

Connections for Classrooms – Digital Learning Device Rural Grant Program (DLDRGP)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. How is Digital Learning Device Rural Grant Program related to the previous rounds of the Connections for Classrooms (CFC) program?

This round represents another phase of the Connections for Classrooms grant program that holds the objective of funding digital learning devices in rural, high-need areas to enable Georgia K-12 schools and classrooms to fully leverage high-speed broadband access. It requires a separate application for funds, regardless of whether an LEA applied during the previous rounds of the grant program.

2. How much grant funding is available in this program?

DLDRGP includes approximately \$5 million in funding, which will be awarded on a competitive basis.

3. Who will evaluate these applications and how will the applications be scored?

A team of independent evaluators will review each application and assign scores according to the rubric that includes the following criteria:

Scoring Rubric Points Possible by Application Section	
Section 1: Applicant Information	0
Section 2: Grant Funding Request Amounts	0
Section 3: Description of Current Device Inventory and Statement of Need	15
Section 4: Device Selection/Deployment/Maintenance Plans	20
Section 5: Assurance of Network Preparedness for Effective Device Usage	15
Section 6: Digital Learning Plans	35
Section 7: Instructional Staff Readiness Plans	15
Section 8: Binding Authority and Assurances	0
TOTAL	100

The full rubric with more narrative on each criterion can be found in the Grant Application Instructions & Program Procedures guide located on the Connections for Classrooms website at <http://gosa.georgia.gov/2016-cfc-program-information>.

4. If an LEA applies early, will feedback and time for corrections/updating be a possibility?

No, once an application is submitted through the online process it may not be altered.

5. Will there be a review process that communicates back to us about the application prior to the final determination?

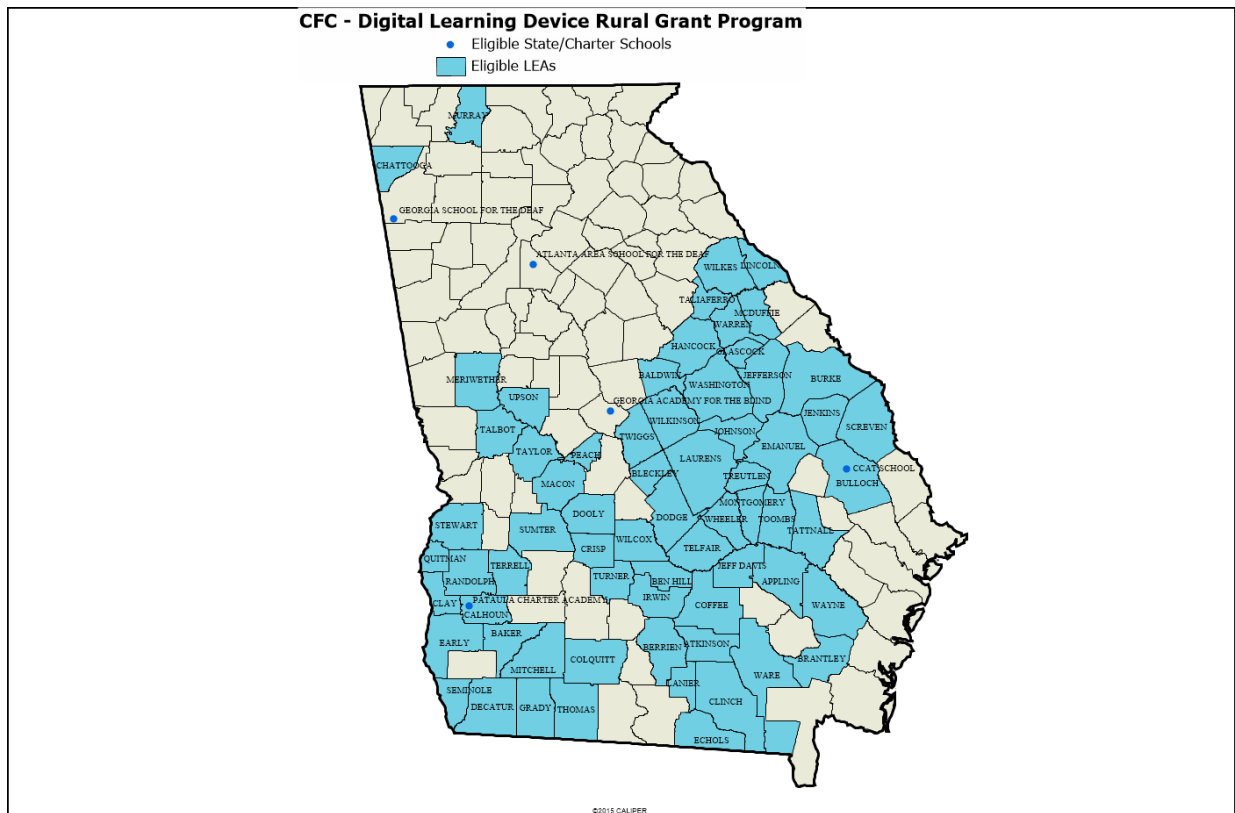
No, there is no intermediate process for application feedback prior to the grant award.

6. Which LEAs are eligible for funding in this round?

This round of funding is focused on rural, high-need LEAs as defined by grant program. Specifically, an eligible LEA meets the following criteria:

1. Is located in one of 71 Tier 1 counties using the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' annual job tax credit tiers. These counties represent the counties with the highest unemployment rate, lowest per capita income, and highest percentage of residents whose incomes are below the poverty level in the state. In addition to being the counties with high student need, the economic conditions make it less likely that these districts are able to bridge the device gap with BYOD policies and local purchases. [For more information on the tiers, click here.](#)
2. Serves less than 25 students per square mile. These LEAs must spend proportionally more funds per pupil since they serve a more dispersed population and do not have the economies of scale of larger districts. In addition, students are more likely to spend more time on buses and have more limited opportunities for dual enrollment, making digital learning more important.

The three State Schools are eligible. In addition, the two state charter schools that are located in a Tier 1 County and have an attendance zone in which all LEAs are eligible for the grant are also eligible. The map below shows the eligible LEAs.



7. Where are the application forms and submittal process located?

Information and documents related to the DLDRGP can be found on the Connections for Classrooms website at <http://gosa.georgia.gov/2016-cfc-program-information>.

8. What is the deadline for the application of the grant?

The application deadline is October 25, 2016, at 5:00 PM ET.

9. When will the grant awards be made?

Grant awards will be announced in January 2017. LEA contact persons listed in the application will be notified of award decisions.

10. How much money can be requested in the application?

The maximum amount an LEA can receive is \$75/student. March 2016 FTE counts were used to determine total eligibility. The list of Eligible LEAs and maximum eligible grant funds is available on the grant program website: <http://gosa.georgia.gov/2016-cfc-program-information>. Please note that these funds are not intended to purchase a \$75 device per student. Rather, as a whole, the total eligible funding amount derived from the \$75/student should be used for devices that will best serve the students.

11. How will funds be dispersed to awardees, and how often can disbursements be requested?

Funds will be dispersed via a reimbursement method and may be requested once a calendar month. The procedures to request reimbursement for the DLDRGP are included in the Grant Application Instructions & Program Procedures guide.

12. How will my award be determined?

Awards will be based upon the competitive strength of the LEA’s plan in achieving the program’s goals, as determined by independent reviewers who score each application against the scoring rubric. Grant administrators must also balance the amount of funds requested and the amount of funds available in making award determinations. The rubric is included in the Grant Application Instructions & Program Procedures guide published on the grant program website: <http://gosa.georgia.gov/2016-cfc-program-information>.

13. What devices can LEAs apply for in the application?

Portable personal computing devices such as tablets, laptop computers, or other mobile devices used for instruction that also comply with Georgia Milestones minimum standards. [Specifications available here.](#)

14. Will this affect my funding from previous CFC grant rounds?

No, funding from this round does not affect any previous Connections for Classrooms award.

15. What is the timeline for this round of funding?

Key dates for this round are as follows:

- **July 21, 2016:** GOSA will publish a grant notice on <http://gosa.georgia.gov/2016-cfc-program-information> and will open the online application for the DLDRGP.
- **September 7, 2016:** 1:30-2:30 PM. Details will be published on the grant program website.
- **October 25, 2016:** The application window closes as of 5:00 PM ET on this day.
- **January 2017:** Award announcements will be made.
- **February 24, 2017:** The last date to submit the LEA’s Notice of Intent to GOSA for Connections for Classrooms – DLDRGP funding. Notices of Intent will not be accepted after this date, and funds will be reallocated for other purposes.

- **December 31, 2018:** The last day to submit a request for reimbursement of expenses related to DLDRGP awards.

16. Will the reimbursement process be the same as the reimbursement process for the 2014 Connections for Classrooms program?

The reimbursement process will be similar to prior rounds and is explained in the Grant Application Instructions & Program Procedures guide located on the Connections for Classrooms website at <http://gosa.georgia.gov/2016-cfc-program-information>.

17. Will DLDRGP Eligible Devices purchased before the announcement of the grant awards of CFC be eligible for reimbursement?

No, all devices must be purchased after the announcement date of the DLDRGP awards to be eligible for reimbursement.

18. Do I need to spend my entire Round 1 award before I am eligible for reimbursement from my award from this round?

No, the spending deadlines outlined for the original 2014 Connections for Classrooms program will not affect your eligibility or award reimbursement for this round.

19. If part of my previous Connections for Classrooms awards was rescinded, will I be eligible for that amount in this round?

Award amount eligibility is determined based upon the calculations outlined in Question #10. Prior awards do not affect eligibility.

20. Where can I find additional information about the Digital Learning Device Rural Grant Program?

Complete information on the DLDRGP can be found on the Connections for Classrooms website at <http://gosa.georgia.gov/2016-cfc-program-information>.

21. How do I apply for the Digital Learning Device Rural Grant Program?

Applications are submitted online at <https://fs3.formsite.com/GOSAGHP/form14/index.html>. Complete instructions on the application process are found in the Grant Application Instructions & Program Procedures guide located on the Connections for Classrooms website at <http://gosa.georgia.gov/2016-cfc-program-information>. Please read the full instructions prior to beginning the application.

22. My district did not apply for Rounds 1 – 3 of the Connections for Classrooms funding. Is it possible to apply for funding in this round?

Yes, LEAs that did not apply for previous rounds of the Connections for Classrooms program may apply for this round, if they are on eligible LEA list.

23. Who should an LEA representative contact with questions during participation in the program?

Concise and complete information on the DLDGRGP can be found on the Connections for Classrooms website at <http://gosa.georgia.gov/2016-cfc-program-information>. Further questions may be directed to the DLDGRGP program manager, Steve Korwan, at skorwan@georgia.gov.

24. Are storage/charging carts, desktop computers, smart TV's, or graphing calculators eligible for the program?

No, please see Question #13 for a description of eligible items.

25. Is device management, tracking, or security software eligible for the program?

No, only the operating system required for device operation is allowable.

26. What is meant by the "Chain of Custody" process in the application?

The "Chain of Custody" process asked to be described in the application is the LEA's process to distribute, track, and collect the digital devices during and between school years. This description should include record keeping systems and inventory systems that will be in place.

27. The application requests our present device inventory. What exactly should this include?

The inventory should include the number of all mobile devices AND desktop computers within instructional areas of the schools, as reported in the GaDOE technology survey. In addition, the number of Georgia Milestones compliant devices should be described.