

Innovative High School Models Grant Opportunity

Frequently Asked Questions

April 30, 2021

What is the Innovative High School Models Grant Opportunity?

The Innovative High School Model Grants are intended to foster and provide a vision of high schools of the future by reimagining new routines of schooling that meet the demands of the 21st century. These grants will support new approaches to increase student postsecondary attainment through groundbreaking partnerships that elevate equity for all students in keeping with the spirit of the department's *Best for All* strategic plan. The goal of the grants is to empower districts to reimagine the use of time, space, partnerships, and modes of learning to accelerate and increase student attainment of high-quality, in-demand postsecondary credentials.

What is the application timeline?

Key dates for the application timeline are listed below. In order to apply for the grant, LEAs must first submit a [Notice of Intent to Apply](#). Then, full grant proposals must be submitted by **Friday, May 7, 2021** at 11:59 p.m. CT. **Submissions received after this deadline will not be considered.**

- [Notice of Intent to Apply](#) opens: March 31, 2021
- Webinar Information Session: April 6, 2021, 3-4 p.m. CT
- [Notice of Intent to Apply](#) closes: April 15, 2021, 11:59 p.m. CT
- Application period: April 16 – May 7, 2021, 11:59 p.m. CT
- Applicants notified of selection for award: no later than May 21, 2021
- Start date for contracts: May 21, 2021

Can one LEA submit multiple grant proposals?

No. LEAs may partner to apply as a consortium (i.e., two or more LEAs collaborating on a single proposal). If multiple LEAs collaborate on a single proposal, one LEA should be designated as the fiscal agent. Each LEA may only be the fiscal agent for one application.

Do you have to be a certified Tennessee Pathways to apply?

No, both schools who are and are not certified Tennessee Pathways are encouraged to apply.

Can grant funds be used to hire personnel? What about stipends for existing staff?

Yes, funds may be used to hire personnel. Existing staff could be paid a stipend for additional duties associated with this grant. It is essential to note these duties must be up and beyond their assigned duties and must be associated with this grant.

Could a district use this funding to hire a work-based learning/career counselor to support students in high need programs of study? Would this fit on the clerical budget line item?

Yes, a district could use the funds to hire a work based learning/career counselor. The job description will determine where the position should be budgeted. Based on the description provided, this position may need to be in Budget Line 189.

If a school is not currently open but plans to open in the 2022-2023 school year, would they be eligible to receive grant funds?

No, the school would need to be in operation on the first day of the period of performance for the grant. For ESSER 1.0 and GEER, the period of performance began on July 1, 2020.

Can funds be spent on industry certification vouchers and dual-enrollment costs for students?

Yes, funds can be spent on industry certification vouchers and dual-enrollment costs for students.

Will there be a priority piece for this grant?

Proposals will be awarded additional points if the LEA is within an at-risk or distressed county, but all districts are encouraged to apply.

Would transportation costs or new transportation vehicles to or from work-based learning sites be an allowable cost under this grant?

Transportation costs or new transportation vehicles could be an allowable use of the grant if used to conduct the grant's intent. Examples may include driving between postsecondary, employer sites, and high school.

Under the ESSER funds, supplanting is allowable. Would this be the same case with the Innovative High School Models Grant Opportunity?

Yes, district leaders are encouraged to ensure purchases are allocable, reasonable, necessary, and aligned to the grant's purpose. Keep in mind funding items out of this grant and then trying to fund under another grant might be problematic. Perkins, IDEA, and ESEA programs' Supplement Not Supplant provisions have not changed.

What would be the indirect percentage for this grant?

Each LEA has an approved indirect cost rate with the department and may charge this rate as a budget line item in the CARES Act application. Indirect costs are the FY21 unrestricted rates. Please note that LEAs are not required to take the maximum amount of direct cost allowed.

Can funding be used for new construction or facility updates or paying rent?

ESSER 1.0 allowable uses of funds did not include funding for building improvements or repairs (i.e. remodels, expansions, repurposing of space) or paying rent. A list of the flowthrough (the 90 percent LEAs received) allowable expenses may be found [here](#) (question 5) in ePlan.

Are consumables allowable?

Yes, consumables that align with the purpose of the grant are allowable

What is the responsibility of the school district after the grant period ends?

Districts should consider developing sustainability plans for subsequent years. This would likely be part of the district's strategic plan and five-year budget.

Can student scholarships be paid for with grant funds?

No, federal funds cannot be used as gifts to individual persons.

Can equipment be purchased for a site that is not the school, such as an industry location that is partnering with the district submitting the grant proposal?

Yes, the ownership of the equipment and tracking (i.e., inventory) must remain with the district. At the end of the grant, the equipment may need to be returned to the district, meaning purchases must be transferable.

If grant funds are used to pay salaries, do districts need to follow the percentage model indicated in Perkins Reserve?

No, the salary could be paid for the life of the grant at 100%

Can districts pay students a stipend for participating in work-based learning or pay wages for hours worked at in internship?

No. A district cannot use these grant funds to pay students a stipend for participating in work-based learning or wages for hours worked at an internship, including a district paying for student wages in place of an employer.

Can purchasing a mobile unit for additional classroom space be allowable under the grant?

No, mobile units as classroom trailers are not an allowable expense.

Does paying for a substitute teacher count as stipend dollars/new staff funding?

No. Substitute teachers would need to budget in the correct account numbers (i.e., Regular Instructional Programs-71100, Special Education Programs – 71200, and Vocation Education Program – 71200) and the line items (195 – certified subs and 198 – uncertified subs).

Could the grant funds be used to hire a bus driver directly related to the proposal?

Yes, bus drivers hired to support the grant proposal are an allowable expense.

Could the grant funds be used to pay for conferences, related costs, professional development and travel?

Yes, professional development conferences, travel and related costs to support the grant proposal are an allowable expense.

Does a Master's program or certification for a teacher count under professional development, or would a degree be considered unallowable?

A Master's program or certification would be considered unallowable under this grant.

Can marketing items such as billboards, videos and mailing expenses be covered under the grant or are they considered consumables?

Marketing items such as billboards, videos and mailing expenses are considered consumables.