

Arts and Foreign Language Assistance Grant

Webinar – Thursday, September 1, 2011

Questions and Answers

Q – If the purchase of iPads for individual teacher use is part of our implementation program, can this dollar amount be deducted from the mandatory 10% Professional Development requirement?

A – No. It's very important to us that your educators are networking with other professionals and experts in their field. I suppose if you can demonstrate that you have an organized, monitored application or software that delivers interactive professional development, the panel can take that under consideration, but more than likely, the purchase and use of iPads will not constitute professional development.

Q – Are there tech purchasing limitations within the implementation grant, or could all funds be used to purchase classroom sets of iPads to increase student engagement and interaction with a second language?

A – the grant really needs to work for the individual districts, so we have not set formal limitations on how funds can be spent. All of your purchases will need to be justified within the body of your proposal.

Exceptions:

(a) you must allocate at least 10% of the implementation budget for professional development.

(b) No more than 5% of the implementation budget may be used for administrative costs.

(c) No more than 50% of the implementation budget may be used for teacher salaries and benefits

Q – With regards to the implementation grant, can all three years of the local cash match be used to retain existing certified staff? (salaries and benefits)

A – Yes. With so many districts facing staff reductions, this grant may be used to retain current teachers; you do not necessarily need to hire new educators, although you may. Please remember that the ultimate goal is sustainability after the life of the grant, so you will be asked to demonstrate a plan to self-fund the salaries and benefits of your teachers after the cycle of the grant is complete.

Q – October 10 (proposal due date) is Columbus Day Holiday. Will ISBE office be open that day in case we FedEx proposals on Friday for receipt by Monday the 10th?

A – The ISBE office will be closed, but deliveries will be held until we open on Tuesday October 11. Please plan accordingly; either by planning to have it arrive by Friday October 7, or delivered by Tuesday October 11. Hand deliveries will not be accepted.

Q – Do both schools apply for both planning and implementation?

A – Many schools do complete the full 4 year cycle of funding, although some do not due to administrative changes, budget or staff reductions, or other unforeseen situations.

Q – If we are looking at a complete rebuild of curriculum is that a project that could be considered?

A – Yes, rebuilding either your Arts or Foreign Language curriculum would be an appropriate proposal for a Planning Grant.

Q – What types of programs in an area career center that been funded?

A – It happens that we have not had an Area Career Center apply for funding, but they could write a proposal to either plan or implement Arts or Foreign Language curricula and programs.

Q – I assume that the projects/subjects to be considered to create new curriculum has to be in foreign language or fine arts?

A – Yes. For the purposes of this grant, Foreign Language is considered languages other than English. The Arts are considered dance, drama, music and visual art.

Q – Can our high school district apply for a planning grant in conjunction with our feeder school districts, or would the feeder school districts have to apply separately? Our Foreign Language programs are connected although we are separate districts.

A – We would certainly entertain joint proposals, but you'd have to consider that option carefully. Certainly, there are pros: a larger core team, shared and clearly defined goals, standard alignment, no risk of one district getting funded and another not getting funded. There are, however, certainly cons: limited funds would need to be stretched much further and it may be difficult to decide which district would ultimately be responsible for the proposal, management of funds, reporting, etc. The districts would need to decide ultimately what would work best for the program they envision..

Q – Since the program begins no sooner than October 17, does this mean that only costs incurred after this period can be reimbursed.

A – Yes. When you are awarded, you will be notified of your actual program start and end dates. Your reimbursable program expenses must fall within that period.

Q – Can you apply for the planning grant and the implementation grant? Same year? Supplemental years?

A – Districts may only apply for one grant at a time. Details:

- (a) Applying for and receiving a planning grant is not a prerequisite for applying for and receiving an implementation grant. If you begin with the implementation grant, however, you will be asked to demonstrate that the district has undergone some sort of formal planning process independently.
- (b) Districts may receive funding in each of the two curricular areas only one time (One arts cycle and one foreign language cycle), and must complete each area before applying for the other...unless...
- (c) After receiving a planning grant in any one area, should you not decide to proceed with implementation, the district must wait at least three years before applying for a planning grant (or implementation) in the opposite area. For example, if you receive an Arts Planning Grant in FY2012 and opt out of Arts Implementation in FY2013, the district must wait until at least FY2016 before applying for Foreign Language funding.

Q – Would it be advantageous for districts that are currently collaborating on similar new projects to highlight those collaboration efforts in their RFPs.

A – Collaborative efforts demonstrate a broader local “buy in” for the project and often indicate improved sustainability. Certainly such efforts should be highlighted in your RFP.