



COLLEGE & CAREER

AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Frequently Asked

Teacher Three Circle Grant Program

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1. Who is eligible to apply?

Illinois school districts and area career centers created pursuant to Section 10-22.31a of the School Code that employ full-time middle or secondary school teachers in a state-approvable agricultural education program as defined by Section 75.210 are eligible to apply. Approvable middle school programs also are eligible to apply. An approvable program at the middle school level includes at least one state-approved introductory agricultural education course with an appropriately licensed teacher in an agricultural education career pathway that connects to a secondary program. This introductory course shall include a career exploration component with Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE) as a part of instruction. A middle school program shall also connect either to a stand-alone middle school or a secondary student organization (FFA) chapter.

2. What are allowable expenditures for the Teacher Three Circle Grant Program?

Funds provided through the Teacher Three Circle Grant Program are allowed to be spent on only 4 items:

| Code | Description |
|----------|---|
| 1000-100 | AFNR teacher or proxy salary for FFA and SAE extended time |
| 1000-200 | AFNR teacher or proxy benefits for FFA and SAE extended time |
| 2210-100 | AFNR teacher or proxy salary for curricular and professional learning extended time |

Activities funded (teacher extended time) under this grant as personal services shall occur outside of the regularly scheduled teaching duties for the benefit of agricultural education.

3. **What is the local match requirement?**

The local match requirement is different for each entity based on the number of years the local AFNR program has been operating. AFNR programs in their first or second year of operation do not have a local matching requirement; 100% of the extended salary and benefits are provided by the grant allocation. AFNR programs in their third or fourth year of operation have a 20% local match requirement. This means that 20% of the extended salary and benefits are provided by the local district, community, etc., and the remaining 80% is provided by the grant allocation. AFNR programs not within their first four years of operation have a 50% match requirement, meaning that 50% of the total extended salary and benefits provided to the teacher are provided by the local district, community, etc. The remaining 50% is provided by the grant allocation from ISBE.

4. **How is the allocation determined?**

The total allocation is based on the calculated value of the expected personal service cost of the respective agricultural education teacher and the local matching requirement as described above. Personal service costs are based upon the following:

1. The reasonably expected personal services cost for a teacher based on the cost of each teacher's regularly scheduled teaching duties, including all costs paid by the district at the daily rate of each teacher; and
2. The daily rate of each teacher (base salary of each teacher in the current year divided by 180 days). This rate will be multiplied by 60 days of approved activities for each teacher in the school district.

An allocation worksheet has been developed and made available on the Agricultural Education Grants webpage to help school districts determine this amount and to validate/standardize the formula used for allocation determination. This worksheet is required as an upload on the ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) Budget Application. It is also required to be used when completing the Intent to Apply form each year.

5. **How do I enroll in this grant program?**

Reach out directly to ISBE at ag_ed@isbe.net or contact your district Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education program advisor to enroll. Districts will need to complete an Intent to Apply form before the start of the fiscal year; include all information necessary when completing the formula calculations for this grant.

This form shall include, at a minimum, the names of the teachers the school district will use the grant to pay, current year base salaries, how the extra hours are an extension of the teachers' regular duties, and the anticipated number of individuals impacted. School districts shall also indicate the initial prorated funding level at which the district would elect to opt out of the grant.

6. **How do I submit my IWAS Budget Application?**

To complete your initial IWAS Budget Application for Three Circles, follow the steps below.

1. Log in to IWAS portal.
2. Select the Agricultural Education — Three Circles (FFA and SAE).
3. Create a new project for the respective fiscal year.
4. Complete the Applicant Information. Click "Save Page."
 - a. Note that end date must be by June 30 on initial application.
5. On Amendments page, select "Original Application" and click "Save Page."
6. Complete the "Upload" page by completing and attaching the required Excel workbook.
 - a. Workbook available on [Agricultural Education Grants](#) page.

7. Complete Budget pages by inputting the required information on each:
 - a. Indirect Cost Calculation (Select “LEAs.” Click “Save Page.”)
 - b. Budget Detail (Ensure details match required upload. Click “Save Page.”)
 - c. Budget (Read and review for accuracy. Revise Budget Details, if needed.)
 - d. Payment Schedule (Input payments. Click “Calculate Total.” Click “Save Page.”)
8. Complete Programmatic Risk Assessment by selecting appropriate responses.
9. Complete Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) pages. Check verification box on each page and click “Save Page.”
10. Complete Assurances pages. Check verification box on each page and click “Save Page.”
11. On Submit page, click and run the “Consistency Check.” Make any identified corrections.
12. Lock Application and Submit to next level for approval.

7. How do I check the status of my IWAS Budget Application?

Log in to IWAS and open the specific application you are checking. Navigate to the “Application History” tab to view a timeline of action taken on your application. Note that your application **has not** been submitted to ISBE unless the application status says, “Submitted to ISBE” or “Final Approved”. If your application status is something else, such as “Submitted for Review” or “Submitted to RCDT” that means that your application has not yet been approved by your local District Administrator and forwarded on to ISBE for final review and approval.

8. How do I submit an amendment to my IWAS Budget Application?

To complete an amendment to your IWAS Budget Application for an Incentive Funding Grant, follow the steps below.

1. Log in to IWAS portal.
2. Select the Agricultural Education — Three Circle (FFA and SAE).
3. Select the radial button corresponding to the most recent application shown.
4. Select “Create Amendment.”
5. On Amendments page, select “Amended Application” and input the number of the amendment.
6. On Amendments page, complete the “Grant Changes” narrative.
7. In the narrative, include function object codes of specific changes to be implemented.
8. Navigate to Page Lock Control tab (second from left).
9. On Page Lock Control tab, ensure all pages needing to be changed are “OPEN.”
10. If not open, select radial button next to corresponding pages. Then click “Save.”
11. Make necessary changes on each page, as needed. Click “Save” after each page is changed.
12. Ensure any expenditure changes are also shown in Budget Details page.
13. Ensure GATA and Assurances pages are complete and saved.
14. On Submit page, click and run the “Consistency Check.” Make any identified corrections.
15. Lock Application and Submit to next level for approval.

9. What are the deliverables of this grant?

Each teacher identified in the Intent to Apply application must complete 400 hours of approved activity. No more than 400 hours will be paid, according to the parameters of the grant. Eight hours shall equal one day. Only hours when the teacher is representing the program/chapter or supervising students shall be counted and the hours must relate to agricultural education. No hours related to activities of a personal nature are permitted. The hours of activity must be in approved activities based on the agricultural education Three Circle Model and shall fall into one of the three following categories: work-based learning (SAE), FFA advisement, and curricular/intracurricular activities.

Teachers must document hours using a free service provided by ISBE available on [the Agricultural Experience Tracker](#). Teachers will generate journal reports on documented activities. These activities are required to be attached to your periodic reports in the [GATA portal](#). Two reports are due per normal grant cycle. A midyear report (through date of December 31) is due by January 31, and an end-of-year report (through date of June 30) is due by July 31.

Grantees will also submit periodic expenditure reports to Funding and Disbursements via the IWAS portal. IWAS expenditure reports provide up-to-date information on actual expenditures. Reports are due at least quarterly, with each respective report due no later than 20 days after the conclusion of the fiscal quarter (e.g., first quarter ends on September 30 and first quarter report is due by October 20). The second, third, and fourth quarter of the grant cycle end of December 31, March 31, and June 30, respectively. Expenditure reports are due 20 days after each respective quarter concludes. The chart below shows a summary of all reports that are required.

Figure 1. Three Circle Grant Required Reports

| Report | Through-Date | Due Date |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Expenditure Report for Q1 | September 30 | October 20 |
| Expenditure Report for Q2 | December 31 | January 20 |
| *GATA Report, Midyear | December 31 | January 31 |
| Expenditure Report for Q3 | March 31 | April 20 |
| Expenditure Report for Q4 | June 30 | July 20 |
| **GATA Report, End-of-Year | June 30 | July 31 |

*Requires documented Teacher Journal Hours from July 1 through December 31.

**Requires documented Teacher Journal Hours from January 1 through June 30.

If this grant is extended for some unforeseen reason, please note that there will be additional reporting requirements based on the length of the extension.

10. What do I do if my allocation in IWAS is less than I need?

Your allocation is based on the salary and benefits information provided on the Three Circle Intent Form prior to the creation of your IWAS Budget Application. If this information was estimated incorrectly at the time due to unfinished local negotiations or the teacher(s) was/were not yet hired, this could mean that your allocation will be less than your eventual need for the fiscal year. Unfortunately, we cannot increase an allocation once the funding level has been set for the year. This is due to the finite amount of funding available in the Agricultural Education line item. The proper course of action is to use the original salary information submitted on the Intent Form to complete your Budget Application.

11. What do I do if my allocation in IWAS is more than I need?

Your allocation is based on the salary and benefit information provided on the Three Circle Intent Form prior to the creation of your IWAS Budget Application. If this information was estimated incorrectly at the time due to unfinished local negotiations or the teacher(s) was/were not yet hired, this could mean that your allocation will be more than your eventual need for the fiscal year. Fortunately, those funds are able to be documented on an additional budget line as an “overage” and then removed later as an amendment. See Figure 2 below for an example of what your original IWAS Budget Application would look like in the case of an overage. The example below shows a district that overestimated the Three Circle need for its teacher, Jane Doe, by \$2,500.

Figure 2. Original Budget Details in the Event of an Overage

| Function | Object | Budget Description | Dollars |
|----------|--------|---|---------|
| 1000 | 100 | Jane Doe Agriculture Teacher Salary FFA & SAE | 8000 |
| 1000 | 200 | Jane Doe Agriculture Teacher Benefits FFA & SAE | 320 |
| 2120 | 100 | Jane Doe Agriculture Teacher Salary Curricular & PD | 2000 |
| 2120 | 200 | Jane Doe Agriculture Teacher Benefits Curricular & PD | 80 |
| 1000 | 100 | Overage to be Removed | 2500 |
| Total | | | 12900 |

After the original application is reviewed, it will be conditionally approved. This will require you to submit an amended Budget Application once the overage dollars have been removed from your allocation. These dollars will be reallocated to another Agricultural Education line item formula grant based on the needs of the state and in consultation with the Illinois Committee for Agricultural Education. Your amended Budget Application can be completed by following the steps in “[Question 8. How do I submit an amendment to my IWAS Budget Application?](#)” You will simply delete the overage line on your amendment and revise your payment schedule to match your updated allocation.

12. How do I complete a Periodic Report (also known as GATA Report) for this grant?

GATA Reports are required biannually. The first GATA Report is available to be completed starting on December 31 of the corresponding fiscal year and covers the reporting period of July 1 through December 31. This report is due on January 31, or 30 days after the end of the reporting period. The second report is available to be completed on June 30 and covers the reporting period of January 1 through June 30. This report is due on July 31, or 30 days after the end of the reporting period. To submit a GATA Report on each of these respective timelines, please follow the steps below.

1. Log in to the IWAS portal.
2. Select the “Grant Periodic Reporting System” from your system listing.
3. Use the dropdown menus to select the appropriate Fiscal Year and “Not Started.”
4. Select the report with the reporting dates you are attempting to complete.
5. Your District and Project should prepopulate at the top of the report. Verify they are correct.
6. Upload a PDF file documenting the Teacher Journal Hours in FFA, SAE, curricular, and professional learning experiences from the state date of the grant up until that point in the grant year. This file can be generated using the Agricultural Experience Tracker, a free online recording-keeping platform provided by ISBE through Agricultural Education line item funding.
7. Complete the “Deliverables” section by indicating that you have uploaded the Hours report. You should also indicate how much of the grant and local match requirement have been paid to the teacher at that point in the year. The end-of-year GATA Report should also include a document on school district letterhead that indicates the amount in full has been paid to the teacher. This document is signed by the teacher(s) and the district superintendent. For an example of what the “Deliverables” section would look like, see Figure 3 below. Note that the section in **yellow** is an example of what you would type into the report.

Figure 3. Deliverables Narrative in Three Circle GATA Report

Deliverables

1. Complete a reporting of the applicable extended hours (at least 400) achieved by each instructor. 2. Document execution of district and grant payments to applicable teachers showing the 60-day value paid. 3. Complete the annual Performance Report uploading the appropriate documentation, including all required applicable data points such as (each participating teacher) documenting the minimum of 400 approvable hours of activity as well as data describing the impact of those hours at the local program.

1. Teacher Journal Hours Report generated on the AET is attached to report. Jane Doe, agriculture teacher and FFA adviser at ABC High School, has completed a total of 431 hours so far this year. 280 of those hours have been in FFA activities like officer meetings, team practices, and conferences/conventions at the state and national levels. 108 of those hours have been in SAE activities, such as project visits, business and industry relations, and award application workshop night with students. The remaining 43 hours have been in curricular and professional development activities.

2. Attached to this report is a document, signed by Ms. Doe and the district superintendent, Ms. Johnson, showing that the full allocation has been paid for the year.

3. Teacher Journal Report includes all required applicable data points, such as students impacted, miles traveled, volunteers engaged, funds raised, etc. This information is shown at the top of the report.

8. The next portion of the GATA Report addresses the performance measures and standards of the grant program. This is a required portion, so select “Required” in the box labeled “Require or Inform Only.” In the narrative portion of this section, describe the results of the grant funding on the local program. Specifically address the performance measures described. They are:
 - Document at least 400 hours of activity
 - Number of individuals positively impacted by this program
 - Impacted financial gain to the program or FFA chapter (fund raising)
 - District meeting or exceeding the local match requirement to be paid to the teacherFor an example of what the narrative portion of the “Performance” section would look like, see Figure 4 on the next page. Note that the section in **yellow** is an example of what you would type.

Figure 4. Performance Narrative in Three Circle GATA Report

| Performance | |
|---|--|
| Performance Measures | Performance Standard / Frequency |
| <p>1. Each participating teacher documented at least 400 hours of approvable activity in either FFA, SAE, and/or curricular-related activities. 2. Each participating teacher has met at least one of the following impacts: a. impacted at least 50 individuals (e.g., students, parents, employer, business partner, community members, etc.); b. impacted positive financial gain to the program or chapter. 3. District meets or exceeds its cost share percentage of the 60 days. (Add document link from program assurances.)</p> <p>UGA Exhibit E</p> | <p>1. Each participating teacher documents 400 hours of approvable activity in an approved category. 2. Each teacher achieved at least one of the following: a. impacted at least 20 individuals; b. program or chapter realized a negative financial impact; and c. no hours of activity reported in one of the three categories (FFA/SAE/curricular) 3. District meets its cost share of the 60-day value.</p> <p>UGA Exhibit F</p> |
| Results/Accomplishments in Reporting Period | Required or Inform Only |
| <p>1. The participating teacher documented 431 total hours of approvable activity in an approved category.</p> <p>2. The participating teacher achieved all the following: impacted 124 individuals (115 students, 9 volunteers); chapter raised more than \$2,000 through strawberry sales; and hours of activity were recorded in FFA, SAE, and curricular, and professional learning activities this year.</p> <p>3. The district met its cost share requirement as evident by the attached signature page from the teacher and superintendent.</p> | <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Required</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Inform Only</p> |

9. The next portion of the GATA Report addresses the performance explanation for the award to date. This is asking you to confirm that all performance accomplishments are on schedule to be completed at or before the end of the grant end date (July 31). If the participating teacher(s) will complete at least 400 hours of approvable activity in the approved activity categories, if the activities will result in at least 20 individuals impacted, and if funds were raised for the chapter or program, then select the radial button next to “All performance accomplishments are on schedule...” If the participating teachers are not on schedule to complete these accomplishments, then select the radial button next to “Not all performance accomplishments are on schedule...” If not on schedule, you will need to provide an explanation as to why and how they situation is intended to be corrected before the end of the grant (July 31).
10. The next portion of the GATA Report addresses the performance accomplishments correlated to reported expenses. This is asking you to confirm that the performance accomplishments are on schedule to be completed based on the payments made to the teacher to date. If the activities completed by the teacher are commensurate with the progress made on the previously explained accomplishments, select the radial button next to “Performance is consistent...”. If activities are not completed by the teacher or are not commensurate with the payments made to date, select the radial button next to “Performance is not consistent...”. If not consistent, you will need to provide an explanation as to why and how the situation is intended to be corrected before the end of the grant (July 31).
11. The final step in completing a GATA Report is to submit the report to ISBE using the respective buttons at the bottom of the report. Before submitting, confirm all information is correct and that the required attachments have been uploaded to the report. Once submitted, download or screen capture a copy of the report for your records. This can be helpful in the event of a glitch or error in the system. It is also a record that you have submitted the report on time in the event that it is lost or not received by ISBE.

13. How do I complete my payment schedule in IWAS?

The payment schedule in your IWAS budget application needs to match the intended use of funds. For example, if the school will pay the teacher in equal installments throughout the year, the payment schedule should be distributed equally across all months. If the payments are made quarterly, then the payments schedule should reflect equal payments in September, December, March, and June.

14. How do I account for an overage of funds in my payment schedule?

If an overage has been made in your allocation due to previously estimated salary/benefits information, be sure to include the overage in the June payment schedule to avoid having an over disbursement of funds. Any overage of funds disbursed will need to be returned to the State Board of Education, and they may not be able to be utilized for agricultural education if not returned in time. Therefore, it's best to avoid having overage funds disbursed. Placing these funds, if applicable, in your June payment will allow time for the allocation to be corrected before the June payment is disbursed.

Prorated Grant -- Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I complete my IWAS budget details with the prorated allocation?

A new budget details worksheet has been created and made available on the ISBE Agricultural Education Grants webpage. It is [linked and available here](#). You will find this worksheet to have one additional tab called “Prorated Budget Details.” Complete the “Allocations Worksheet” and “IWAS Budget Detail Worksheet” as you would normally. Then complete the “Prorated Budget Details” tab.

Figure 5. Worksheet Tabs to Review and Complete

| | | | | |
|------------|----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| Directions | Allocation Worksheet | IWAS Budget Detail Worksheet | Prorated Budget Details | Help Guide |
|------------|----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|

For each agricultural education teacher, you will need the prorated allocation amount for that specific teacher (contact your FCAE program advisor if needed) and the intended split of time between FFA/SAE hours and Curricular/PD hours. The worksheet will automatically calculate the appropriate budget details lines, accounting for your local benefits structure and the prorated allocation. Transfer those budget details for each teacher into your actual IWAS budget application.

Figure 6. Information needed on Prorated Budget Details Tab

| Table 1 - Questions to Answer | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--------|
| 1A | How many dollars were allocated for the Three-Circles Grant on the IWAS? | \$0.00 |
| 1B | What percentage of the extended work time was to be used for FFA and SAE Activities? (Recommended 80%) | 0.00% |
| 1C | What percentage of the extended work time was to be used for Curricular and PD Activities? (Recommended 20%) | 0.00% |

It is also worth noting that the worksheet is best completed in Microsoft Excel, not Google Sheets, as some of the formula functions are lost when transferred to Google Sheets.

2. When is my original IWAS budget application due for fiscal year 2023?

Original budget applications are due to ISBE no later than September 15, 2022 to guarantee a July 1, 2022 start date. Applications submitted after September 15 will be reviewed in the order they are received, and the official start date of the grant will be the date of approval by ISBE. Note that the start date of the grant program is also the date participating teachers can start to record hours as a part of the 400-hour work requirement in this program.

3. Does the participating teacher still need to document 400 additional working hours?

Yes, participating teachers will still need to document 400 hours of approved activities beyond the regularly scheduled teacher duties for the benefit of agricultural education.

4. Who do I contact regarding any TRS or retirement related questions?

Questions regarding TRS and retirement should be directed to Teachers' Retirement System of Illinois directly. Contact information is available online at <https://www.trsil.org/>.

5. Who can help me with my IWAS budget application and required worksheet?

It is strongly recommended that you reach out to your FCAE District Program Advisor before submitting your original application to ISBE. This will ensure all details have been completed accurately and will not require a revised budget application.

6. Can I use incentive funding for teacher salary and benefits?

Yes, up to 50% of your incentive funding allocation can be used for teacher salary and benefits. This will not be represented in your Three Circle application; however, this information is referenced here to remind teachers and administrators that those funds may be an option to supplement the funding available to compensate teachers' for time outside the regularly scheduled responsibilities.

7. How do I know the prorated amount for each teacher? (for school districts with multiple teachers)

If your school district has multiple agricultural education teachers, you will note that your total allocation in IWAS is the sum of all your teachers individual allocations. If you need help figuring out what the appropriate allocation will be for each teacher (as is needed to complete the prorated budget details), you can take the total amount requested for that teacher and multiply by 93.4%. You can also contact your District FCAE Program Advisor as they have been given a list of all prorated allocations on a per teacher basis.