

2009 Enhancing Education Through Technology
Competitive Grant Program Application Guidelines

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Technology/EdTech/arra_competitive_grant_guidelines.pdf

Closing Date
October 30, 2009

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INTRODUCTION

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) (www.nclb.gov), which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), provides increased flexibility and local control to states and school divisions, emphasizes strong accountability for results, offers expanded options for parents of disadvantaged children, and supports teaching methods that have a solid scientific research foundation.

The reauthorized ESEA established the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program, also known as Title II, Part D. The primary goal of the EETT program is to improve student academic achievement through the use of technology in schools.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), also known as the Recovery Act, signed on February 17, 2009, offers an opportunity to improve teaching and learning; save hundreds of thousands of jobs; support states and school divisions; and advance reforms and improvements that may create long-lasting results for students and the nation, including early learning, K-12, and postsecondary education. Activities funded through ARRA should focus on short-term investments with the potential for long-term benefits, as opposed to ongoing commitments that might not be sustainable once ARRA funds have been expended.

Congress and the Secretary of Education have directed that ARRA funds be distributed “swiftly and impeccably.” Funds will be available only through September 30, 2011, requiring swift action by each applicant. The Recovery Act includes significant transparency and accountability provisions with regard to the expenditure of funds and other reporting requirements pertaining to the number of educators retained or hired as a result of the funding.

Consistent with the purposes of the EETT program and the *Educational Technology Plan for Virginia*, NCLB and ARRA allow the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) considerable flexibility to develop selection criteria and priorities for awarding competitive grants to local eligible entities. All NCLB and ARRA funds related to the EETT program are subject to the requirements of Title II, Part D. NCLB legislation requires SEA to meet the following specific requirements:

- Give priority to LEA that receive insufficient amounts of EETT formula grant funds
- Award grants of sufficient size and duration to carry out the purposes of the EETT legislation effectively
- Provide a competitive preference to applicants that submit proposals addressing activities or initiatives authorized in the legislation
- Ensure that grant activities address the needs of the high-need LEA

ARRA legislation requires SEA to meet the following specific requirements in making grant awards:

- Spend funds quickly to save and create jobs
- Ensure transparency, reporting, and accountability
- Invest one-time ARRA funds thoughtfully to minimize the “funding cliff”
- Improve student achievement through school improvement and reform

The USDOE encourages SEA, LEA, and eligible collaboratives to give particular consideration to strategies that will help build sustainable capacity for technology integration, improve student achievement, and advance education reform in the following four areas:

- Increase teacher effectiveness and address inequities in the distribution of effective teachers through high-quality professional development and teacher incentive programs designed to attract and keep effective teachers in hard-to-staff schools in rural and urban areas
- Use advanced technology systems to collect, manage, and analyze data in order to track student progress from pre-K through college and career and foster continuous improvement
- Implement technology-enhanced strategies that support rigorous college- and career-ready, internationally benchmarked standards, supplemented with high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable for all students, including limited English proficient students and students with disabilities
- Target intensive support to high-poverty, high-need LEA to improve access to and the effective use of advanced technologies to turn around the lowest-performing schools

Programs supported with EETT Competitive Grant funds must be of sufficient scope and quality to carry out the purposes of the legislation effectively.

Description of EETT Competitive Grant Program

The purpose of the EETT Competitive Grant program is for grant recipients to implement programs that will stimulate the use of educational technology to improve teaching and learning. Grant funds must assist schools in developing 21st century classrooms as envisioned by the *Educational Technology Plan for Virginia* (for an overview of the focus areas, see Appendix A). The *Educational Technology Plan for Virginia* guides LEA in the effective use of technology to prepare students to learn and work in the 21st century. Providing students with the necessary advanced technologies,

educational technology programs and practices, and well-trained teachers will enable schools to use innovative teaching strategies that engage students and promote critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and college and career readiness.

LEA are encouraged to collaborate among themselves to identify common needs, goals, and resolutions to produce 21st century classrooms. Partnerships should support high-need LEA by fostering collaboration with other LEA, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and institutions of higher education (IHE) to deliver proven research-based educational technology services. To encourage collaboration among LEA and appropriate partners, the VDOE will provide priority points to collaborative applicants.

Additional benefits of collaboration include the following:

- **Cost:** Collaboration takes advantage of the economy of scale, in which the cost per student decreases as the number of students increases.
- **Support:** The high-need LEA receive more direct access to the experience, expertise, and resources of their collaborating partners, which can offer assistance in critical areas such as professional development and training, leadership, and technical support.

This grant must meet the following goals defined in NCLB, Title II, Part D:

1. Improve student academic achievement through technology use in elementary and secondary schools
2. Ensure that every student is technology literate by the time he or she finishes the eighth grade, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, family income, geographic location, or disability
3. Encourage the effective integration of technology resources and systems with teacher training and curriculum development to establish research-based instructional methods that SEA and LEA can implement widely as best practices

This grant also must meet the following assurances identified in ARRA:

1. Make progress toward rigorous college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments that are valid and reliable for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities
2. Establish pre-K-to-college and career data systems that track progress and foster continuous improvement
3. Make improvements in teacher effectiveness and in the equitable distribution of qualified teachers for all students, particularly those most in need

4. Provide intensive support and effective interventions for the lowest-performing schools

Priority will be given to the highest-need applicants committed to implementing high-quality research-based programs with effective practices that improve student academic achievement. Projects must demonstrate an effort to comply with NCLB and ARRA by providing some researched-based evidence of the success of selected strategies.

Research-based programs should include the following characteristics:

- Credibility
- Methodology
- Valid, reliable data collection
- Strong research design
- Availability of detailed results
- Replication capability
- Review by educators and critics

In addition, all applications must clearly identify efforts to involve parents, community members, IHE, and other eligible entities in the grant planning process.

FOCUS AND USE OF FUNDS

AN LEA or eligible collaborative may use EETT funds to support activities such as the following:

- Increase accessibility to technology, particularly through public-private partnerships, with special emphasis on access for high-need schools
- Adapt or expand applications of technology to help teachers increase student academic achievement, including technology literacy, through research-based teaching practices and innovative distance-learning strategies
- Implement proven and effective courses and curricula that incorporate integrated technology and that help students reach challenging academic standards
- Use technology to promote parent involvement and foster communication among students, parents, and teachers about curricula, assignments, and assessments

- Prepare one or more teachers in schools as technology leaders to assist other teachers—including bonus payments to the technology leaders
- Enhance existing technology and acquire new technology to support education reforms and improve student achievement
- Acquire connectivity linkages, resources, and services for students and school personnel to improve academic achievement and technology literacy
- Use technology to collect, manage, and analyze data to inform and enhance teaching and school improvement efforts
- Implement enhanced performance measurement systems to determine the effectiveness of education technology programs funded by EETT
- Develop, enhance, or implement information technology courses

LEA and eligible collaboratives should use EETT funds to implement strategies that build sustainable capacity for integrating technology into curricula and instruction to improve student achievement. ARRA funds constitute a large increase in Title II-D funding that likely will not be available at the same level beyond September 30, 2011; as such, LEA and eligible collaboratives should focus these funds on short-term investments with the potential for long-term benefits—rather than making ongoing commitments that may not be sustainable once ARRA funds have been expended.

The focus areas of the EETT Competitive Grant program are consistent with the state focus areas for educational technology in Virginia:

- Schools need to consider physical and virtual **environments** in new and innovative ways to support learning activities.
- Educators must employ multiple ways to engage students in learning through technology. This **engagement** should reflect student learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and personal interests.
- Students need to understand the proper **application** of technology tools, i.e., choosing and applying the most appropriate technologies for communicating and problem solving and to be creative and innovative.
- Students should not use technology **tools** just to replicate paper-and-pencil activities. Tools should extend student capabilities to perform functions that would be difficult, if not impossible, without technology. Tools should be authentic—ones students will encounter in the nonschool environment.

- **Results** are not just a matter of meeting accountability requirements but using data, including real-time assessments, to inform instruction. Teachers addressing 21st century skills and knowledge must employ intelligent assessments.

Members of a collaborative must agree to address the following:

1. **Goals** defined in NCLB Title II, Part D
2. **Assurances** identified in ARRA
3. Virginia's five state **focus areas** for educational technology

The application must clearly correlate the proposed goals of the grant application with the NCLB Title II-D goals, ARRA assurances, and Virginia focus areas. At least one high-need LEA must be a member of the collaborative; An LEA must serve as the fiscal agent.

Collaborative members should prepare a collective budget and budget justification statements that support the goals of the EETT Competitive Grant and the activities outlined in the proposal. Funds should not be distributed to collaborative members on a prorated basis.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR AN EETT COMPETITIVE GRANT

The VDOE is requesting applications from (A) a high-need LEA or (B) an eligible collaborative. Priority points will be given to collaborative applicants that encourage LEA to take advantage of the benefits of collaboration.

- A. To be considered *high need*, An LEA must meet all the following criteria:
 1. Is among those LEA with the highest numbers or percentages in the state of children from families with incomes below the poverty line
 2. Serve one or more schools identified for improvement or corrective action under section 1116 of the ESEA
 3. Demonstrate a substantial need for assistance in acquiring and using technology

For purposes of this program, *poverty line* is defined based on the Office of Management and Budget's definition, which is revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act applicable to a family of the size involved (ESEA Section 9101(33)). See the U.S. Census Web site at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/saipe/>.

- B. At least one member of the collaborative must be a high-need LEA. In addition to at least one high-need school division, collaborative applicants must include at least one of the following:
1. AN LEA that can demonstrate (a) how teachers in its schools are effectively integrating technology and proven teaching practices into instruction, based on a review of relevant research, and (b) how this integration has improved classroom instruction and helps students meet challenging academic standards
 2. An institution of higher education that (a) is in full compliance with the reporting requirements of section 207(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, and that (b) has not been identified by the state as low performing under that act
 3. For-profit businesses, schools, or organizations that (a) develop, design, manufacture, or produce technology products or services or that (b) have substantial expertise in applying technology in instruction
 4. Public or private nonprofit organizations with demonstrated expertise in applying educational technology in instruction

LEA partners must represent urban and rural areas. An eligible partnership may also include other LEA, libraries, or other educational entities appropriate to provide local programs. The fiscal agent for the collaborative must be An LEA.

Eligible partnerships must enter into agreements to support programs funded under the EETT Competitive Grant. Grant applications must show concrete evidence of cooperative planning and demonstrate a strong link between proposed application goals and strategies to meet the NCLB Part II-D goals, ARRA assurances, and Virginia educational technology focus areas.

The intent is that these partnerships will make the project activities more effective, practical, meaningful, and successful. As such, each entity in a collaborative should be selected based on the added value it brings to the project. The role and responsibility of each partner should be clearly described.

Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed activities reflect up-to-date evidence-based research in teaching and learning that uses technology. Partners also must submit documentation that clearly shows how they agree to participate in the program, if funded, and how they intend to use any other funds to enhance and broaden the scope of the proposed program. Funds must not be used to supplant but must supplement technology-funding efforts.

EETT COMPETITIVE GRANT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Selection Criteria

Applications will be selected based on an assessment of each applicant's ability to carry out all requirements contained in the Request for Applications (RFA). Applications will be evaluated based on the overall quality and validity of the proposed grant programs and the extent to which the applications address: (1) the NCLB Title II-D goals, (2) the ARRA assurances, and (3) Virginia's five **focus areas** for educational technology (see Appendix A).

For an applicant to receive funding under this program, all LEA members must have on file, or submit to the Virginia Department of Education, a new or recently updated (within the past two years) local long-range strategic educational technology plan. The application must assure that each plan is consistent with the objectives of the *Educational Technology Plan for Virginia* (see Appendix A).

To be considered for funding, applications must address each requirement as specified in the RFA. The VDOE reserves the right to select from the highest-ranking applications those that (1) address all requirements in the RFA and that (2) are most advantageous to the EETT Competitive Grant program. The VDOE is not obligated to approve an application, provide funds, or endorse any application submitted in response to this RFA. This RFA does not commit the VDOE to pay any costs before an application is approved. The issuance of this RFA does not obligate the VDOE to award a grant or pay any costs incurred in preparing a response.

Each LEA participating in the grant activities must meet all assurances of the application process:

- An assurance that the LEA is compliant with the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) for all equipment connected to the Internet
- An assurance that all eligible nonpublic schools have been contacted for possible participation in the final planning, implementation, and support of all activities funded by this grant
- An assurance that financial resources provided under the EETT Competitive Grant program will supplement and not supplant any local funding
- An assurance that no more than 5 percent of the grant will be used for indirect or administrative costs

Each application should be organized into components that are identifiable to reviewers. An application must contain specific components labeled and inserted precisely as follows:

- Cover Page
Contact information and signatures of the project director and LEA superintendent and board chairperson
- Component A: Project Summary – 1 page maximum (5 points)
Brief description of the project
- Component B: Project Narrative – 12 page maximum (40 points)
Detailed information regarding implementation of the project (e.g., strategies, activities, resources, participants)
- Component C: Project Operation and Management Plan – 1 page maximum (10 points)
A list of the major phases of the project along with task lists and beginning, ending, reporting, and completion dates and person(s) responsible
- Component D: Collaborative Partners (25 points)
A description of the planning process and contact information for all partners and their specific roles and responsibilities in the project
- Component E: Funding Strategy (10 points)
A description of how the funds will be used to support the grant
- Component F: Budget Summary
A summary of expenditures by specific categories
- Component G: Sustainability – 2 page maximum (5 points)
A description of how the activities may be replicated and sustained beyond the funding period
- Component H: Evaluation
A description of how the project's participation in the statewide evaluation will be managed
- Component I: References – 2 page maximum (5 points)
Sources of evidence-based research used to design the project
- Component J: Assurances
Signatures of the LEA superintendents of each participating LEA, assuring compliance with the EETT Competitive Grant program requirements
- Component K: Letters of Support
Statements from each of the participating entities indicating their support for the project goals

Participating LEA must submit letters of support that clearly show how they will contribute to the program. The application must also show how EETT Competitive Grant funds will be used with other local funds to enhance and broaden the scope of the proposed projects.

Technical assistance will be available throughout the process to help grant applicants develop competitive applications and update LEA technology plans. This support will follow these procedures: assistance provided to each qualifying applicant during the grant application process, review of the application by a peer review panel, and feedback to the applicant if the grant application is found deficient in any area. Other activities will focus on program implementation and development.

Selection Process

Application reviews will occur within four to six weeks of the application deadline. The Division of Technology and Career Education will form a grant application review team composed of representatives from various educational technology partners with extensive experience in educational technology program implementation. Grant applications will be reviewed to determine the extent to which the application meets the required components of the application and provides a compelling and high-quality plan to address program goals.

For the awarded grants, each partner will receive a copy of an award letter. Next, staff of the Virginia Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology (OET) will work with each grant recipient to monitor progress and assist with the identification of resources. In addition, statewide training sessions on topics such as technology planning, high-quality professional development, and technology integration will be provided to complement local activities.

Private and Nonpublic School Participation

Title IX, Part E, Uniform Provisions Subpart 1—Private Schools requires recipients of federal grant funds to conduct timely and meaningful consultation to provide equitable services to the educators in private and nonpublic schools. Applicants selected for funding will be required to engage in timely and meaningful consultation with officials of eligible private schools located in the geographic areas of all LEA receiving EETT Competitive Grant-funded services. The consultation must determine the educational needs of any private or nonpublic school interested in participating in activities funded by the EETT Competitive Grant. The consultation may require modifications to the final design and development of the project activities documented in the application. Consultation with participating private and nonpublic schools must continue throughout the implementation of the grant.

FUNDING AND BUDGET

NCLB implementation will continue as approved in 2001. ARRA will be implemented during the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years. Applicants should plan to start projects no earlier than January 1, 2010, and end no later than September 30, 2011. The number of projects funded will be determined by the quality of the applications received. This project is funded by the federal NCLB Act of 2001 and ARRA of 2009. Expenditures must be tracked and reported separately from all other funds.

No more than 5 percent of EETT Competitive Grant funds may be used for administrative expenses. The administrative expenses must be itemized in the budget.

One LEA must serve as the fiscal agent. Grant funds will be made available on a cost-reimbursable basis. Any recipient that fails to make progress toward its annual measurable objectives will have its budget reduced 20 percent. The reduced amount will be redistributed to the other recipients that meet or exceed their objectives. Budget items may be purchased from existing state contracts or through the competitive bid process. These items must be itemized in the budget section of the application. Budget items must relate directly to the project(s) being implemented and must relate directly to (1) the NCLB Title II-D goals, (2) the ARRA assurances, and (3) Virginia's five **focus areas** for educational technology. Items such as the following are not allowed:

- Salaries and fringe benefits
- Furniture
- Individual subscriptions
- Individual or organizational memberships
- Non-project-related equipment and supplies

In addition, any costs incurred prior to the application approval are not allowed. Applicants may be requested to remove any items from their budgets that do not meet the guidelines. Applicants will have an opportunity to revise their budgets. All anticipated costs, with information about how funds will be used, must be outlined in the detailed budget narrative section of the application.

EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The VDOE will contract with external evaluators to measure the quality and impact of the EETT Competitive Grant program. Specifically, an external evaluator will develop process and accountability measures to analyze the extent to which activities funded by the grant program effectively meet the NCLB Title II-D goals and the ARRA assurances.

The VDOE will compile the results of evaluations and assessments and ultimately provide this information to the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE).

All grant recipients must track, account for, and report on the use of EETT and ARRA funds. Grant recipients must assist the external evaluators by providing data, upon request, that will help determine the quality and impact of the program.

Any grant recipient that fails to make progress toward its annual measurable objectives will have its grant amount reduced 20 percent. The grant recipient shall develop an improvement plan for meeting its annual objectives. Funding may be restored pending successful implementation of the improvement plan. A reduction in funding does not relieve the grant recipient of its responsibility to meet its measurable objectives.

Applicants are not required to plan or budget for project evaluation. However, funded projects must allocate funds (not to exceed 5 percent) to participate in a statewide evaluation coordinated by the VDOE. Additional evaluation activities may be conducted by individual projects if desired.

SUBGRANT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Notice of Intent to Apply Form

Individual LEA and eligible collaboratives may have the high-need LEA serving as fiscal agent submit a Notice of Intent to Apply form. Filing the form is not mandatory but will assist the VDOE in anticipating the volume of applications to better expedite the review process and finalize awards. See Appendix B for the Notice of Intent to Apply form.

Requesting an Application

The RFA is not available in print. The complete RFA is posted on the VDOE Web site for viewing and downloading at:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Technology/EdTech/arra_competitive_grant_application.doc

Bidders' Meeting

A mandatory bidders' meeting will be held on October 2, 2009, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon (EDT) at the VDOE for all interested applicants. Bidders may elect to attend either in person or by a virtual conference. Information and resources related to the EETT Competitive Grant program will be posted at

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Technology/EdTech/rrf.shtml>.

For Further Information

To clarify information about the RFA, contact Mark Saunders, EETT program coordinator, at (804) 786-0307. All questions pertaining to the RFA must be submitted in writing to the VDOE contact person listed above. All questions must be submitted in writing to the VDOE contact person no later than 5 p.m. (EDT), October 8, 2009. Any questions received after 5 p.m. (EDT), October 8, 2009, will not be answered by the VDOE. All submitted questions and the corresponding answers will be posted on the VDOE Web site as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on or before October 12, 2009.

Deadline for Receipt of Applications

To be considered, applications must be e-mailed to the EETT program coordinator (mark.saunders@doe.virginia.gov) by 5 p.m. (EDT), October 30, 2009. A hard copy of the application cover sheet—with signatures by the representatives of each participating LEA—and the assurances must be sent by surface mail and postmarked no later than 5 p.m. (EDT) on October 30. The application must also include the signatures of the school board chair and division superintendent for the LEA that serves as the fiscal agent. These items should be mailed to the following:

EETT Competitive Grant Program
Attention: Dr. Tammy McGraw
Director of Educational Technology
Virginia Department of Education
Post Office Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120

EETT COMPETITIVE GRANT TIMETABLE

September 18, 2009	Request for Applications posted
September 30, 2009	Notice of Intent to Apply form due
October 2, 2009	Mandatory Bidders' Meeting held
October 8, 2009	Deadline for questions
October 12, 2009	FAQ posted on VDOE Web site
October 30, 2009	Applications due to VDOE
November 13, 2009	Announcement of Award
January 1, 2010	EETT Competitive Grant begins
September 30, 2011	Grant period ends
December 15, 2011	Deadline for payment requests

Appendix A

Educational Technology Plan for Virginia Five Focus Areas

1. Schools need to consider physical and virtual **environments** in new and innovative ways to support learning activities.
2. Educators must employ multiple ways to engage students in learning through technology. This **engagement** should reflect student learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and personal interests.
3. Students need to understand the proper **application** of technology tools, i.e., choosing and applying the most appropriate technology for communicating and problem solving and to be creative and innovative.
4. Students should not use technology **tools** just to replicate paper-and-pencil activities. Tools should extend student capabilities to perform functions that would be difficult, if not impossible, without technology. Tools should be authentic—ones students will encounter in the nonschool environment.
5. **Results** are not just a matter of meeting accountability requirements but using data, including real-time assessments, to inform instruction. Teachers addressing 21st century skills and knowledge must employ intelligent assessments.

Appendix B

Notice of Intent to Apply Form

2009 Enhancing Education Through Technology Competitive Grant Program Notice of Intent to Apply

Individual LEA and eligible collaboratives must have a high-need LEA as the fiscal agent. This form must be completed and submitted by the high-need LEA serving as fiscal agent.

The undersigned local education agency (LEA) hereby files a Notice of Intent to Apply for:

2009 Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) Competitive Grant funded under No Child Left Behind and the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act

Name of Organization	
Contact Person	
Mailing Address	
Phone Number (with area code):	
E-mail Address:	
The filing of this notice is not mandatory; however, it will assist the Virginia Department of Education in anticipating the volume of applications to better expedite the review process and finalize awards.	
Filing this notice in no way binds the applicant in regard to its application for a 2009 Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) Competitive Grant.	
Applicants who do not file this notice are still eligible for funding.	
<p>Submit this notice by mail or fax as soon as possible after the receipt of the Request for Application but no later than September 30, 2009, to the following address:</p> <p>EETT Competitive Grant Program Attention: Dr. Tammy McGraw Director of Educational Technology Virginia Department of Education Post Office Box 2120 Richmond, VA 23218-2120</p> <p>Fax: 804-371-2455</p>	