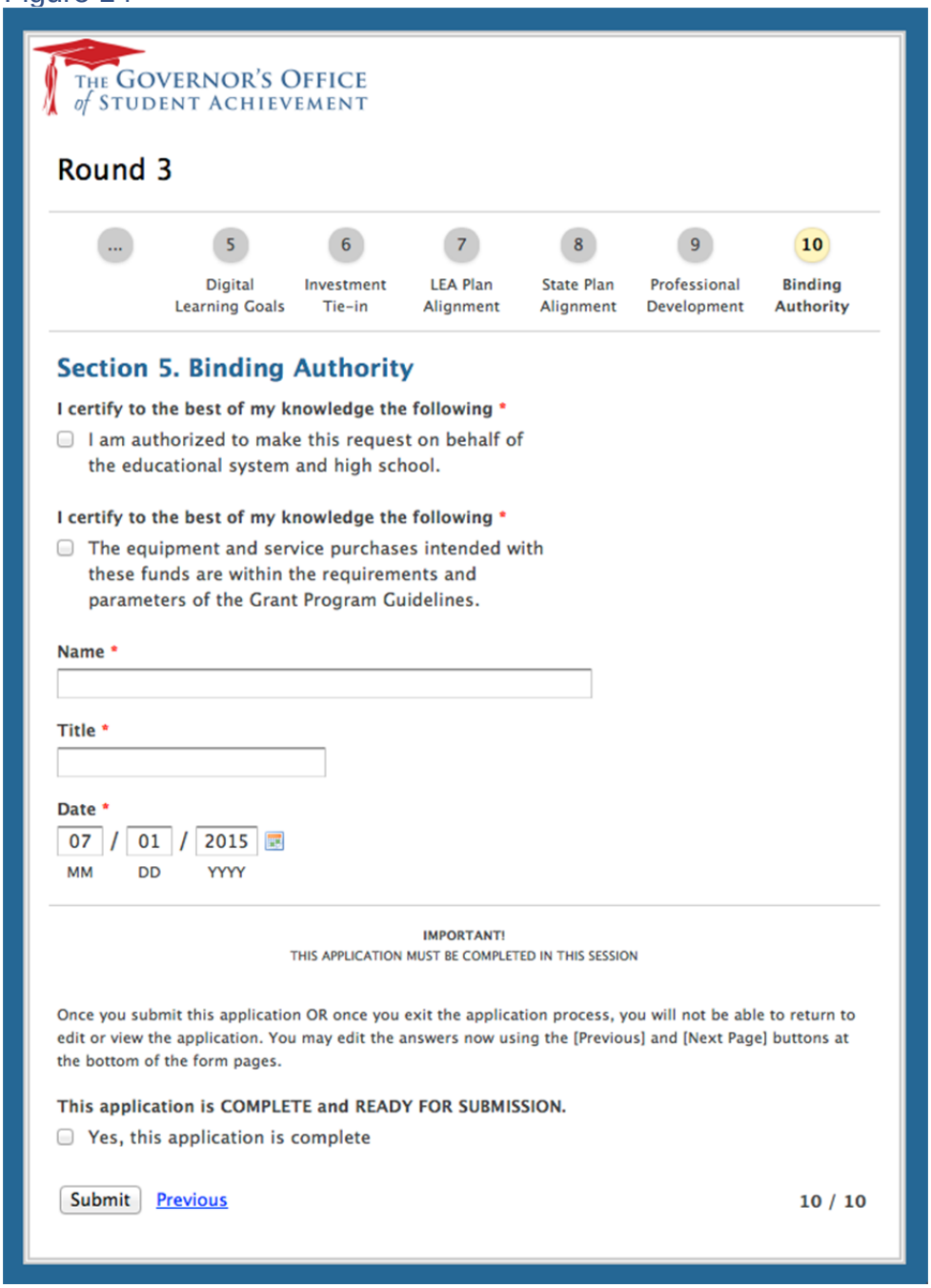
When this page of information is complete, click the [Next Page] button. Click [Previous] to return to the prior page. The information you entered on the current page will be saved, as long as you do not exit the application completely.

Section 5. Binding Authority

The Binding Authority section seeks a legally binding commitment to the grant application from an appropriate local representative. While any authorized local representative may

complete the majority of the grant application, Section 5 requires acceptance by an official of the district who is able to obligate the district with such a commitment. Each information element is described below (see Figure 14).

Figure 14



I am authorized to make this request on behalf of the educational system and high school: This is a checkbox to indicate that an appropriate official has knowledge of and has provided approval for the submission of the grant request.

The equipment and service purchases intended with these funds are within the requirements and parameters of the Grant Program Guidelines: This is a checkbox to affirm that the items included within the applicant's request for grant funding are appropriate

based upon the equipment and services eligible for the program. For more information about eligible equipment and services, see Section 2.3 Applicable Award Expenditures found earlier in this document.

Name: Enter the name of the affirming authority.

Title: Enter the affirming authority's title or role with the district.

Date: Enter the date when the affirming authority provides approval of the application submission.

This application is COMPLETE and READY FOR SUBMISSION: Choose "Yes" if this application's content is final and ready for submission. Once submitted, the application may not be edited.

Applications are due on or before October 29, 2015.

When this page of information is complete and the entirety of the application is complete and final, click the [Submit] button. Click [Previous] to return to the prior page. The information you entered on the current page will be saved, as long as you do not exit the application completely.

ⓘ You may click [Submit] to complete your application or you may click [Previous] to return to the prior page. The information you entered on the current page will be saved, as long as you do not exit the application completely. The application **must be completed in one session**. Upon exit, you will not be able to return to view or change your application.

Confirmation

When the application is submitted a confirmation message displays (see Figure 15).

Figure 15

Congratulations! You have completed your submission to the Connections for Classrooms – Round 3 grant program.

4.0 Grant Awards

In December 2015 the primary point of contact for each Connections for Classrooms application will receive email notification of the outcome of the LEA's grant application. The evaluation of grant applications will result in one of several outcomes:

Granted in full. An application where the full requested amount is approved for funding.
Granted in part. An application where an amount lesser than the requested amount is approved for funding.
Not granted. An application where none of the requested amount is approved for funding.

Funds are reserved but not under contract until an agreement is executed between GOSA and the LEA. GOSA reserves the right to rescind funding if it its intended use is for purposes other than the required local matching funds for E-rate Category Two Eligible Expenses.

Questions regarding the grant amounts or the competitive scoring should be directed to Steve Korwan, CFC program manager at skorwan@georgia.gov.

4.1 Award Acceptance and Setup

LEAs that plan to accept funding from Connections for Classrooms – Round 3 must submit a Notice of Intent stating their intention to Steve Korwan at skorwan@georgia.gov on or before **January 29, 2016**. The Notice of Intent should contain several pieces of information related to the grant request:

- The name of the Local Educational Agency (LEA)
- The LEA Number
- The LEA Contact
- The LEA Contact Phone
- The LEA Contact Email
- The estimated dollar amount the LEA intends to request from Connections for Classrooms – Round 3 for E-rate FY 2015
- The estimated dollar amount the LEA intends to request from Connections for Classrooms – Round 3 for E-rate FY 2016
- If applicable, the estimated dollar amount the LEA intends to request from Connections for Classrooms – Round 3 for Priority 2 E-rate expenditures for a previous funding year for which it has been unable to provide the required local match

This procedure reserves funds in advance for the LEA for these years, thus **Notices of Intent will not be accepted after this date**. The dollar amounts estimated for use in each E-rate funding year are non-binding, however the LEA will not receive more than the total amount requested in the Notice of Intent.

Please note that while this Notice of Intent reserves funds for local matching portion of Category Two E-rate funds, it should not be construed as an executed contract. Any reserved funds for which the requirements outlined in this section are not met will be rescinded.

A Connections for Classrooms administrator will reply to each Notice of Intent submission to confirm its receipt.

To setup a Round 3 grant award, a certifying representative of the district must send the following documents to the program manager within 30 days of receipt of the E-rate Funding Commitment Decision Letter:

- FCC Form 471 ("Description of Services Ordered and Certification Form")
- USAC Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL)

E-rate form 471 and the USAC FCDL for E-rate Funding Year 2015 (or a prior year, per the scenario outlined in Section 2.2 Eligibility found earlier in this document) are required at the time a Round 3 award is setup, if the Round 3 award pertains to these E-rate funds. If the LEA's Round 3 award is made solely for E-rate Funding Year 2016, form 471 and the FCDL are required within 30 days of receipt of them, and prior to receiving any Round 3 reimbursements. A Round 3 Contractual Agreement will be sent to the Awardee for signature after these items have been received and reviewed by the program manager.

4.2 Grant Recipient Registration

Round 3 Requests for Reimbursements are processed through the FluidReview workflow system. LEAs that applied for the 2014 Connections for Classrooms program, whether awarded or not, have already registered with this system and will see the request for reimbursement feature on the main screen when they authenticate. LEAs that did not apply for the 2014 grant program must register with FluidReview in order to access the request for reimbursement form. A registration link will be provided to these Round 3 award recipients at the time that awards are made.

4.3 Request for Reimbursement

Connections for Classrooms – Round 3 is a reimbursement-based grant program. Requests for reimbursement may be submitted after the service has been performed or procurement has been made and paid for by the recipient. Expense and payment reference documentation should be included with each reimbursement request to support the requested funding amounts. Payment requests may be made no more than once every calendar month and can be submitted online at the Connections for Classrooms web site located at http://cfc.fluidreview.com.

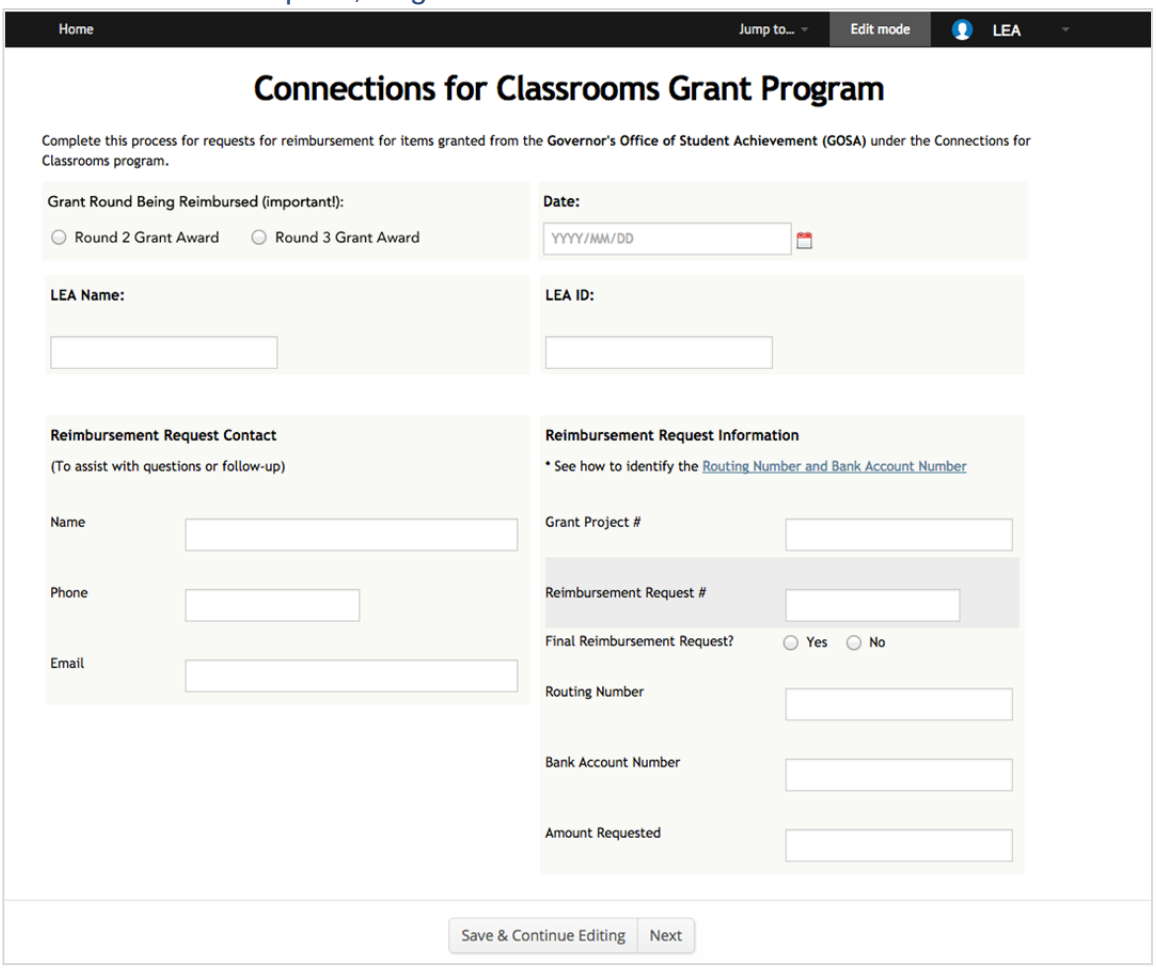
ⓘ Reimbursement requests must be made prior to December 31, 2017.
Requests made after that time will not be considered.

To submit a reimbursement request, an LEA representative should visit the FluidReview portal at http://cfc.fluidreview.com and complete the following:

1. Select the option "Round 2 and 3 Reimbursement Request Form."

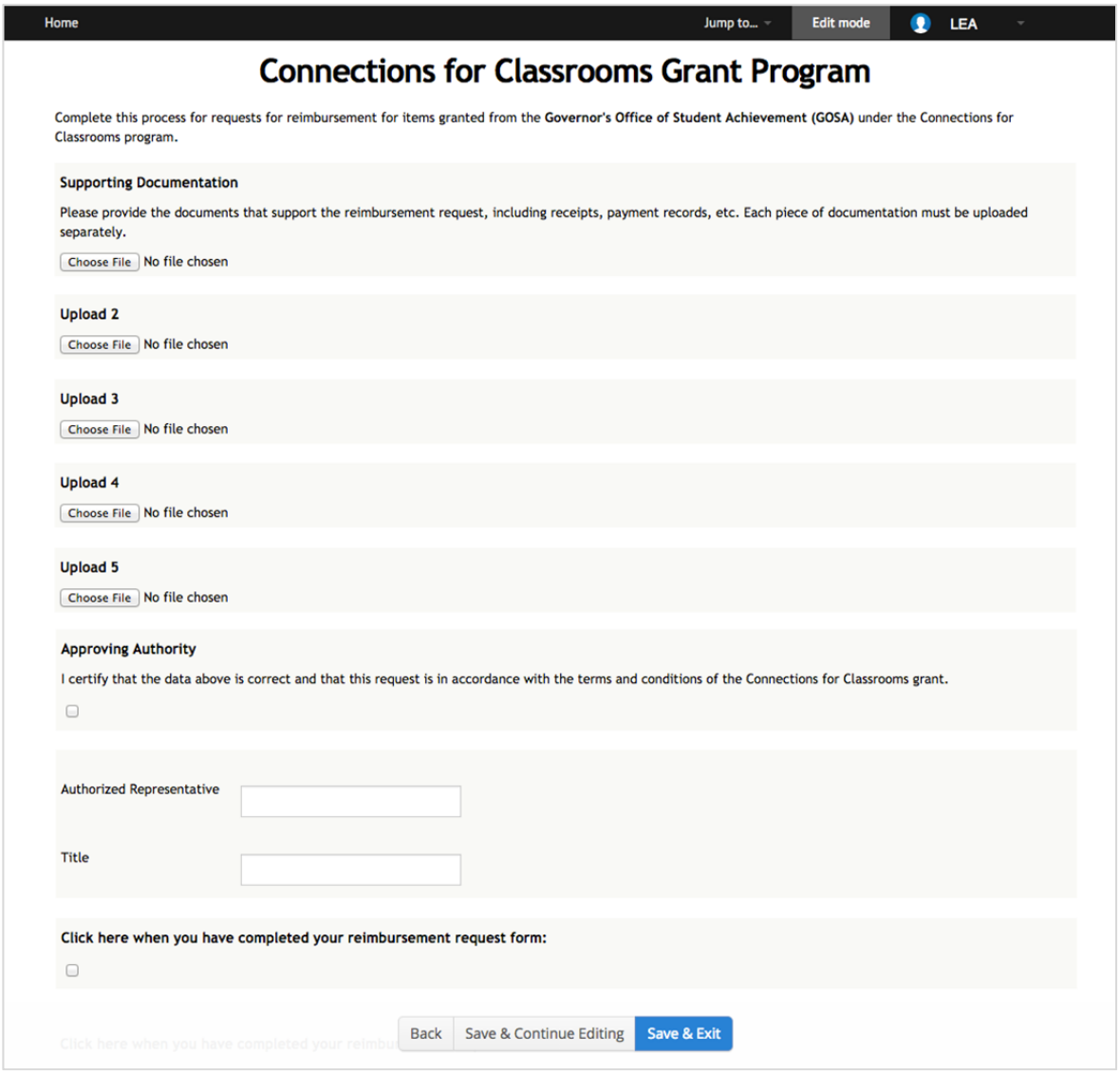
2. Complete the first page of information with the reimbursement contact, the reimbursement request and the banking information. Be sure to enter the amount being requested. See the image below labeled "Reimbursement Request, Page 1."
   - The Grant Project # can be found in the Grant Award materials.
   - The Reimbursement Request # indicates which sequenced Round 2 or 3 reimbursement request this is for your LEA.

Reimbursement Request, Page 1



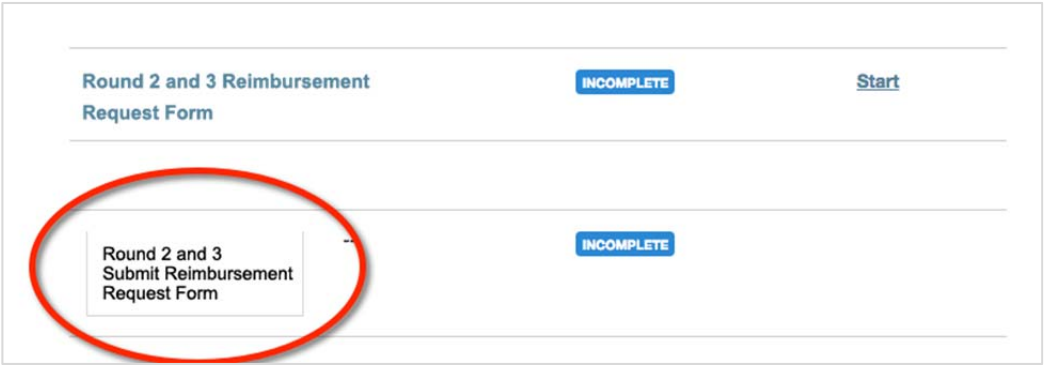
3. Proceed using the [Next] button to complete the second page of information with documentation related to the reimbursement request. See the image below labeled "Reimbursement Request, Page 2."

Reimbursement Request, Page 2



4. Upload documents that support the reimbursement request, including receipts, payment records, etc. To do so, click the button [Choose File], which opens a window where you can choose a file from your computer's local hard drive.
5. Indicate the approving authority.
6. Select [Save & Exit] to complete the request. You will return to the FluidReview portal main screen.
7. **Important:** To complete the reimbursement request you must click the option Round 2 and 3 Submit Reimbursement Request Form from the FluidReview portal main screen. See the image below labeled "Reimbursement Request, Submit."

Reimbursement Request, Submit



To support timely reimbursements, please make sure to submit proper documentation with each reimbursement request. Questions regarding Round 3 expense reimbursements should be directed to Steve Korwan at skorwan@georgia.gov or 404-463-2399.

Reimbursement requests are handled as quickly as possible from the time they are submitted. The process for funding reimbursements is as follows:

- The LEA makes a reimbursement request using the steps outlined above.
- The request is reviewed and validated by grant administrators.
- The LEA contact is sent an email message if the reimbursement request requires follow-up information to validate and approve the request.
- Once all necessary information is received and verified, the request is approved.
- Funds are then wired via ACH transfer to the LEA's bank.

Reimbursement payments are transferred directly into a designated banking account and are coordinated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

Appendix A – Round 3 Scoring Rubric

Applications for Round 3 will be evaluated for their ability to achieve the objectives of the Connections for Classrooms program. A team of independent reviewers will evaluate applications using the Round 3 Scoring Rubric, described here and available for download on the GOSA website ("Round 3 Scoring Rubric.pdf"). The total points possible is 50.

Criteria 1: E-Rate Request & Infrastructure Investment Plans (10 points)

Evaluation	Description	Points
Exemplary	The applicant clearly describes project technologies that will be put in place if requested local match is received, including the equipment and managed services. If the applicant received a Round 1 or 2 award, there is a clear description of how a Round 3 award will complement that initial investment.	10
Satisfactory	The applicant describes project technologies that will be put in place if requested local match is received, including the equipment and managed services. However, the summary lacks some coherency or details. If the applicant received a Round 1 or 2 award, there is a description of how a Round 3 award will complement that initial investment.	7
Poor	The applicant generally describes project technologies that will be put in place if requested local match is received, but the equipment and managed services requested do not directly add up to the funding requested. The summary lacks significant coherency or details. If the applicant received a Round 1 or 2 award, there is some description of how a Round 3 award will complement that initial investment, or the description is unclear.	4
Unsatisfactory	The applicant provides little or no description of project technologies that will be put in place if requested local match is received. The equipment and managed services that are described to not directly add up to the funding requested. If the applicant received a Round 1 or 2 award, there is limited or no description of how a Round 3 award will complement that initial investment.	0

Criteria 2: Digital Learning Strategy (20 points)

Evaluation	Description	Points
Exemplary	The applicant clearly describes its current digital learning strategy and how this grant awards will facilitate learning with technology that gives students some control over time, place, path, and/or pace (definition of digital learning). Applicant provides a clear link to improved student outcomes. Applicant clearly describes what this grant will enable that is not possible under the LEA's current infrastructure. Applicant provides the number of students, teacher, instructional areas, and schools positively impacted by the application.	20
Satisfactory	The LEA's strategy clearly demonstrates how this grant will facilitate learning with technology that gives students some control over time, place, path, and/or pace (definition of digital learning). However, the applicant either does not provide a clear link to improved student outcomes or does not clearly describe what this grant will enable that is not possible under the LEA's current infrastructure. Applicant provides the number of students, instructional areas, classrooms, and schools positively impacted by the application.	14

Poor	The LEA's strategy does not demonstrate how this grant will facilitate learning with technology that gives students some control over time, place, path, and/or pace (definition of digital learning). While the Applicant may mention student outcomes, the focus of the narrative is more on the technology being implemented. Information on the number of students, teacher, instructional areas, and schools positively impacted may be either incomplete or unclear.	8
Unsatisfactory	The LEA's strategy does not demonstrate how this grant will facilitate learning with technology that gives students some control over time, place, path, and/or pace (definition of digital learning). The narrative lacks details or focuses strictly on technology being implemented. Any discussion of students is not clearly linked to improved outcomes. Information on the number of students, teacher, instructional areas, and schools positively impacted is either incomplete or unclear.	0

Criteria 3: Alignment with District Plans (5 points)
Includes accompanying documents “LEA Strategic Plan” and “LEA Technology Plan”

Evaluation	Description	Points
Exemplary	Narrative clearly shows how the application is aligned with both the LEA's Technology and Strategic/Business Plans.	5
Satisfactory	Narrative clearly shows how the application is aligned with the either LEA's Technology or Strategic/Business Plans. Or, the alignment with both plans is described, but lacks coherency.	3
Poor	Narrative describes some alignment between the application and either LEA's Technology or Strategic/Business Plans, but overall, the application does not clearly align with those plans.	1
Unsatisfactory	The application is not aligned with the LEA's Technology or Strategic/Business Plans, or the narrative is missing.	0

Criteria 4: Alignment with State Plans (5 points)

Evaluation	Description	Points
Exemplary	Narrative clearly shows how the application is aligned with both the state's strategy and technical plans related to digital learning, as detailed in the Digital Learning Task Force's December 2013 recommendations.	5
Satisfactory	Narrative shows how the application is aligned with the state's strategy and technical plans related to digital learning, as detailed in the Digital Learning Task Force's December 2013 recommendations, but the alignment lacks coherency or clarity in some places.	3
Poor	Narrative describes some alignment between the application and either the state's strategy and technical plans, as detailed in the Digital Learning Task Force's December 2013 recommendations, but overall the application does not clearly align with those plans.	1
Unsatisfactory	The application is not aligned with the state's strategy and technical plans, as detailed in the Digital Learning Task Force's December 2013 recommendations, or the narrative is missing.	0

Criteria 5: Professional Development Plan (10 points)

Evaluation	Description	Points
Exemplary	The professional development plan clearly describes how the LEA will ensure that instructional staff will be prepared to successfully integrate the systems into their instruction and implement digital learning. The plan demonstrates a clear understanding of the instructional staff's training needs or describes a clear process to diagnose those needs. The plan describes how those needs will be addressed.	10
Satisfactory	The professional development plan describes how the LEA will ensure that instructional staff will be prepared to successfully integrate the systems into their instruction and implement digital learning. The plan demonstrates some understanding of the instructional staff's training needs, or its process to diagnose needs lacks detail. The plan may also lack some detail on how those needs will be addressed.	7
Poor	The professional development plan does not fully describe how the LEA will ensure that instructional staff will be prepared to successfully integrate the systems into their instruction and implement digital learning. The plan lacks an understanding of the instructional staff's training needs and does not have a process to diagnose needs.	4
Unsatisfactory	The professional development plan does not ensure that instructional staff will be prepared to successfully integrate the systems into their instruction and implement digital learning.	0

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