



Illinois State Board of Education

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James T. Meeks
Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

February 22, 2017

TO: Eligible Applicants

FROM: Tony Smith, Ph.D. 
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: **NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO) / REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP):**
Fiscal Year 2018 E-rate State Matching Grant Program

CSFA Number: 586-00-1527

CSFA Title: District Broadband Expansion

General Information

Eligible Applicants: Public School Districts

NOTE: The State of Illinois Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) requires applicants to complete pre-award requirements before being awarded an FY 2018 grant. This includes completion of the Grantee Registration, Grantee Pre-qualification and Fiscal and Administrative Risk Assessment (the Internal Controls Questionnaire) available at the Illinois GATA Web Portal at <http://www.illinois.gov/sites/GATA/Grantee/Pages/default.aspx> and completion of a Programmatic Risk Assessment through the ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) system. This state matching grant program is subject to appropriations for this purpose. Grant applications must be submitted by the application deadline indicated in this NOFO/RFP.

Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM). Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal or State awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR § 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal or awarding agency under 2 CFR § 25.110(d)) is required to:

- (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application. If you are not registered in SAM, this link provides a connection for SAM registration: <https://www.sam.gov/portal/SAM/#1>
- (ii) Provide a valid DUNS number in its application <http://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html>; and
- (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal, Federal pass-through or State award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal or State awarding agency. ISBE may not consider an application for a Federal pass-through or State award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements.

Code of Federal Regulations / Title 2 - Grants and Agreements / Vol. 1 / 2014-01-01192 Guidance is found at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2013-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2013-title2-vol1.pdf>

This grant is subject to the provisions of:

- Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA), 30 ILCS 708/1 et seq. <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=3559&ChapterID=7>
- Administrative Rules for GATA, 44 Ill. Admin. Code Part 7000 <ftp://www.ilga.gov/JCAR/AdminCode/044/04407000sections.html>

Grant Award/Cost Sharing or Matching: Contingent upon state appropriation, the E-rate State Matching Grant Fund may have up to a total appropriation of \$5 million in FY 2018 to help districts cover the non-discount project costs for E-rate special construction projects. As part of the state match, awardees can request a percentage of their non-discounted E-rate Category 1 (C1) special construction project costs (specifics on percentage breakdown is found under Fiscal Information). If funding is appropriated for this purpose, the state will issue grants until the funds are expended.

Grant Period: The initial project period will begin no earlier than July 1, 2017, and will extend from the execution date of the grant until June 30, 2018. There will be no extensions or renewals of this grant.

Submission Dates and Times/Other Submission Requirements:: An original application and an electronic copy of the proposal on a USB flash drive must be received no later than 3 p.m. on March 31, 2017. Mail the material to Illinois State Board of Education, Attn: Jamey Baiter, Principal Consultant, 100 North First Street (C-215), Springfield, IL 62777-0001.

Proposals also may be hand-delivered to the following locations:

<u>Springfield Office</u>	<u>Chicago Office</u>
Guard Station	Reception Area
1st Floor	Suite 14-300
100 North First Street	100 West Randolph Street

No late proposals, facsimile proposals, or electronic submissions will be accepted. Incomplete proposals will not be considered for funding.

Grant Award Notice: It is anticipated that successful applicants will receive a Notice of State Award (NOSA) from the state superintendent via US Postal Service approximately 90 days after the application deadline. The NOSA is NOT an authorization to begin performance or expenditures. Applicants must sign and return a copy of the NOSA to confirm acceptance of the terms of the award. Once the signed NOSA is received by ISBE, a Uniform Grant Agreement (UGA) will be prepared and sent to the applicant. Awardees will receive additional information from the programmatic contact approximately one week later via US Postal Service or email. This information will include important programmatic dates. Monies spent prior to programmatic approval are done so at the applicants own risk.

Technical Assistance Session: A technical assistance webinar will be held at 10 a.m. on March 8, 2017. Attendance is not required. Registration information is found at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Broadband-Information.aspx>.

Changes to NOFO/RFP: ISBE will post any changes made to the RFP prior to March 24, 2017 at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Broadband-Information.aspx>. Applicants are advised to check the site before submitting a proposal.

Agency Contact/Contact to Request Application Package: For more information on this RFP, contact broadband@isbe.net. All questions asked concerning this RFP will be responded to in a Frequently Asked Questions document found at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Broadband-Information.aspx> so all respondents can see all questions and the responses to the questions. Changes to the FAQ will not be made after March 24, 2017. Applicants are advised to check the site before submitting a proposal.

Program Description

Program Background/History:

In the December 2014 Second Report and Order on Reconsideration, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted rules for E-rate C1 special construction charges. The rules allow the FCC to match state funding (up to 10 percent) for special construction charges to connect schools and libraries to high-speed broadband services that meet the FCC's long-term capacity broadband goals.

The order indicated that the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) adopted the State Education Technology Directors Association's (SETDA) goal of at least 1 Gbps per 1,000 students/staff for internet access. When making decisions about fiber purchases, districts should note that in September 2016 SETDA updated its internet recommendations to the following:

- Recommendations for the 2017-18 school year until 2019-21
 - School districts (1,000 or fewer students) at least 1.5 Mbps per user
 - Medium districts (3,000 students) at least 1 Gbps per 1,000 users
 - Large districts (10,000 or more students) at least 0.7 Gbps per 1,000 users
- Recommendations for the 2020-21 school year and beyond.
 - School districts (1,000 or fewer students) at least 4.3 Mbps per user
 - Medium districts (3,000 students) at least 3 Gbps per 1,000 users
 - Large districts (10,000 or more students) at least 2 Gbps per 1,000 users

This request will use the following terminology: educational technology, lit fiber, dark fiber, self-provisioned fiber, special construction. Definitions for each are found below.

The Association for Educational Communications and Technology's 2008 definition will be used to define educational technology.

- Educational Technology - The study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources.

The definitions for fiber and special construction were taken from the USAC website, the FCC Second Report and Order on Reconsideration (released December 19, 2014), and the FCC Sixth Report and Order (released September 28, 2010).

- Leased Lit Fiber - A fiber-based broadband service where the service provider owns and manages the network, and the E-rate applicant pays a recurring fee to have data transported over the network.
- Dark Fiber - Dark fiber leases and other dark fiber service agreements (e.g., indefeasible rights of use (IRU)) are commercial arrangements in which a customer purchases use of a portion of a provider-owned and maintained fiber network separately from the service of lighting (i.e., transmitting information over) that fiber.
- Self-Provisioned - Self-provisioning is complete applicant ownership of a high-speed broadband network. An applicant that self-provisions will construct, own, operate, and maintain the network or a portion of the network.
- Special Construction - Special construction projects deploy new fiber or upgraded facilities to E-rate Program eligible locations. Special construction charges are the upfront, non-recurring costs of such installations or upgrades. Special construction consists of three components: (1) construction of network facilities; (2) design and engineering; and (3) project management. More information on special construction can be found in the FCC Second Report and Order on Reconsideration https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-14-189A1.pdf and the FCC Sixth Report and Order https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-10-175A1.pdf.

Program Description:

On May 20, 2015, the FCC hosted the Workshop on E-Rate Funded Fiber Build Projects. The workshop provided E-rate applicants, providers, and state and local policymakers with information and tools for planning fiber build projects under the new E-rate rules, with a focus on issues applicants need to consider in order to choose the most cost-effective option for deploying fiber. The workshop was recorded and can be viewed at <https://www.fcc.gov/news-events/events/2015/05/erate-fiber-build-workshop>.

Acting Director Jon Wilkens and FCC Consultant Joe Freddoso emphasized during the Workshop on E-rate Funded Fiber Build Projects that districts need to show that their fiber build project has gone through substantial

planning. They stated that districts must include current bandwidth available to the district, the amount of the current bandwidth used within the current curriculum, the plans the district has for future technology curriculum, and the bandwidth that will be needed to meet those needs when planning.

Program Objectives:

This RFP will pertain to the overall planning that went into the determinations made with the FCC Form 470. The Form 470, along with additional components discussed further in this section, will be considered the project portion of your proposal and will need to be submitted and judged as part of the overall proposal. The Form 470 will NOT need to be rewritten into this proposal unless your form is missing portions requested on page 6, Section B (Attachment 4), part viii.

Proposals for special construction for lit fiber should include a copy of the district's FCC Form 470 and the rubric that was used to make determinations. District proposals requesting special construction for either a dark fiber or a self-provisioned project should include both the FCC Form 470 and the separate RFP for the services requested (dark fiber, self-provisioned fiber, or both) as well as the rubric used to make determinations. All proposals should include a synopsis of each proposal received for the project and an explanation as to why the vendor(s) were chosen. The Form 470, additional RFPs, the proposal responses, and scoring rubrics are considered part of the district's overall plan and will be reviewed as part of this proposal response in the areas of capacity and cost effectiveness in the scoring rubric.

As part of the application response, districts must provide a description of need for the project in the targeted schools:

- Current district and school bandwidth (Attachment 2);
- Devices that currently access that bandwidth available to students and staff within the district (Attachment 2);
- Current educational technology program, including but not limited to, staffing, professional development, and students' ability to use technology in current program (Attachment 3);
- Planning used to determine the need for the project and the project design (Attachment 3);
- Identification of stakeholders and communication with them during the planning of the project (Attachment 3);
- Funding limitations that the district is currently facing (Attachment 3);
- The need for the proposed special construction project in order to meet the district's future plan (Attachment 3); and
- The schools chosen to participate in the project and indicate their need (Attachment 3).

Deliverables and Milestones:

Districts will use Attachment 4 to describe the proposed project/program. The description should include the following:

- The future plans for the educational technology program (provide minimum of five years into the future) for schools targeted in the project, including but not limited to, curriculum, professional development, as well as the bandwidth and devices that will be needed to meet those needs.
- Project goals and how they will advance the technology program.
- A description of student learning using innovative practices based upon research or previously collected data, best practices, and/or additional information.
- An estimate of technology refreshes that will be needed over the life of the plan.
- Provide the steps for project completion, including a list of activities and internal resources (both human and fiscal), that will be used to meet the activities. Applicants will need to clearly express the relationship between the proposed project, activity, and/or resources and the district's educational goals, learning approaches, and/or school improvement plans.
- A description of the well-developed strategies for drawing upon community resources to improve student learning. Provide a description of the district's prior stakeholder engagement efforts to support successful development of application and implementation of the educational plan. A description of how the school district will use technology effectively to promote community involvement and increase communication with resources within the community as the plan progresses.
- If not already listed within the Form 470 documentation, provide details of the special construction project, including a listing of activities that are a part of the project and the resources (include staff or contractors

that will be needed). The proposal must show how outside contractors chosen to work with this project were chosen in a manner congruent with the district's educational goals and school improvement goals.

- A description of previous projects or programs similar in nature to the current project should be provided as well as a description of the project's outcome, including descriptions of any problems encountered during the life of the project and their resolutions. Detail the district and/or school resources, both human and fiscal, that will be available to support implementation of the project. Staff and outside contractors who will implement the project should be listed as well as the role they will fill and the responsibility of that role, their qualifications and experience, and the funding source for the position (grant or internal resources).
- Indicate the expected program outcomes for the life of the project. The timeline should go beyond the funding for the matching grant and show project sustainability. Include information regarding dissemination, management, and anticipated project expansion.

Complete a timeline in Attachment 5 of the activities to meet each of the goals indicated in Attachment 4 in a time-specific format with start and completion dates and person or persons responsible. If the timeline of activities for the special construction project are not listed in the Form 470 documentation, include them in the attachment.

Provide a description in Attachment 6 of how the plan will be monitored and evaluated as well as how results will be reported. Indicate how the impact on increasing student success and/or other stated goals and objectives will be shared within your district and beyond (parents, community, etc.).

Goals and Measurements:

It is expected that awardees will complete the whole of the special construction project within the timelines put forth by the E-rate program. Awardees will be expected to complete quarterly financial reports via IWAS and a final program report detailing all steps of the program and completion information via a Word document submitted to broadband@isbe.net within 30 days of the completion of the program.

Performance Standards:

It is expected that awardees will complete the whole of the special construction project within the timelines put for the by the E-rate program.

Funding Information

Introduction:

The E-rate State Matching Grant Fund may have up to a total appropriation of \$5 million in FY 2018 to help districts cover the non-discount project costs for E-rate special construction projects, subject to state appropriation for this purpose.

Cost Sharing or Matching:

As part of the state match, awardees can request a percentage of their non-discounted E-rate C1 special construction project costs. The amount a district can request depends upon their E-rate C1 discount.

- Those with a 90 percent Discount Rate can request up to 5 percent of the costs for their non-discounted charges.
- Those with an 80 percent Discount Rate can request up to 10 percent of the costs for their non-discounted charges.
- Those with a 70 percent Discount Rate can request up to 20 percent of the costs for their non-discounted charges.
- Those with a 60 percent Discount Rate can request up to 30 percent of the costs for their non-discounted charges.
- Those with a 50 percent or below Discount Rate can request up to 40 percent of the costs for their non-discounted charges.

ISBE will use the district's National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Discount found on the ISBE website at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Seamless-Summer-Option-Meal-Eligibility.aspx> to determine a district's discount. If the district doesn't participate in the NSLP/CEP program, ISBE will use the FY 2017 Fall Housing information found at <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Fall-Enrollment-Counts.aspx>.

If a district uses a date later in the year to determine its C1 discount, it must provide a report from the ISBE Student Information System (SIS) for the date chosen that shows both student enrollment and free/reduced-price student eligibility. (NO student names or IDs should be included.) ISBE will NOT validate a discount beyond the methods listed above.

Successful districts will receive an award letter from ISBE stating they have been selected for the matching grant, subject to appropriation. The award letter should be submitted along with the district's FCC Form 471. The district will need to submit a copy of its funding notice to ISBE after USAC has approved the district for funding. ISBE will work with the selected districts to finalize the grant funding process, subject to appropriation.

Indirect Cost Rate:

In accordance with a Delegation Agreement between the United States Department of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and pursuant to its authority under the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) and administrative rules, the Governor's Office of Management and Budget has granted ISBE an exception to the federal Uniform Guidance and GATA regarding the determination of indirect cost rates which may be utilized by all grantees that receive a state award or federal pass-through award for grant programs administered by ISBE.

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) may utilize either the indirect cost rate the LEA negotiates annually with ISBE (school districts) or the state-wide average indirect cost rate calculated by ISBE (Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Service Centers, special education cooperatives, area vocational centers, charter schools, and university laboratory schools approved by ISBE). These LEAs will also utilize the ISBE-established indirect cost rates for state and federally funded grant programs administered by other state agencies.

Not-for-profit agencies, community/faith-based organizations, and for-profit entities may utilize the state-wide average indirect cost rate calculated by ISBE for all state and federal grant programs administered by ISBE. Colleges and Universities will be restricted to a maximum indirect cost rate of 8% or other indirect cost rate calculated by their cognizant federal agency, whichever is less, for state and federal grants administered by ISBE. These non-LEA entities may choose to negotiate a separate indirect cost rate to utilize for state and federally funded grant programs administered by other state agencies.

Content and Form of Application Submission

Proposal Specifications: Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please use the following as a checklist in assembling your completed proposal.

- ___ **1. Uniform Application for State Grant (Attachment 1):** Include the entity name, address, telephone and fax number, email, name, and telephone number of the contact person; Federal Employer Identification number; DUNS number; SAM CAGE Code; and all other listed information. The Application page must be signed by the official authorized to submit proposals.

- ___ **2. Current Technology Status (Attachment 2):** Complete the requested information. Use a separate sheet for each school participating in the project.

- ___ **3. Proposal Narrative (Attachments 3 and 4):** Use the attached form to respond to each of the following in the order in which they are presented below.
 - A. Determining Need (Attachment 3) – maximum 5 pages:**
 - i. Provide a description of the district's current educational technology program, including but not limited to, staffing, professional development, and students' ability to use technology in current program;
 - ii. Provide a description of planning used to determine the need for the project and the project design;
 - iii. Identify stakeholders and how you will communicate with them and community resources while planning the project;
 - iv. Describe the funding limitations that the district is currently facing;
 - i. Describe why the proposed special construction project is needed in order to meet the district's future plans; and
 - ii. Identify the school(s) chosen to participate and a description of their need.

 - B. Proposed Project/Program (Attachment 4) – maximum 5 pages:**
 - i. Provide a description of the future plans for the educational technology program (provide minimum of five years into the future) for school(s) targeted in the project, including but not limited to, curriculum and professional development, as well as the bandwidth and devices that will be needed to meet the needs of all staff and students within the school(s);
 - ii. Describe the project goals and how they will advance the technology program.
 - iii. Indicate the expected program outcomes for the life of the project. The timeline should go beyond the funding for the matching grant.
 - iv. Provide a description of student learning using innovative practices based upon research, previously collected district data, best practices, and/or additional information.
 - v. Provide an estimate of technology refreshes that will be needed over the life of the plan.
 - vi. Provide a description of a previous project or program similar in nature that the district has undertaken and discuss its outcome. Give a brief description of any problems encountered during the project and the successful and creative resources used to reach a solution;
 - vii. List the district and/or school resources, both human and fiscal, that will be available to support implementation of the project. Provide the qualifications of each person and/or vendor listed, including descriptions of projects similar in nature on which they worked and the outcome of the project;
 - viii. If not already listed within the Form 470 documentation, provide details of the special construction project, including a listing of activities that are a part of the project and the resources (include staff or contractors that will be needed). The proposal must show how outside contractors chosen to work with this project were chosen in a manner congruent with the district's educational goals and school improvement goals.
 - ix. Provide a description of the well-developed strategies for drawing upon community resources to improve student learning. A description of the district's prior stakeholder engagement efforts to support successful development of application and implementation of the educational plan should be included. Also describe how the school district will use technology effectively to promote community involvement and increase communication with resources within the community as the plan progresses.

- x. Indicate how the overall project will continue after the end of the matching grant period. Describe how other district and/or school technology-related projects can be used to support and sustain the project. Include information regarding dissemination, management, and anticipated project expansion.

- ___ 4. **FCC Form 470:** Follow the instructions below for appropriate FCC 470 documentation to submit:
 - A. Lit Fiber** - Include a copy of the district's FCC Form 470 and the rubric that was used to make scoring determinations.
 - B. Dark fiber** - Include both the FCC Form 470 and the separate RFP for the services requested (dark fiber, self-provisioned fiber, or both) as well as the rubric used to make scoring determinations.
 - C. Self-provisioned fiber** - Include both the FCC Form 470 and the separate RFP for the services requested (dark fiber, self-provisioned fiber, or both) as well as the rubric used to make scoring determinations.
 - D. All proposals** should include a synopsis of each response your Form 470 and/or RFP received that includes the vendor name, services that will be rendered, cost, personnel included in the project along with their expertise and their prior experience with projects of this nature and their success rates for projects of this nature, subcontractors that the vendor would use along with their success rate and prior experience in projects of this nature, and an explanation as to which vendor was chosen and why.

- ___ 5. **Proposed Project Timeline (Attachment 5)** – maximum 5 pages: Using the provided form, provide a timeline of the activities to meet each of the goals indicated in Attachment 4 in a time-specific format with start and completion dates and person or persons responsible. If not listed in the Form 470 documentation, include the timeline of activities for the special construction project.

- ___ 6. **Evaluation Design (Attachment 6)** – maximum 5 pages: Using the provided form, describe the overall evaluation plan, including the data that will be collected; how the data will be monitored and evaluated; and how the plan will be adjusted as needed to ensure successful completion of the overall plan. Describe how results will be reported. Indicate how the impact on increasing student success and/or other stated goals and objectives will be shared within your district and beyond (parents, community, etc.).

- ___ 7. **Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 7):** Must be submitted on the form provided and signed by the district superintendent. The Payment Schedule must be based on the projected date of expenditures and be in accordance with ISBE's *State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures* handbook found at https://www.isbe.net/Documents/fiscal_procedure_handbk.pdf.

- ___ 8. **Budget Breakdown (Attachment 7A)** – maximum 4 pages: Must include detailed descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Budget Summary. Expected expenditures made to vendors should include the vendor name based upon the selection during the Form 470 process.

Attachment 7B, the Budget Amendment Form, should NOT be included in the application. It should be kept at the district and will only be used after the final awards are determined during budget negotiations.

- ___ 9. **Certifications and Assurances (Attachments 8 and 9):** Each applicant is required to submit the certification forms attached. These must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its contents.
 - A. Program Specific Terms of the Grant (Attachment 8)**
 - B. Grant Application Certifications and Assurances (Attachment 9)**

Application Review

Review and Selection Process:

The selection of the districts will be based upon the overall quality of the application. The scoring is based upon the following criteria:

- Need is defined as the identification of stakeholders, facts, and evidence that demonstrate the proposal supports the grant program purpose;
- Capacity is defined as the ability of an entity to execute the grant project according to the project requirements;
- Quality is defined as the totality of features and characteristics of a service, project, or product that indicate its ability to satisfy the requirements of the grant program;
- Cost effectiveness is defined in the terms of tangible benefits produced by the monies spent; and
- Sustainability, which is defined as the ability to ensure that the project will continue on without further state monies.

Criteria:

These overall criteria are built into the criteria below. The attachment number in the parenthesis following the criteria lists the portion of the proposal that will be used to determine if the criteria has been met. The points for each criterion section as well as the individual criteria will also be included in parenthesis.

Following the notification of grant awards, an applicant may request copies of reviewer comments by contacting broadband@isbe.net.

Selection criteria and point values are as follows:

1. The school district has demonstrated a need for the proposed project, activity, and/or resources. (30 points)
 - a. The proposal describes the status of the applicant's educational technology programs and demonstrates that students' access to educational opportunities in this curricular area is limited to an undesirable degree. (Attachment 3 - 5 points)
 - b. The proposal provides a clear description of the needs found between the anticipated technology required within the district for at least the next five years and the current technology status and shows how this project will address that need. (Attachment 3 - 5 points)
 - c. The proposal describes how the unique strengths and resources of the district will contribute to the development of new learning approaches and strategies. (Attachment 4 - 5 points)
 - d. The proposal includes past and/or current examples of successful and creative uses of resources for educational purposes. (Attachment 4 - 5 points)
 - e. The proposal demonstrates that other sources of funding are limited to such an extent that the applicant is unable to conduct or expand the educational technology program as proposed without funding from this grant. (Attachment 3 - 5 points)
 - f. The proposal demonstrates that the district has previous experience with successful implementation of similar deployments and/or steps are in place to ensure success. (Attachment 4 - 5 points)
2. There is a clearly expressed relationship between the proposed project, activity, and/or resources and the district's educational goals, school improvement plan, or local school board's approved technology plans. (30 points)
 - a. The proposal states time-specific objectives and activities for each goal that are realistic and include all major activities needed to implement the project. (Attachments 4 & 5 - 5 points)
 - b. The proposal description includes a design for overall evaluations that will allow the project to develop successfully. (Attachment 6 - 5 points)
 - c. The proposal presents evidence that the project will enhance the district's plan for the use of technology and its integration into curriculum. (Attachment 4 - 5 points)
 - d. The proposal includes a description of student learning using innovative practices based upon research, previously collected district data, best practices, and/or additional information. (Attachment 4 - 5 points)
 - e. The plan describes the steps the school district will take to ensure that all students AND teachers have increased access to technology. (Attachment 4 - 5 points)
 - f. The proposal describes an evaluation design using data to further refine and improve the overall project. (Attachment 6 - 5 points)

3. Receipt of funding under this program will contribute to the accomplishment of the district's long-term plans for the use of technology. (20 points)
 - a. Budget allocations indicate a cost-effective use of funds related to and consistent with the overall goals, objectives, and activities of the proposed program. (Attachment 4, Form 470 documentation, Attachments 7A & 7B - 5 points)
 - b. The proposal describes strategies to train staff to effectively use advanced technologies to improve teaching and learning. (Attachment 4 - 5 points)
 - c. The plan fully describes how the school district will coordinate activities funded through the matching program with technology-related projects supported from other sources. (Attachment 4 - 5 points)
 - d. The proposal describes how the project will continue after the end of the grant period and includes information regarding dissemination, management, and anticipated project expansion. (Attachment 4 - 5 points)
4. Staff and/or outside entities chosen to be involved with the project were chosen in a manner congruent with the district's educational goals, school improvement plan, or local school board's approved technology plans. (10 points)
 - a. A description of all staff and outside contractors involved in the project was provided. (Attachment 4 & Form 470 documentation - 5 points)
 - b. Evidence of the staff and/or outside contractor's prior delivery of quality outcomes on similar projects or a detailed description of technical expertise that will lead to the successful outcomes of project was provided. (Attachment 4 & 470 documentation - 5 points)
5. The district has well-developed strategies for drawing upon community resources to improve student learning. (10 points)
 - a. The plan describes how the school district will use technology effectively to promote community involvement as well as increase communication with resources within the community. (Attachment 4 - 5 points)
 - b. Description of district's prior stakeholder engagement efforts to support successful development of application and implementation of the plan. (Attachments 3 & 4 - 5 points)

Merit-Based Review and Selection Process for Competitive Grants

The Illinois State Board of Education has designed and adopted a merit-based review and selection process for competitive grant applications. The merit-based review process is incorporated herein by reference. The full text of the ISBE merit-based review policy can be found at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/ISBE-merit-based-review.pdf>. Applicants are advised to refer to the policy document.

Merit-Based Evaluation Appeal Process

- 1) Competitive grant appeals are limited to the evaluation process. Evaluation scores themselves may not be protested. Only the evaluation process is subject to appeal.
- 2) Appeals Review Officer - The State Superintendent of Education or designee may appoint one or more Appeal Review Officers (ARO) to consider the grant-related appeals and make a recommendation to the State Superintendent of Education or designee for resolution.
- 3) Submission of Appeal –
 - a. An appeal must be submitted in writing and mailed as indicated below.
 - b. An appeal must be received within 14 calendar days after the date that the first grant award notice has been published on grants.Illinois.gov.
 - c. The written appeal shall include at a minimum the following:
 - i. The name and address of the appealing party
 - ii. Identification of the grant
 - iii. A statement of reasons for the appeal
- 4) Response to Appeal
 - a. ISBE must acknowledge receipt of an appeal within 14 calendar days from the date the appeal was received.

- b. ISBE must respond to the appeal within 60 calendar days or supply a written explanation to the appealing party as to why additional time is required.
- c. The appealing party must supply any additional information requested by ISBE within the time period set in the request.

5) Stay of Grant Agreement/Contract Execution

- a. When an appeal is received, the execution of the grant agreement/contract shall be stayed until the appeal is resolved, or
- b. The State Superintendent of Education or designee determines the needs of the state require moving forward with the grant execution.
- c. The state need determination and rationale shall be documented in writing as soon as practicable and within a maximum of 60 calendar days after receipt of the appeal.

6) Resolution

- a. The ARO shall make a recommendation to the State Superintendent of Education or designee as expeditiously as possible after receiving all relevant, requested information.
- b. In determining the appropriate recommendation, the ARO shall consider the integrity of the competitive grant process and the impact of the recommendation on ISBE.
- c. ISBE will resolve the appeal by means of written determination by the State Superintendent of Education or designee, and the written determination will be sent to the appealing party.
- d. The determination shall include, but not be limited to: i. Review of the appeal, ii. Appeal determination, iii. Rationale for the determination.

7) Effect of Judicial Proceedings

If an action concerning the appeal has commenced in a court or administrative body, the State Superintendent of Education or designee may defer resolution of the appeal pending the judicial or administrative determination.

Mail a hard copy of the appeal to:

Appeals Review Officer
c/o State Superintendent of Education
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street S-405
Springfield, IL 62777-0001