INNOVATION FUND
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

ABOUT THE INNOVATION FUND & INNOVATION FUND FOUNDATION

The Innovation Fund invests in organizations that are developing, piloting, implementing, and scaling radically innovative programs that target the root causes of our state's most significant education challenges. The Innovation Fund began as a $19.4 million fund created under Georgia's Race to the Top plan (RT3). To continue the Innovation Fund's work beyond RT3, Governor Deal appropriated state funding in Fiscal Years (FY) 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018. In addition to state funding, the Innovation Fund Foundation, Inc. – a nonprofit organization established under § O.C.G.A 20-14.26.1 – serves as an additional source of capital for promising innovations. Since its inception, the Innovation Fund has invested over $36 million of state and federal funding through grants to school districts, charter schools, postsecondary institutions, and nonprofit organizations.

Beginning on January 2, 2018, the Innovation Fund Foundation began receiving funds through the Qualified Education Donation Tax Credit. The Community Partnership Grants will be funded with donations received from this tax credit. To learn more about the Innovation Fund Foundation and the Qualified Education Donation Tax Credit, please click here.

ABOUT COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Community Partnership Grants provide between $35,000 to $75,000 over one to two years for eligible organizations – in partnership with schools, districts, and community, state, or national organizations – to implement programs focused on one of the following priority areas: (a) Birth to Age Eight Language and Literacy Development, (b) Coordinated Community Services, (c) Elementary Mathematics Teaching and Learning, and (d) Positive Learning Climate. Definitions of each priority area are included below.

- **Birth to Age Eight Language and Literacy** programs will:
  - Leverage strategic partnerships with social service and community agencies, non-profit organizations, parents, and families to address children's learning, health, and social-emotional needs.
  - Provide children, birth to age eight, with access to language-rich child and adult interactions both inside and outside of school; and
  - Provide children with rigorous, evidence-based instruction aimed to ensure that, by 3rd grade, students are active consumers and critical thinkers of written texts.

- **Coordinated Community Services** programs will:
  - Leverage strategic partnerships with social service agencies, nonprofit organizations, healthcare providers, and other community agencies to support students' nonacademic needs, including their physical, emotional, social, and psychological needs.
  - Ultimately improve school climate and student achievement by supporting students' nonacademic needs.

- **Elementary Mathematics Teaching and Learning** programs will:
  - Leverage strategic partnerships to provide mathematics-focused professional development, support, and/or mentoring for potential, new, and veteran elementary school teachers; and
  - Improve elementary mathematics achievement by providing students with a hands-on, evidence-based, rigorous mathematics curriculum that relates to grade level standards.

- **Positive Learning Climate** programs will:
  - Meet students' academic and social-emotional needs;
  - Create a rigorous environment for teaching and learning that supports student success both in school and beyond (college, career, etc.);
  - Hold students, teachers, and leaders to high standards and provide support in reaching those standards; and
  - Foster a positive environment where leaders, teachers, and students use mistakes and challenges as learning opportunities, celebrate successes, and are empowered as change agents.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To apply for a Community Partnership Grant your organization must be one of the following:
- A Georgia local education agency (LEA)/school district[1]
- A Georgia traditional public school or charter school
- A 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a current Form 990

Given the focus of the Community Partnership Grants, <u>eligible organizations must partner with another organization</u> (e.g. government agency, RESA, college or university, etc.). However, the school district, charter school, or nonprofit organization must submit the application and serve as the fiscal agent and lead for all grant funds.

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[1] *If the applicant is not a school, district, or nonprofit organization it must be a party to a contract or contract amendment pursuant to OCGA § 20-14-45.*

Please note that applicants will be required to verify their eligibility prior to accessing the online application.

<div align="center">**PRIORITY POINTS**</div>

Applicants that fall into one of the following categories will receive priority points on their application, in alignment with the chart below. Please note that applicants will only receive priority points in one category (the category for which they would receive the highest points). For example, a high-need, rural school actively working with the Chief Turnaround Officer (CTO) would receive seven points total, rather than seven points for working with the CTO and three for being a high-need, rural school. To receive priority points, applicants must indicate which category they fall into on their grant application. GOSA will verify that the information provided by the applicant is correct prior to awarding the priority points.

Category	Priority Points	Notes
Schools Actively Working with the Chief Turnaround Officer	**+7 points**	To receive priority points for this category, the school must be actively working with the state's Chief Turn Around Officer (CTO), as verified by the CTO. Please note, *school districts* are only eligible for these priority points if their proposed grant program *exclusively* involves school(s) actively working with the CTO.
Schools on the Turnaround Eligible Schools List	**+5 points**	To receive points for this category, a school must be on the **Turnaround Eligible Schools list, available here.** Please note, *school districts* are only eligible for these priority points if their proposed grant program exclusively involves school(s) on the Turnaround Eligible Schools List.
High-Need Rural Schools/School Districts	**+3 points**	To receive points for this category a school district must be located in a county designated as Tier 1 or Tier 2 based on the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' annual job tax credit tiers AND must serve fewer than 25 students per square mile. **Click here for a map and list of high-need, rural school districts.** Individual schools within the listed school districts are also eligible for priority points.

WHAT IS THE FUNDING TIMELINE?

GOSA will accept, review, and award Community Partnership Grants on a rolling basis. Applicants can submit their application at any time, and GOSA will award grants at least four times per year. *Please note these timeframes are subject to change, subject to the availability of funds from the Qualified Education Donation Tax Credit.* The below chart indicates the currently-anticipated timeframe in which GOSA will review and award grants.

Applications Received By	Will Be Reviewed and Awarded By
June 30, 2018	Mid-August 2018
September 30, 2018	Mid-November 2018
December 30, 2018	Mid-February 2019
March 31, 2019	Mid-May 2019

HOW DO I APPLY?

To apply for a Community Partnership Grant, please follow the steps below.

1. Carefully review the Community Partnership grant guidelines, application questions, and scoring rubric.

2. Participate in Community Partnership Grant Application Webinar. **Please note completion of this webinar is mandatory for all applicants**.

3. Once you participate in the webinar series, create an account on the Community Partnership Grant Application Portal and log in to complete the eligibility form and application.

4. Electronically submit your completed application, including your answers to the application questions along with all required documents.

WHAT QUESTIONS ARE ON THE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP GRANT APPLICATION?

The Community Partnership Grant Application is divided into five sections, listed below.

SECTION	# OF QUESTIONS	REQUIRED DOCUMENTS	POSSIBLE POINTS
What's Your Program?	3	▪ Statements of Commitment from Partner Organizations	8
Do You Really Need It?	2	n/a	8
What's Your Plan?	2	▪ Statements of Commitment from Leadership and Grant Leads ▪ Community Partnership Grant Scope of Work	8
What Will You Do With the Grant Funding?	0	▪ Community Partnership Grant Budget Template ▪ Budget Rationale	8
How Will You Evaluate It?	2	▪ Community Partnership Grant Evaluation Template	8
TOTALS	9	6 required documents	40 points*

Please note, each applicant's final score will be converted to a percentage. For example, an application scoring 40 points would receive a 100% (40/40). Alternatively, an application scoring 35 points would receive an 87.5% (35/40). Any priority points will be added to the applicant's final percentage.

HOW WILL GOSA SCORE MY GRANT APPLICATION?

Two reviewers will score each grant application using the Community Partnership Grant Rubric. The average of the reviewers' scores will serve as the applicants final score. In cases where there is a large discrepancy between the two reviewer scores, a third reviewer will score the application. The outlier score will be dropped, and the average of the other two scores will serve as the applicant's final score. ***If needed, GOSA may also conduct interviews with the highest-scoring applicants.***

WHAT WILL A SUCCESSFUL GRANT APPLICATION LOOK LIKE?

The following charts: (a) outline what successful answers will look like for each section of the grant application, and (b) provide tips for success. You can also view the Community Partnership Grant Rubric to see each section's standards for excellent, good, average, and poor answers.

Innovation Fund Community Partnership Grant Guidelines

	SECTION I. WHAT'S YOUR PROGRAM?	
A Successful Application Will . . .	- Demonstrate that your program: - Serves a *specific, thoughtfully-selected* target population, - Has *clearly-defined, realistic but ambitious goals* that *directly* relate to the target population and program, - Is *strongly aligned* with one of the Innovation Fund priority areas, and - Has *relevant and committed partner(s)* with *clearly-defined roles* related to the grant. - Each partner's statement of commitment supports that it is *strongly committed* to the grant and *deeply understands* its role related to the grant.	
Tips for Success	- You should be able to *clearly and concisely* describe your program, its target population, and its goals within the 300-world limit. Think of this section as an *elevator pitch* for your program – providing enough information that the reviewer clearly understands your program at a high level, but leaving the nitty-gritty details for other sections of the application. - In this section, you need to justify *why* you are serving a *specific* target population. For example, if your program serves over-aged eighth graders – what data did you use to determine that target population? Why do they need this program? How are you defining over-aged? Why do you want to work with eighth graders rather than ninth graders or seventh graders? - The partners you describe in this section should be <u>***true partners***</u> in this work – *meaning both parties benefit from participation in the grant*. True partners engage meaningfully and continuously in the grant program (ex: the local university that will provide tutors for your students), not partners that show up occasionally (ex: a company that will provide a guest speaker one time). Remember, more partners are not better. One meaningfully-engaged partner is better than fifteen disengaged partners.	

SECTION II. DO YOU REALLY NEED IT?	
A Successful Application Will . . .	Demonstrate that: • Your program will ***directly address*** its identified need. • You identified the need for the program using multiple sources of ***relevant and specific*** qualitative and quantitative data. • The data provided ***clearly supports*** the need for the program.
Tips for Success	• Your proposed program should directly address a need that is specific to your school or district (e.g. low mathematics achievement among third grade female students) rather than a national or global need (e.g. women are underrepresented in STEM fields). Ask yourself: "Why does <u>my school or district</u> need this program? What direct impact will it have on <u>my school/district's students, teachers or leaders</u>?" If you cannot answer these questions, you may want to revisit the reasoning behind your program. • You must be able to support the need for your program with relevant, valid, and reliable qualitative and quantitative data. For example, if your program will provide mental health counseling for ninth graders experiencing depression – how do you know that ninth graders need these services? Do you have accurate data regarding the percentage of students in your high school that are experiencing depression? Have you talked with students? If you do not have data to back up the need for your program, then chances are your identified need is based on assumptions. • Your proposed program must ***actually address*** your identified need. For example, if the identified need is to improve third grade mathematics achievement, but your proposed program is for fourth grade students to volunteer at the local animal shelter – there is no clear connection between the need and the program.

SECTION III. WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?	
A Successful Application Will . . .	• Include a scope of work with **all** critical grant milestones that is **highly likely** to lead to successful program implementation. • Demonstrate that you have a **thoughtfully-selected** and **highly-qualified** team that is **strongly** committed to implementing the program per the scope of work. • Include statements of commitment from team members and organization leadership that support that each individual is **strongly committed** to the grant and **deeply understands** his/her role related to the grant.
Tips for Success	• Your idea for a program may be fabulous, but if you do not have a detailed and realistic implementation plan, then you are not ready to apply for a Community Partnership Grant. **Your scope of work should include enough detail that if another school or district received it, they could implement the program by following the activities in the chart.** • **Be realistic**. If you receive an Community Partnership Grant, GOSA will expect you to complete the activities on your scope of work, unless data collected during the implementation process indicate otherwise. For example, if you know your district's hiring process takes a minimum of two months, do not indicate you will hire someone within three weeks of receiving the grant. If you know it will take six months to adequately train your teachers to implement your personalized learning mathematics program, do not say you will begin serving students one month after you receive the grant. • Grants are only as successful as the people involved. Therefore, you should thoughtfully select your grant team to ensure it represents the roles and skill sets needed for the project's success. Similarly, everyone on your grant team should fully understand the grant's purpose, goals, implementation plan, and evaluation plan. If selected for an interview, you will need to demonstrate your team is committed and qualified and that each team member deeply understands the grant and his/her clearly-defined role.

SECTION IV. WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR GRANT FUNDING?	
A Successful Application Will . . .	- Have a specific budget where all items are: (a) allocable (directly relatable) to the project, (b) an allowable use of state funds, and (c) reasonable. - Include a budget rationale that indicates: - All budget items are necessary for the program's success; and - You calculated the total funding request based entirely on the needs of the grant and not the available funding amount. - Provide *strong evidence* that you will sustain the program, if successful, after the grant ends.
Tips for Success	**Do your research**. If you receive an Community Partnership Grant, **GOSA expects that you will spend your full grant award within the funding period**. Therefore, GOSA strongly recommends conducting extensive budget research before applying. This research should include, but is not limited to: (a) getting accurate quotes from vendors for any supplies and equipment you will purchase, (b) making realistic estimates regarding salary and stipends for people involved in the grant, and (c) investigating whether the district or other funding sources will fund any items related to the grant. **Show your math in your proposed budget and budget rationale.** For example, if you are proposing to spend $25,000 on supplies for your grandparent literacy center, what, specifically, will you buy? How many of each item will you buy? How much does each item cost? If you have done the necessary prep work as outlined above, showing your math is easy. If you find showing your math difficult, you have not done enough research. **Request only what you need**. The maximum amount for a Community Partnership Grant is $75,000. However, please calculate your budget based on the ***actual needs of your program***, not based on figuring out how you can spend $75,000. For example, if you only need $40,000 to operate your program successfully, that should be your funding request.

SECTION V. HOW WILL YOU EVALUATE IT?

A Successful Application Will . . .	• Include two to four SMART goals that ***directly relate*** to the project; and • Have ***a clear and feasible plan and timeline*** for collecting and analyzing ***valid, reliable, and relevant data*** that will ***accurately measure*** the program's progress towards its SMART goals AND impact on students, teachers and/or leaders.

Tips for Success	• Your goals must be SMART goals – <u>**S**</u>**pecific,** <u>**M**</u>**easurable,** <u>**A**</u>**chievable/Ambitious,** <u>**R**</u>**elevant, and** <u>**T**</u>**ime-**<u>**B**</u>**ound.** For example:
	    ○ *SMART Goal:* The percentage of third grade students scoring proficient or above on the English Language Arts Milestones Assessment *(specific, relevant)* will increase by three percentage points per year *(specific, measurable, attainable/ambitious, time-bound)* over baseline. (2017 Baseline: 50% percent of students scoring proficient or above; 2018 goal: 53% scoring proficient or above; 2019 goal: 56% scoring proficient or above).
	    ○ *Not a SMART goal:* Students *(not specific - what students?)* will increase their ELA milestones score by 25% *(not specific, measurable, or timebound – Increase what? The percentage of students scoring proficient or above? When will this increase occur by?)*
	    ○ *Also not a SMART goal:* Students will increase their ELA milestones score by 25%.
	    ○ *Definitely not a SMART goal:* Students will develop a new love for reading.
	
	• Prior to submitting your application, you must have an actual plan for collecting the proposed data. For example, if one of your SMART goals relates to a decrease in the percentage of students with a clinical diagnosis of depression, you must have a way to obtain these data.
	
	• Successful evaluation plans use ***valid and reliable*** data and data collection methods that accurately measure the program's progress towards its SMART goals. ***Valid data*** measure what they are supposed to measure. For example, if your scale says you weigh 150 pounds, but you really weigh 127 pounds, your scale is not providing valid data. ***Reliable data*** are collected from a tool that provides consistent results. For example, if one day your scale says you weigh 150 pounds; the next day is says you weigh 127 pounds; and the next day it says you weigh 400 pounds, it is not providing reliable data. The chart below provides education-specific examples:

Program Goal	Valid and Reliable Data	Invalid and/or Unreliable Data
The percentage of third grade students scoring proficient or above on the English Language Arts Milestones Assessment will increase by three percentage points per year over baseline.	The percentage of third grade students scoring proficient or above on the ELA Milestones Assessment for both years of the program.	• The percentage of students mentioning they like reading more at the end of the program. • The percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the ELA Milestones Assessment for Year 1 of the program. The percentage of students passing End of Year District Benchmark Assessments in Year 2.
At least 85% of ninth graders will indicate the program adequately met their mental health needs in Year 1 and at least 95% of ninth graders will indicate the program adequately met their mental health needs in Year 2.	Survey results from a survey administered to ninth graders where students indicated the extent to which the program met their mental health needs. In this case, the *same survey* would be administered in both Year 1 and Year 2.	• The percentage of 9th – 12th graders that indicated they liked the program. • The percentage of students with a diagnosis of depression. • The percentage of students indicating the program adequately met their mental health needs, where the data were collected by a survey in Year 1 and a focus group in Year 2.

HOW WILL I RECEIVE MY GRANT FUNDS?

The Innovation Fund is a reimbursement-based grant program. Grantees will receive reimbursement quarterly. Community Partnership Grantees will submit a quarterly expense report no later than 30 days after the end of each quarter. This expense report will include a summary of the funds liquidated during that quarter as well as supporting documentation for each expense. Please note, GOSA will not reimburse unallowable expenses or expenses with missing or insufficient documentation.

WHAT CAN I USE MY GRANT FUNDING FOR?

All expenses covered by Innovation Fund grants must be:

- **Allowable:** the expense is not a prohibited use of state funding;
- **Allocable**: the expense is directly related to the purpose and outcomes of your grant, and the amount of the expense is proportional to the benefit the program will receive from the expense; and
- **Reasonable**: a prudent person outside of your organization would agree that the expense is reasonably priced and necessary to accomplish the grant objectives.

Community Partnership Grant funds may be used for personnel, fringe benefits, supplies, equipment, travel, contractual expenses, and indirect costs. The chart below provides examples of allowable items within each budget category. Please note that this list does not include every allowable expense, but should give you an idea of typical allowable expenses.

CATEGORY	EXAMPLE
Personnel	Salary, or a portion of salary, provided that the salary is for individuals working towards the grant objectives, AND that the percentage of each individual's grant-funded salary is commensurate with the amount of time that the individual will dedicate toward the grant objectives
Supplies	Materials, under $5,000 in value, for activities directly related to the grant. Such materials may include classroom materials, office supplies, iPads, laptops, etc.
Equipment	Equipment, over $5,000 in value, for activities directly related to the grant, such as lab equipment, or other equipment necessary to accomplish the grant objectives
Travel	Travel expenses for activities directly related to the grant, including mileage, lodging, airfare, and per diem amounts. Please note that travel expenses must be in accordance with the State of Georgia Travel Policy and per diem amounts.
Contractual	Contractual services with qualified individuals or organizations, such as service providers or evaluators that will directly serve the purposes of the grant. Please note that all organizations awarded grants must adhere to the State of Georgia Procurement Manual and their district procurement policies.
Indirect Costs	Indirect costs related to the grant, such as administrative assistance, of up to no more than 10% of the overall grant budget

WHAT REPORTS ARE REQUIRED IF MY PROGRAM IS FUNDED?

Community Partnership Grantees are responsible for submitting the following reports:
- **Quarterly Budget and Progress Reports**; and
- **End-Of-Year Evaluation Reports**.

GOSA will send more information regarding these reports to funded grantees.

ARE THERE OTHER EXPECTATIONS I NEED TO BE AWARE OF?

If your organization receives an Community Partnership Grant, you must meet the following expectations during the grant period:
- Complete and submit, in a timely manner, additional forms and certifications required for the use of state funding;
- Adhere to all provisions in your Innovation Fund grant contract;
- Complete and submit, in a timely and satisfactory manner, quarterly expense and progress reports end-of-year evaluation reports;
- Submit any budget or milestone amendments to GOSA for approval prior to making those changes;
- Arrange for GOSA staff to make site visits, when requested by GOSA, to your program;
- Respond to emails and phone calls from GOSA staff in a timely and professional manner;
- Clearly and honestly communicate to GOSA both the successes and challenges of your grant work;

- Attend the annual Innovation Summit, which occurs in June; and
- Allow other GOSA grantees, schools, districts, etc. to visit your program.

Failure to meet these expectations may result in GOSA withholding funding from your grant award.