



## INNOVATION FUND 2015-2016 IMPLEMENTATION GRANT GUIDELINES

### About the Innovation Fund

The [Innovation Fund](#) supports local education authorities (LEAs) in planning, implementing, and scaling innovative education programs that advance student achievement throughout Georgia.

Most recently, the Innovation Fund received 2015-16 Fiscal Year state funding to provide grants to LEAs focused on planning, implementing, or scaling innovative education programs focused on the following priority areas:

1. Applied Learning with a Focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Education,
2. Birth to Age Eight Language and Literacy Development,
3. Development and Replication of Blended Learning School Models, and
4. Teacher and Leader Development for High-Need Schools.

### Award Timeline

<b>July 8, 2015</b>	Grant Technical Assistance Day: Monroe County Conference Center, Forsyth, GA
<b>July 9, 2015</b>	Grant Technical Assistance Day: GTRI Conference Center, Atlanta, GA
<b>July 10, 2015</b>	Application Opens
<b>September 3, 2015</b>	Grant Applications Due
<b>October 5, 2015</b>	Grant Awards Announced

## Eligibility Requirements

**In order to apply for the 2015-16 grant round, you must be a LEA in the state of Georgia.**

Please note that while in the past GOSA has awarded Innovation Fund grants directly to nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education, **this grant round is exclusively for LEAs.** LEAs are *strongly encouraged*, where appropriate, to apply in partnership with institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, and community-based agencies to strengthen the quality of their proposed program. **However; the LEA must submit the application and serve as the fiscal agent for all grant funds.**

## Submission Instructions

To apply for an Innovation Fund grant, please follow the steps below:

1. Carefully review these Grant Guidelines, along with the definitions of key terms located on at the end of this document.
2. Attend one of the Technical Assistance Days. If you cannot make it to a Technical Assistance Day, be sure to visit the [Innovation Fund Grant Application Toolbox](#), which includes guidance such as funded grant application examples, video presentations from our current Innovation Fund grantees, and research articles about the Innovation Fund priority areas.
3. Beginning on July 10, create an account or, if you already have an account, log in to complete your application at <http://innovationfund.fluidreview.com>
4. Submit your completed application, including your answers to the application questions, along with all required documents, **no later than Thursday, September 3, 2015.**

**If you have any questions during the application process, please contact:**

**Rebecca Ellis**  
**Governor's Office of Student Achievement**  
**Program Manager, Innovation Fund**  
[rellis@georgia.gov](mailto:rellis@georgia.gov)  
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## General Information about Implementation Grants

Implementation grants will provide LEAs between \$200,000 and \$750,000 to implement an innovative education program aligned with one or more of the Innovation Fund priority areas:

1. Applied Learning with a Focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Education,
2. Birth to Age Eight Language and Literacy Development,
3. Development and Replication of Blended Learning School Models, and
4. Teacher and Leader Development for High-Need Schools.

LEAs will have two years from the date of the grant award (October 2015) to spend implementation grant funds.

Successful implementation grant applications will demonstrate that:

- You can logically articulate your program's mission, theory of change, the population your program will serve, and the program's intended goals and outcomes,
- You have an understanding of similar programs and can use this knowledge to strengthen your program's implementation,
- Your program is *directly aligned* with the 2015-16 Innovation Fund priority areas,
- Your program will directly address a need, determined by data, in your school, district or community,
- You have a strong evaluation plan that will clearly measure the success of your program against the stated goals and objectives,
- Key stakeholders and partners are committed to implementing the program,
- Your LEA has the capacity, qualifications, governing body support, and time to successfully implement this program,
- Your organization has an intentional and feasible scope of work to implement the program, and,
- Your organization has a strategic budget that is aligned with your scope of work.

Successful applications will also be well written, free of any grammatical or spelling errors, and clearly answer only the questions in the grant application.

The Innovation Fund implementation application will include the following sections. Below please find the following information:



- The number of questions per application section,
- The required documents for each section, and
- The possible points for each section.

Section	Number of Application Questions	Required Documents	Possible Points
Executive Summary	1	n/a	5 points
Similar Programs	1	n/a	5 points
Alignment and Need	2	n/a	15 points
Goals and Evaluation Plan	3	n/a	15 points
Partnership Overview	2	Letters of Commitment	20 points
Capacity to Implement	3	Resumes of Key Personnel	10 points
Scope of Work	2	Innovation Fund Grant Scope of Work	20 points
Budget	3	Innovation Fund Grant Budget Template	10 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17 questions</b>	<b>4 required documents</b>	<b>100 points</b>

Please refer to the below section for specific information about each section of the implementation grant application.

### Specific Information about the Implementation Grant Application

#### Executive Summary (5 points)

This section should provide a *concise summary* of your program in 300 words or less. Successful executive summaries will include:

- **A logically articulated program mission and theory of change,**
- **A description of the participants your program will serve,** including the target number (students, teachers, or leaders) and type of program participants. When discussing the type of program participants, you may include general demographic information such as grade level, subject area, school or district, or educational background. Please be sure to *only include*



*information about the participants the program will actually serve, not information about individuals who live in the same community or students who attend the same school.*

- **A brief summary of your program's intended goals and outcomes.** Please note that you will be able to expand upon these goals and outcomes later in the Goals and Evaluation Plan section of the application.

### Similar Programs (5 points)

This section should demonstrate that you have an understanding of the existing market, specifically programs that are similar to yours in both scope and nature. Similar programs may include programs that serve a similar target population, utilize a similar model, have similar goals, or are focused on a similar priority area. In this section, you should also include any best practices or components of these similar programs that you will incorporate into your own program.

### Alignment and Need for the Program (15 points)

This section includes two components:

- **A description of how your program will align with one or more the Innovation Fund priority areas.<sup>1</sup>** Please be sure to review the definitions of each priority area (located at the end of this document) to ensure that your program matches one or more of these definitions. You may also refer to information about your priority area from the Technical Assistance Day breakout sessions or [Innovation Fund Grant Application Toolbox](#).
- **A description of how your intended program will address a need and benefit students, teachers or educational leaders in your school, district, or community.** You must include the data you used to determine this need, and explain how these data support the need for the program.

Appropriate data include, but are not limited to: student test scores, teacher or leader evaluation results, or county demographic data (poverty rates, unemployment rates, etc.). Where appropriate, you may also include qualitative data, such as administrator observations of teacher or student needs.

### Notes about Specific Priority Areas for the Alignment and Need Section

- If you are applying for a grant aligned with the **Applied Learning with a Focus on STEM Education** priority area, you must articulate how your program will *integrate* science,

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<sup>1</sup> If your intended program will address more than one priority (for example, your program will provide training for STEM teachers in a high-need school on applied learning methods), please list both priority areas, and clearly state how your program will align with each priority.



technology, engineering, and math, and how you will provide students with opportunities to integrate classroom content with authentic, real-world (personal, home, career, community, society) experiences.

- If you are applying for a grant aligned with the **Birth to Age Eight Language and Literacy** priority area, you must clearly explain how your program will address the four pillars of this priority area: (a) *Language Nutrition*; (b) *Access*; (c) *Productive Learning Climate* and (d) *Teacher Preparation and Effectiveness*. Please refer to the definitions at the end of this document for information about those pillars.
- If you are applying for a grant aligned with the **Bended Learning** priority area, you must articulate what blended learning model you will use, and specify how your program will give students control over the time, place, path and/or pace of their learning.
- If you are applying for a grant aligned with **Teacher and Leader Development for High - Need Schools** priority area, you must describe how you are defining your school as a high-need school and provide the data you used to make this determination.

### Goals and Evaluation Plan (15 points)

The Goals and Evaluation Plan section should expand upon the goals and outcomes listed in the Executive Summary of the grant application. Successful applications will logically articulate:

- **Three to six clearly articulated SMART goals and outcomes.** Please note that all goals must be written as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-Oriented, and Time-bound) goals. In addition, you must include at least three academic outcomes that will indicate if your program has generated positive student achievement results. For more information about SMART goals, please visit this link: <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Smart-Goals-Training-Videos.aspx>

We strongly recommend that you complete the **Grant Goals and Outcomes Chart**, available on the online application site or in the [Innovation Fund Grant Application Toolbox](#) before completing this section of the application. Please note, **you are not required** to upload the Grant Goals and Outcomes chart as part of your application. However, this chart will help guide you in completing this section.

- **A logical plan for collecting data and analyzing the outcome of your program**, including potential data collection methods, possible external evaluators that can lead the evaluation of your program, and the qualifications of the listed external evaluators.



**Please note, if you are awarded funds, you MUST use a portion of your grant funding to contract with an external evaluator.** Please see the *Evaluation Requirements* section at the end of this document for more information.

### **Partnership Overview (20 points)**

This section should demonstrate that you have strong existing or planned partners and stakeholders that will support the implementation of your program. Potential partners could include, but are not limited to, community organizations, nonprofit organizations, technical colleges, colleges or universities, other schools or districts, businesses, and service providers. Successful partnership overview sections will clearly demonstrate how you will utilize each partner to implement the program. In addition, this section should demonstrate that your LEA's leadership fully supports this program's implementation

**You must upload letter(s) of commitment from each partner listed in this section and your governing body.** More information regarding letters of commitment can be found in the *Information about Required Documents* section of this document.

### **Capacity to Implement the Program (10 points)**

This section must demonstrate that your organization has the capacity to implement your intended program. Successful applicants will demonstrate that:

- The individual who will lead or facilitate the implementation process has both the qualifications and time to implement your intended program, and
- Your LEA has demonstrated experience managing grants and implementing grants of a similar size and scope, and/or implementing programs that have yielded positive student, teacher, or leader outcomes.

**Please be sure to upload the resume(s) of the grant lead(s), along with resumes from other key personnel.** More information regarding resumes of key personnel can be found on in the *Information about Required Documents* section of this document.

### **Implementation Scope of Work (20 points)**

Successful scopes of work will outline intentional and feasible milestones that will: (a) lead to the successful implementation of your program, and (b) generate positive student, teacher, or leader outcomes. In addition, you must clearly articulate any challenges you foresee in reaching these intended outcomes, and explain how you will mitigate these challenges.



You must also upload your scope of work using the **Innovation Fund Grant Scope Work Template**, available on the online application site or the [Innovation Fund Grant Application Toolbox](#). Please note that you must use the template provided.

When completing this template, you must indicate:

- The milestones you need to reach in order to successfully implement your program,
- The action steps you will take to meet these milestones,
- The timeframe for meeting these milestones, and
- The person(s) responsible for meeting these milestones.

You may include more than one action step for each goal. However, each goal should align with the intended outcome. Please see below for an example:

Milestone	Action Steps	Timeframe	Person(s) Responsible
Deliver training to 16 Kindergarten to 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade teachers on technology integration in elementary classrooms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select teachers based on the technology integration readiness assessment.</li> <li>• Work with Young Scholar Technology Partners to design training.</li> <li>• Hire substitutes to cover participating teachers' classrooms during the training.</li> </ul>	February 2016	Grant Lead  Technology Specialists at participating schools  Young Scholar Technology Partners Representatives

### Budget (10 points)

This section must indicate how you will use your implementation grant funds (between \$200,000 to \$750,000) to implement your program, as well as how you intend to sustain your program beyond the grant term. For this section, you must upload the **Innovation Fund Grant Budget Template** available on the online application site or in the [Innovation Fund Grant Application Toolbox](#). Please note that you must use the template provided to you.





When completing this template, please be sure to enter:

- The total amount of grant funds and funds from other sources (other grants, federal funds, district funds, etc.) that you plan to spend in each budget category,
- The specific items and cost of these items included in each budget category, (you may enter additional line items as needed), and
- A description and rationale for each of these items. You may include the description in the template provide, or attach additional pages as needed.

Successful budgets will demonstrate alignment between your expenses and your milestones listed in the previous section. In addition, all proposed expenditures must meet the following criteria:

- **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.
- **Reasonable:** a prudent person outside of your LEA would agree that the expense is reasonably priced and necessary to accomplish the grant objectives.

Please be sure to review the *Financial and Other Expectations* section of this document prior to completing your budget.

### Information about Required Documents

In addition to the application questions, **Innovation Fund Grant Scope of Work**, and **Innovation Fund Grant Budget Template**, please remember to upload the following documents:

- **Resumes from Key Personnel** (*resumes will be considered in the Capacity to Implement your Program score*): You must upload the resume of the grant lead along with any other individuals that will play an integral role in the implementation process. These resumes should demonstrate that the individuals involved in the implementation process are highly-qualified to do this work.
- **Letter(s) of Commitment** (*letters of commitment will be considered the Partnership Overview score*): You must upload a letter of commitment from any listed partners, as well as your LEA's governing body (superintendent, board chair, executive director, or other appropriate official).

A letter of commitment is a statement of active participation in the project. An effective letter of commitment should:

- Be succinct, usually less than a page in length,
- Identify the project,



- Specify the roles and responsibilities of the governing body or partner,
- Specify the resources the governing body or partner will contribute, and
- Convince the reader that the governing body or partner has the capacity to fulfill its responsibilities and is committed to achieving success.

## Evaluation Requirements and Information

### External Evaluation Requirements

The goal of Innovation Fund implementation grants is to identify best practices and innovative programs that advance student achievement. In order to meet this goal, all organizations awarded implementation grants must contract with a qualified external evaluator, who will be responsible for:

- Refining your proposed evaluation plan to ensure it accurately measures the impact of your program on your proposed outcomes,
- Assisting in the completion of required mid-year and end-of-year evaluation reports,
- Conducting and analyzing student, teacher, or leader focus groups and/or interviews, where appropriate,
- Administering and analyzing student, teacher, or leader surveys, where appropriate, and
- Analyzing student outcome data, or teacher and leader effectiveness results.

Please note, if your LEA is awarded grant funds, GOSA will require a signed contract and evaluation plan from your external evaluator.

### Transition from Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) and End of Course Tests (EOCT) to the Georgia Milestones Assessments

The Georgia Department of Education implemented the Georgia Milestones Assessments in the 2014-15 School Year. Given that you must include at least three academic outcomes in the Goals and Evaluation section, you may want to include an academic outcome related to these assessments. GOSA understands that, at the time of submission, you will not have baseline data from the 14-15 school year to inform your intended outcomes based on state assessments. Therefore, you should base your outcomes on a reasonable estimate of how you anticipate your students performed on these assessments. If your organization receives grant funding, you will have the opportunity to adjust your target outcomes based on baseline data from the 2014-15 school year.

Please note, you may also choose academic outcomes related to other assessments you already use in your school, such as norm-referenced assessments or district benchmarks.



## Financial and Other Expectations

### Allowable Expenses

Implementation grant funds may be used for personnel, fringe benefits, materials, equipment, travel, contractual, and indirect costs. Allowable expenses in each category are outlined below. Please note that this list is not intended to be inclusive of every allowable expense, but rather, to give you an idea of the types of allowable expenses.

- **Personnel:** Staff salary, or a portion of salary, provided compensation is paid specifically to individuals working towards the grant objectives, AND the percentage of each individual's salary paid from grant funds is commensurate with the amount of time that the individual will dedicate toward the grant objectives.
- **Supplies** for activities directly related to the grant, such as binders, notebooks, pens or pencils, post-it notes, chart paper, tablets, laptops or other supplies for students, teachers, leaders, or personnel involved in grant activities
- **Equipment** over \$5,000 for activities directly related to the grant, such as lab equipment or other equipment necessary to accomplish the grant objectives.
- **Travel** expenses directly related to the grant, including the cost of mileage, lodging, airfare and per diem amounts. Please note travel expenses must be in accordance with the State Travel Policy, available here:  
[http://sao.georgia.gov/sites/sao.georgia.gov/files/related\\_files/site\\_page/SOG\\_Statewide\\_Travel\\_Policy\\_012414\\_031214.pdf](http://sao.georgia.gov/sites/sao.georgia.gov/files/related_files/site_page/SOG_Statewide_Travel_Policy_012414_031214.pdf)
- **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 LEAs awarded grants must adhere to the State of Georgia Procurement Manual, available here:  
<http://doas.ga.gov/assets/State%20Purchasing/GPM%20Documents/GeorgiaProcurementManual.pdf>
- **Indirect Costs**, such as administrative assistance, of up to no more than 10% of your overall grant budget.

Innovation Fund grant funds can only be used for proposed expenses as outlined in the approved grant application, unless GOSA staff approves these expenses in writing prior to the expenses being



incurred. GOSA reserves the right to approve or reject specific items requested that are not aligned with the grant program's intent.

**The Innovation Fund is a reimbursement-based grant program.** LEAs awarded grants will request reimbursement on a quarterly basis, after the expenses have been liquidated. In order to receive reimbursement, LEAs must incur all approved costs on or after the grant award date and prior to the project closeout. In addition, all expenses must be included in the grant application as part of the project or must be approved by GOSA staff in writing.

### **Auditing Requirements**

Organizations that receive an Innovation Fund grant must follow all applicable financial reporting and audit requirements set forth by the State of Georgia.

### **Grant Expectations**

If your organization is awarded an Innovation Fund grant, you must adhere to the below expectations during the grant award period:

- Completing and submitting, in a timely manner, additional forms and certifications required for the use of state funding,
- Adhering to all provisions in your Innovation Fund Grant Contract,
- Completing and submitting, in a timely manner, monthly reports, quarterly expense and progress reports, mid-year evaluation reports, and end-of-year evaluation reports that include all requested information,
- Submitting any budget or milestone amendments to GOSA for approval prior to making those changes,
- Arranging for GOSA staff to make site visits, when requested by GOSA, to your program,
- Responding to emails and phone calls from GOSA staff in a timely and professional manner,
- Clearly communicating to GOSA both the successes and challenges of your grant work, and
- Attending a yearly conference with other Innovation Fund grantees to share your work.

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

## **Definitions**

**Academic Outcomes** are targets related specifically to increased student achievement, including, but not limited to:

- Graduation rates,
- For tested grades and subjects, a student's score on the state assessments, and



- Other measures of student learning and performance — provided that they are both rigorous and aligned with the goals of your grant – including benchmark data, student growth data, and student performance on English language proficiency assessments.

**Applied Learning** is the opportunity for students to integrate classroom content with authentic, real-world (personal, home, career, community, society) experiences. Through these experiences, students develop and strengthen their problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, and self-management skills. Applied learning not only supports students in mastering content standards, but also equips them with the skills they need to be successful students and adults.

**Birth to Age Eight Language and Literacy** focuses on creating high-quality and productive learning environments – both inside and outside of the classroom – where children, ages birth to eight, have access to the resources necessary to fully develop their language and literacy skills. This priority area focuses on both in-school learning, and on leveraging community partnerships with social service and nonprofit organizations to address each child’s learning, health, family, and social-emotional needs.

In alignment with the Get Georgia Reading Campaign, programs aligned with this priority area must address these four pillars:

- *Language Nutrition:* All children receive language-rich child and adult interactions.
- *Access:* All children and their families have access to high-quality social services that support healthy development.
- *Productive Learning Climate:* Children have access to home and school environments that foster their social-emotional development, school engagement, and academic achievement.
- *Teacher Preparation and Effectiveness:* Early childhood educators provide high-quality, evidence-informed instruction tailored to the needs of each child, regardless of background. (*Definition from [Get Georgia Reading](#)*)

**Blended Learning** is a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online learning with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace, and at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home. In addition, the modalities along each student’s learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience. Blended learning is NOT simply placing technology in the classroom or providing students access to online courses. Blended learning utilizes technology to restructure traditional school models, promote data-driven and individualized instruction, leverage the strengths of effective educators, and advance student achievement. (*definition adapted from [The Clayton Christensen Institute](#)*)



**High-Need Schools** are schools that face challenges in ensuring success for all students. Examples of high-need schools include, but are not limited to: (a) consistently underperforming schools, (b) schools located in rural areas that have difficulty recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers and leaders, and (c) schools that serve a high percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch, special education students, or English language learners. *Please note that if you are applying for a grant in this priority area, you will be required to describe how you are defining your school as a high-need school and provide data to support your description.*

**Local Education Authority (LEA)** means a government agency which supervises the provision of instruction or educational services to members of the community. LEAs are also often referred to as “school districts.”

**STEM Education** is defined as an integrated curriculum (as opposed to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics taught in isolation) that is driven by problem solving, discovery, exploratory project/problem-based learning, and student-centered development of ideas and solutions. (Definition from the [Georgia Department of Education](#))

**Teacher and Leader Development for High-Need Schools** focuses on building teacher and leader capacity to improve student achievement in high-need schools. This priority area may include programs targeted to: (a) build the pipeline of effective teachers and leaders for high-need schools, (b) recruit and retain effective teachers and leaders for high-need schools, and/or (c) provide professional development opportunities to boost the capacity of current teachers and leaders in high-need schools.

