



GEER Innovation Grant Process FAQs v.4

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to answer Frequently Asked Questions about the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER Fund). Under the GEER Fund, established in the CARES Act, the U.S. Department of Education awards grants to Governors for the purpose of providing local educational agencies (LEAs), institutions of higher education (IHEs), and other education related entities with emergency assistance as a result of the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

DEFINITION OF INNOVATION

Q: What is the definition of innovation that applicants should use?

A: *Innovation is:*

- *A new practice, strategy, method, idea, or product.*
- *Both a process and an outcome.*
- *A significant positive change fueled by creativity that can become a catalyst for growth.*
- *A combination of problem/opportunity identification, the introduction, adoption or modification of new ideas germane to organizational needs, the promotion of these ideas, and the practical implementation of these ideas.*
- *An iterative process in working toward a solution, and a multi-stage process whereby organizations transform ideas into new/improved products, service or processes, in order to advance learning and education outcomes.*
- *Sustaining innovation (improvement of a product or service based on needs) and disruptive innovations (creation of something new to displace the status quo).*
- *In the context of the existing incentive structure to overcome potential institutional resistance.*
- *Not successful when there is a lack of:*
 - *Vision*
 - *Goal definition*
 - *Relevance*
 - *Alignment of actions to goals*
 - *Alignment of resources*
 - *Implementation strategy*
 - *Monitoring of results*
 - *Leadership buy-in*
 - *Participation by stakeholders*
 - *Communication and information access*

GEER ADVISORY GROUP

Q: Who are the members of the GEER Advisory Group?

A: *The GEER Advisory Group includes Mrs. Dawn Ige, First Lady, State of Hawaii; Dr. David Lassner, President, University of Hawaii; Dr. Christina Kishimoto, Superintendent, Department of Education; Brian Hallett, Interim Assistant Superintendent of the OFS; Catherine Payne, Chairperson, State Board of Education; Yvonne Lau, Executive Director, Charter School Commission; Kym Sparlin, Director of Intergovernmental Relations & Policy, Office of the Governor; Dr. Phil Bossert, Executive Director, Hawaii Association of Independent Schools; Darrel Galera, Hawaii Center for Instructional Leadership; Karen Aka, Academy 21 and One Shared Future; Dr. Steve Nakasato, Principal, Mililani Uka Elementary; Gerald Teramae, Principal and Head of School, Island Pacific Academy; Melissa Speetjens, Principal, Waimea Canyon Middle School; Janice Blaber, Principal, Kealakehe Intermediate School*

DEFINITION OF EDUCATIONAL ENTITY

Q: What is the definition of an educational entity?

A: *An education-related entity is a governmental, nonprofit or for-profit entity within the State that provides services that support preschool, elementary, secondary, or higher education. Such entities may include, for example: State agencies that oversee or directly provide early childhood education services; Public agencies or private entities that coordinate or directly provide early intervention services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); State agencies that oversee or provide vocational rehabilitative services; State mental health agencies; State Higher Education Boards; Education-related non-profit organizations; Non-public elementary, secondary and postsecondary schools; For-profit elementary, secondary and postsecondary schools; Charter management organizations; Non-profit and for-profit child-care centers; Public libraries; Community centers; and State or local agencies coordinating food services for students and their families.*

GRANT ELIGIBILITY – WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Q: If you have multiple schools applying, does a single school have to be the lead?

A: *Yes. There needs to be a clear point of contact and responsibility for completing of reports, etc.*

Q: Is a consortium required?

A: *No. A consortium is not required for the application, but it is encouraged. Partnerships, collaboratives and consortia are weighted in the selection criteria.*

Q: Is a Theatre Company that is producing virtual educational content that teachers are using eligible?

A: *An applicant must be an educational entity.*

Q: Is an after school program like the Boys and Girls Club eligible?

A: *An applicant must be an educational entity.*

Q: Would a non-profit teaming up with multiple charter schools qualify for this grant? Should the applications state the charter schools as the applicant or can the nonprofit be the applicant working in partnership with the charter schools?

A: *An applicant must be an educational entity. A non-profit formed for an educational purpose/mission would qualify.*

Q: There are a lot of non-profits that provide education programs for the DOE. Would they be eligible?

A: *An applicant must be an educational entity. A non-profit formed for an educational purpose/mission would qualify.*

Q: Will private K-12 schools be able to receive these funds directly given state mandates prohibiting direct government funding? Will Title I requirements apply?

A: *Yes, private schools will be able to receive these federal funds.*

Q: Would a non-profit dedicated to the support and advancement of educators, principals and administrators be eligible?

A: *An applicant must be an educational entity. A non-profit formed for an educational purpose/mission would qualify.*

Q: Can an organization be a member of more than one consortium?

A: *Yes.*

Q: Can UH be an applicant on behalf of a partnership?

A: *Yes.*

GRANT FUNDING

Q: Is the budget period from July 15, 2021 - June 30, 2022 and does the grant need to be spent during that period?

A: *Yes.*

Q: Is it possible to be partially funded? For example, if we ask for \$500,000 but the response is that \$350,000 is approved for funding? Or is it all or nothing?

A: *Yes, it is possible that the Project Manager may require adjustments in requested funding to ensure that actual funding is in alignment with federal requirements and the integrity of the grant program.*

Q: Is there a financial audit requirement?

A: *Yes, there are financial requirements for reporting by grant recipients.*

Q: Should the grant include fees for an evaluator?

A: *No, this is not a requirement.*

Q: Most federal grants require a 15% administrative fee – is this a requirement?

A: *No, this is not a requirement.*

Q: Because this is federal money, are there issues with the federal fiscal year vs. the SY 21-22? **A:** *The Project Manager will keep grant recipients informed of all timelines and deadlines relating to encumbrances and expenditures.*

Q: Will there be guidelines on “Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)” for the award?

A: *Yes.*

Q: Is there cost-sharing required in this effort?

A: *No.*

Q: Can part of this grant award funding be used for personnel to implement the grant?

A: *Yes, within reasonable standards.*

Q: Can any portion of the funds be spent on subcontracting for support from partners from the mainland?

A: *Yes, but must be able to demonstrate value to education in Hawaii.*

Q: If a project involves a trainer based on the mainland, is it possible to fund professional development by that partner?

A: *Yes, but must be able to demonstrate value to education in Hawaii.*

Q: Would travel costs to meet strategic partners/educators/students on other islands be allowed?

A: *Yes, but benefit for any travel must be defined by the project scope.*

Q: Are there any known costs associated with the education summit next summer? Where will it be held? Are there travel cost that we need to budget for?

A: *The Project Manager will inform all recipients when final plans are made regarding whether the 2022 Education Innovation Summit will be virtual or face to face. There are no central funds allocated for travel, so entities should budget to come to Oahu in Summer 2022 if applicable.*

Q: Should I pad or inflate my budget request anticipating that there may be cuts made?

A: *No, please provide budget requests that are not padded nor inflated.*

Q: So equipment that would be part of the project can be included in the proposal?

A: *Yes.*

GRANT PROCESS & TIMELINE

Q: If COVID changes in the 21-22 school year affect the ability to meet in person, and the proposed project is based on the ability to do so, will there be a process to amend the project?

A: *Yes. The process for this grant program is striving to model an innovation process where iteration is important.*

Q: How much time will be given for the 5 slide presentation?

A: *Each panel presentation will be 15 minutes in length. Presentations will be scheduled during a two-hour block in the morning and another two-hour block in the afternoon.*

Q: Are we going to see the rubric shared for points allotted per specific area when presenting? **A:** *Yes, it will be shared along with the slide formats.*

Q: Is it okay to embed a video in one of the slides for the 5 slide presentation? Seems unfair if some do and some don't.

A: *No.*

Q: Are there restrictions on using the money for capital improvements or personnel for the projects?

A: *No, but remember the focus is on innovation.*

Q: Can individuals or institutions apply for more than one grant if partnering with different schools/complex areas each time?

A: *Yes, but the projects must be distinct and mutually exclusive in terms of resourcing and outcomes.*

GRANT SELECTION CRITERIA

Q: Do you have an anticipated number of awards? Or will that be flexible and depend on the pool of applications?

A: *Given the amount of available funding, the awards could range between 8 at \$500,000 each and 40 at \$100,000 each.*

GEER Initiatives at UH

Q: Is there a POC at UH for the High School Transition piece?

A: *Yes, links are posted on the Governor's website.*