

# **Learn and Serve America Grant Bidders' Conference**

Questions and Answers about the FY  
2010 RFP

# What is the Purpose of the Learn and Serve America Grant

- To encourage the use of service-learning as a teaching methodology by supporting the development of high-quality service-learning projects in elementary, middle, and secondary schools

# Definition of Service Learning (according to National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993)

- An educational method that:
  - Is conducted in and meets the needs of a community
  - Is coordinated with an elementary or secondary school within the community
  - Helps foster civic responsibility
  - Is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students; and
  - Provides structured time for the students to reflect on the service experience.

# Focus of the FY 2010 Learn and Serve America Grants

- Economically Disadvantaged Students
- Student Leadership
- Job-Shadowing
- Environmental Focus
- Truant Students and Potential Dropouts

# Who is eligible for the FY 2010 LSA Planning Grants

- Local Education Agencies that have not received a previous award under the LSA program
- Local Education Agencies are defined as:
  - Public School Districts, Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Service Centers, special education cooperatives, regional career and technical education programs, charter schools, public university lab schools approved by the ISBE.

# Who is eligible for the FY 2010 LSA Planning Grants

- Qualified private nonprofit or public organizations and other educational agencies or private, for profit businesses should be included in the planning team. These entities should meet the following criteria:
  - Have demonstrated expertise in the provision of services to meet educational, public safety, human, or environmental needs;
  - Have been in existence for at least one year; and
  - Will make their organizations available for the participation of students in service in the broader community

# Who is eligible for the Implementation, Operation or Expansion LSA Grants

- Partnerships of one or more
  - Public School Districts, Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Service Centers, special education cooperatives, regional career and technical education programs, charter schools, public university lab schools approved by the ISBE; and

# Eligible Implementation, expansion, or operation applicants (cont)

- Qualified private nonprofit or public organizations and other educational agencies or private, for profit businesses that:
  - Have demonstrated expertise in the provision of services to meet educational, public safety, human, or environmental needs;
  - Have been in existence for at least one year; and
  - Will make their organizations available for the participation of students in service in the broader community

# Eligible Implementation, expansion, or operation applicants (cont)

- A local partnership also may include a private for-profit business or private elementary or secondary school.

# Who may serve as the LSA Grant's fiscal agent?

- The local education agency must serve as the fiscal agent.

# May we participate in more than one proposal?

- No, eligible applicants may only participate in one LSA proposal.

**Our LEA has received an LSA in the past. May we apply this year?**

- Yes, the LEA may apply, but it needs to provide justification as to why it should be provided with another three years of funding within the proposal.

# Are any priority considerations given to applicants?

- Yes. 10 priority consideration points will be given to applicants proposing to serve a substantial number of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches under the federal meals program.

# Are there any additional deciding factors for proposals?

- If there is not enough funding for approvable proposals and there are a number of proposals that are substantially similar the following deciding factors will be used:
  - A focus on environmental projects, or
  - Local board of education adoption of a resolution endorsing service-learning as an approved instructional strategy was included with the proposal.

# What are the amount of the grant awards available?

- It is anticipated that approximately \$522,000 will be available for all LSA grants
- Planning grants will range from \$3,000 to \$5,000 each.
- Implementation, expansion, and operation grants are expected to be \$10,000; however, the final grant award will be dependent upon the proposed activities and other special circumstances defined within the proposal.

# Is a Letter of Intent required

- No, no letters of intent are required for this grant.

# What are the time frames of the grant?

- The grant period will begin no sooner than November 15, 2009 and will extend from the execution date of the grant until August 30, 2010.
- Funding for two additional years is contingent upon receipt of sufficient funds from the Federal Corporation for National and Community Service and the grantee's satisfactory progress in the preceding grant period.

# Is there a bidder's conference?

- The online bidder's conference will be held on October 19, 2009. Information for the conference will be housed here <http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/default.htm> after the conference has ended.
- Applicants should carefully review the bidder's conference before submitting a response to the RFP.
- Should the conditions of the RFP change, the State Board of Education will post the changes at <http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/default.htm>

# What are the program specifications for the RFP?

- Overall

- Applicants may request funds to Plan or to Implement, Operate, or Expand K-12 school-based service learning initiatives. Definitions for each of these proposals can be found on page 4 of the RFP.

# What are the program specifications for the RFP (cont)?

- Establish learning objectives for their service-learning projects that align with the Illinois Learning Standards. Programs may also address Illinois Career Development Competencies, Illinois Social/Emotional Learning Standards, individualized education programs, or individual optional education plans (see Attachment 3 in RFP);
- Include provisions for continuous program improvement in terms of the criteria established in the *Illinois Service-Learning Readiness Rubric* (see Appendix A in RFP);

# What are the program specifications for the RFP (cont)?

- Include budgetary provisions for staff and students to participate in ISBE-sponsored service-learning conferences and workshops, including the annual Illinois State-Wide Service-Learning Conference; and
- Agree to cooperate with ISBE in meeting its reporting responsibilities by participating in online surveys in spring and fall as well as any other reports or external evaluations that the federal government requires of the grant.

# What are the program specifications for the RFP (cont)?

## ■ Needs and Activities

- service-learning will be incorporated as an essential component in curriculum and instruction;
- service-learning will be aligned with Illinois Learning Standards or students' individualized education programs; service-learning will be provided for students, teachers and adult volunteers to collaborate in program planning, implementation and evaluation; and
- the impact of the service-learning project on student learning and community needs will be documented and measured.

## What are the program specifications for the RFP (cont)?

- Each applicant must address how it will promote service on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day (third Monday in January) as part of the “A Day On, Not a Day Off” celebration.
- Applicants are advised to review the toolkit and other resources available about the event at [www.mlkday.gov](http://www.mlkday.gov).

# What are the program specifications for the RFP (cont)?

## ■ Developing Participants

- Each applicant is required to describe the specific goals and activities of its initiative that are intended to foster civic mindedness and develop student leadership competencies, including the process for engaging broad-based student participation in the project's planning, implementation, operation and evaluation.
- The narrative must include plans for ensuring that students have opportunities to serve and learn in diverse student teams and diverse community settings.
- All services and programs provided under this grant must be made available to students (as well as their teachers, if appropriate) who attend private or home schools within the area served by the grantee (see RFP Attachment 7).

# What are the program specifications for the RFP (cont)?

- Organizational Capacity
  - The proposal should also describe the plan for coordinating the activities of all the teachers, students and community representatives involved in project planning and implementation, the steps that will be taken to prepare them to assume their roles, and any previous accomplishments of the organization in developing service-learning or school-community partnerships.

# What are the program specifications for the RFP (cont)?

## ■ Evaluation

- The data collected and the methods used should allow the grantee to assess the effectiveness of the program's management, the quality of services provided, and the satisfaction of both the participants in and recipients of the service.
- The grantee may conduct this evaluation itself or arrange for an independent evaluator to complete the work.
- More information about evaluation can be found on page 7 of the RFP.

# Statewide Evaluation

- Each grantee will be expected to participate in the statewide evaluation, as directed by the State Board of Education or an independent evaluator hired by the agency.
- The evaluation will be based upon five evaluation questions found on page 8 of the RFP.

# Is there is sustainability requirement to the grant?

- Yes. Applicants are required to include plans to sustain an increasing share of the costs beyond the third year of their grant from local resources or alternative sources of external support within their proposal.

# Is there a matching component to the grant?

- Yes. All applicants must provide a local match of at least \$1.20 for every \$1.00 of the grant award.
- The local share may be a payment in cash or in-kind, including facilities, equipment, or services.

# Are there limitations on the use of grant funds?

- Yes. Grant funds are limited to the following:
  - development and conduct of teacher and student training in service-learning;
  - development, implementation, and integration of service-learning with Illinois teaching and learning standards;
  - formation of broad-based, school-community partnerships to develop diverse school-based service-learning initiatives;
  - supervision of student service providers by qualified individuals (e.g., certified teachers and teacher aides) while these students are engaged in service-learning activities;

# Are there limitations on the use of grant funds? (cont)

- costs of hiring substitute teachers to replace regular teachers involved in the service-learning project;
- consultant services, not to exceed \$300 per day, inclusive of indirect expenses, travel, supplies, etc.;
- in-state travel; or
- reimbursement for student service provider travel, food, and other reasonable out-of-pocket expenses directly related to participation in the project.

# Are there limitations on the use of grant funds? (cont)

- LSA funding may NOT be used for the following:
  - the purchase of equipment (nonexpendable property having a useful life of more than two years) exceeding \$500 in total costs for all components;
  - stipends, allowances, or other forms of financial support to students;

# Are there limitations on the use of grant funds? (cont)

- LSA funding may **NOT** be used for the following:
  - supplanting local public funds that had been used to support initiatives or projects of the type eligible to receive funding under this program;
  - duplicating services that are already available in the locality of the project or duplicating activities that are substantially equivalent to activities provided by a local government agency in the locality in which the project will be implemented;
  - administrative costs; or
  - indirect costs recovery.

# Is there a format the proposal should follow?

- Yes. The instructions for submission assembly is found on pages 9 – 10 of the RFP.
- Proposals that do **NOT** follow the format will **NOT** be reviewed.
- Incomplete proposals will **NOT** be reviewed.

# Completing the Cover Page (Attachment 1)

- Choose the appropriate check box for the proposal submitted (either a planning application or an implementation application)
- Only the LEA (defined on page 1 of the RFP) serving as the fiscal agent is listed
- Complete the applicant information section. The Program Contact should NOT be the same as the Superintendent Contact – this is the person that can answer questions about the proposal.

# Completing the Cover Page (Attachment 1)

- Complete the amount requested for Year One Only (see pages 2 & 8 for amounts)
- Check the amount of years this project will need grant funding
- If a school district is applying, unless otherwise on file with ISBE, the superintendent is the authorized official when signing ALL forms.

# Partnership Member Information (Attachment 1A)

- All Implementation grants ARE partnership grants. Planning grants should consider including partners when writing.
- The fiscal agent information will go in the first section – partners in remaining sections (we do know those sections are labeled as Fiscal agent).
- If more than one page is needed, on page two and beyond, the first section may be used for partner information.

# Participant Demographics (Attachment 2)

- This is the proposal abstract – NOT the proposal narrative.
- Fill in the requested information.
- Totals should reflect all participants listed in Attachment 1A and Attachment 7.

# Proposal Narrative (RFP)

- Requirements and instructions are found on pages 10 – 13 of the RFP
- 7 page limit to the narrative section
- Proposal activities should align to the standards referenced in Attachment 3
- Pages 5-8 of the RFP and the applicable scoring rubric (Appendix B or C) should be used when writing the narrative.
- Information that should only be listed by specific applicants is bolded.

# Local Match Budget Breakdown (Attachment 4)

- Provide an itemized description of the expenditures that will make up the district's match.
- Function and Object Numbers can be found at [http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/fiscal\\_procedure\\_handbk.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/fiscal_procedure_handbk.pdf)
- Local Match total must equal \$1.20 for every \$1 requested.

# Budget Information (Attachment 5)

- Amounts listed in cells need to match Budget Summary Breakdown Totals
- Initial Budget should be checked
- Fiscal Agent's Region, County, District, Type Code needs to be completed (RCDT lookup is found at <http://www.isbe.net/sis/html/rcdts.html>)
- The signature line is for the LEA superintendent or ISBE noted Authorized Official

# Budget Summary Breakdown Information (Attachment 6)

- Information listed in the Budget Summary Breakdown (Attachment 6) should be as complete as possible.
- Supplies such as flash drives and printer ink can stay together in a line listed as supplies then note in parenthesis what is being purchased, such as:
  - 2210/400 – Purchase of supplies and materials for professional development (pens, CDs, paper)

# Budget Information – Teacher Stipends (Attachment 6)

- Teacher stipend description should include the event, then list the number of teachers receiving the stipend, the contracted hourly rate for stipends, and the amount of time (hours, days, etc.)
- Substitutes hired for teachers attending professional development should be listed in 2210/100.

# Budget Information – Teacher Stipend Benefits (Attachment 6)

- This is a federal grant. You will be required to pay the Federal TRS rate as part of benefit costs. TRS information is found at <http://trs.illinois.gov/subsections/employers/employerservices.htm#rates>
- If the district is picking up the any or all portions of benefits – it should be noted in the budget summary breakdown.
- Descriptions should be written
  - 2210/200 Benefits for stipend (\$\_\_\_ x \_\_\_%) – first blank is stipend amount, second blank is benefit percentage.

# Nonpublic School Verification Form (Attachment 7)

- If a nonpublic school is located in the geographical area of the school and has the same grade level of the school, they should be invited to participate in the grant
- If a nonpublic isn't in the area, this should be noted at the top of Attachment 7 and signed by the superintendent. The attachment needs to be returned as part of the proposal.

# Certification and Assurances (Attachments 8 – 10)

- Each entity participating in the grant needs to complete the attachments and submit as part of the proposal application
- Attachment 8 – District Name is written on the top line. Superintendent signature is on the second line.

# Certification and Assurances (Attachments 8 – 10)

## ■ Attachment 9

- Page 1 - District's Name is written on top line. Applicant information under #1 – LEAs are government entities. The RCDT code should be written under the check boxes.
- Page 6 – District's Name is written on top line. Official signature is on the second line.

# Certification and Assurances (Attachments 8 – 10)

## ■ Attachment 10

- Organization Name is name of LEA
- Learn and Serve America Grant should be listed for the PR/Award Number
- The name and title of the superintendent/authorized official is printed on the Name and Title line

# Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

- Total possible points for either a Planning or Implementation grant are 110 and are divided as follows:
- up to 60 points for the program design (25 points for needs and activities, 20 points for strengthening communities and 15 points for developing participants)
- up to 25 points for organizational capacity,
- up to 15 points for budget/cost effectiveness, and
- up to 10 points for priority considerations.

# When is the proposal due?

- 4 PM on November 6, 2009
- Facsimile copies and electronic submissions will **NOT** be accepted.
- Late proposals will **NOT** be reviewed.
- Incomplete proposals will **NOT** be reviewed.

# Where should the proposal be mailed to?

- Curriculum and Instruction Division  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 N First Street (C-215)  
Springfield IL, 62777-0001

# Hand delivered proposals must be taken to one of the following:

- Springfield Office  
Information Center  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
100 N First St
- Chicago Office  
Reception Area  
Suite 14-300  
100 W Randolph St

Proposals delivered to any location other than ISBE will **NOT** be reviewed.

# Contacts for additional RFP help

- Jamey Baiter  
Illinois State Board of Education  
[jbaiter@isbe.net](mailto:jbaiter@isbe.net)  
217-557-7323
- Mike Mangan  
Illinois Resource Center  
[mmangan@cntrmail.org](mailto:mmangan@cntrmail.org)  
(224)366-8534

