Classrooms for the Future

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

EGrants Help Questions
Please send your eGrants questions on your application to:
eGrants Support 717-783-6686

PROGRAM DESIGN & SUPPORTS

Q: Is the State standardizing on one platform?

A: The Department of General Services has established a statewide contract to aggregate the purchasing power of Classrooms for the Future to negotiate an aggressive price and to permit consistent, quality technical assistance and support across the Commonwealth. Two platforms are supported: Macintosh and Windows. Grant recipients may enter into a contract with, and acquire equipment and services from, one or both of the vendors listed on the Classrooms for the Future statewide contract.

The DGS contract is located at: http://www.dgsweb.state.pa.us/comod/Contracts/581015-1.pdf

CDWG Equipment information: http://www.cdwg.com/PAclassroomsforthefuture

Apple equipment information: http://web.mac.com/applecff

Q: What Professional Development will PDE provide? Is it required?

A: The success of any instructional reform program relies heavily upon the involvement of administrators and educators in relevant and rigorous professional development; therefore, PDE requires grant recipients to participate in PDE-sponsored Classrooms for the Future professional development including:

▷ A half-day pre-grant orientation session for high school or CTC principals (required) and CFF teams including district superintendents (strongly encouraged) interested in applying for a grant.

▷ A minimum of 2 days of hands-on workshops for administrators and educators involved in the first year of the grant implementation (required).

▷ A minimum of 30-hours of online coursework (21st Century Teaching and Learning Series) for administrators and educators per year for every funded year (required).

Q: What is a Classrooms for the Future Coach?

A: Every participating school will receive funding to support an on-site Classrooms for the Future coach to provide just-in-time support to classroom teachers, and identify appropriate resources and instruction in the core curricular areas. The coach will also help to ensure a high-quality interactive learning environment and the delivery of local hands-on relevant professional development.

For more information on a Classrooms for the Future Coach, such as the coaching job description and qualifications, click here.

Q: What is a Keystone: Technology Integrator?

A: Keystone: Technology Integrators is a PDE initiative that recognizes teachers who fully utilize the many benefits technology, offers to improve instructional practices across their content areas and have become "Keystones" through a local nomination process. Additional information may be found under Professional Development at www.pde.state.pa.us/keystones. Although there is no direct funding for Keystone Integrators through CFF, they are encouraged to support their colleagues during Classrooms for the Future program implementation.

Q: Will there be an evaluation?

A: Grant recipients are required to create their own monitoring systems for technology deployment, professional

development, and technology integration with instructional and learning practices in order to ensure that each is occurring as delineated in the project plan and within the time frame proposed.

At the state level, the Department has partnered with the Penn State University; CaseNEX, associated with the University of Virginia; and The Metiri Group to develop data collection instruments and data analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. All Classrooms for the Future schools are required to participate in the annual PaTI survey as well as other data collection tool trainings, teacher and student surveys and interviews.

Districts will be required to identify a local "data collector" who will be trained to collect classroom practices data.

ELIGIBILITY

Q: Who is eligible to apply?

A: Any of Pennsylvania's public school districts may apply on behalf of their senior high schools (grades 9 - 12), Comprehensive Area Vocational Technical Schools, and Career and Technical Centers (those that are accountable to the state for demonstrating adequate yearly progress in the core curricular areas).

Comprehensive AVTS/CTCs that act as their own fiscal agency may apply for funding directly.

Schools must have a 12th grade in the building to be eligible; therefore, high schools or AVTS/CTC that include Grades 9, 10, and/or 11 but not 12 are not eligible to participate in Classrooms for the Future.

Non-public, private, and public charter and cyber charter schools are not eligible for Classrooms for the Future funding.

Q: May a consortium apply?

A: Consortia applications (one application representing multiple school districts or comprehensive AVTS/CTCs) will not be accepted. School districts may, however, submit one application representing multiple eligible schools within the district. Please note that entities other than a school district or a comprehensive AVTS/CTC may not apply on behalf of the eligible school.

Q: What is an "eligible instructional setting"?

A: An eligible instructional setting is a classroom or comparable space that is used for core curricular instruction more than 50% of instructional time during a day.

Q: How will Grants be awarded?

A: Award amounts will be based on a formula using course enrollment reported in the SecCEn (Secondary Course Enrollment) report.

1) Using high school student enrollment, PDE calculates how many laptops and peripherals each participating school would need to cover core subject courses using an efficient roster (meaning computers are used every period of the day). PDE uses the following formula to calculate the number of laptops a building is eligible for: student enrollment divided by 175 (which is 7 periods per day per 25 students per classroom) times 4 (core subject areas). Please take this model into account in your planning.

2) Using data supplied by the school districts, PDE then deducts, from the calculation in step 1, the amount of existing equipment already available in the high school. "Existing equipment" includes both equipment purchased by CFF awardees in previous years as well as other equipment already available in the high school.

Each school is eligible for a certain number of classrooms as calculated from PDE data. A spreadsheet with the eligibility formula is available in the CFF Guidelines for your planning based on your student enrollment and existing technology. This worksheet will not be submitted to the state. IT IS FOR YOUR USE ONLY.

New and continuing applicants must use this data for planning purposes because the 2008-2009 data is based on the most accurate and up to date information.

Q: What courses qualify as "core curricular instruction" under English, Math, Science, and Social Studies?

A: An eligible "core curricular instruction" course is one that fulfills the requirements for:

▷ English subject matter credit,
▷ Math subject matter credit,
▷ Science subject matter credit, or
▷ Social Studies subject matter credit.

Q: What are readiness and need, and what role do they play in determining eligibility?

A: Readiness may be determined by, but not limited to:

▷ Previous successes with implementation of school-wide changes such as implementing new curriculum or new teacher and student support systems.

▷ Regular use of technology in instruction, communication and administration.

▷ Evidence of highly qualified educators as demonstrated by number of National Board Certified Teachers with advanced degrees.

▷ Thoughtful consideration to capacity (e.g., project plan reflects realistic rollout based upon existing infrastructure, commitment, sustainability strategies, etc.).

Need may be determined by, but not limited to:

▷ Low student performance.
▷ Socio/economic status as defined by
 - a high percentage of students that are eligible to receive free or reduced-price
   lunch, and/or US census data.
▷ Lack of appropriate technologies.

APPLICATION

Q: When will the online eGrants application be due?

A: The eGrants application will remain open until the deadline of 2 pm EDT on April 11, 2008, at http://egrants.ed.state.pa.us/.

Q: May we apply on behalf of more than one eligible school during the same funding year?

A: Yes, if you are a school district with more than one eligible entity within your district, you may apply on their behalves during the same funding year but you must do so through a single eGrants application.

The LEA will be asked to identify within the application each of the schools for which funding is requested.

Q: May we submit an application for a school that was funded through CFF in a previous year?

A: Eligible beneficiaries (public high schools and high school level comprehensive AVTS/CTC) may apply for additional funds if their total net eligibility has not been reached.

AWARDS & EXPENDITURES

Q: Will every public high school and comprehensive AVTS/CTC receive funding?

A: It is the intention of this initiative to equip every public high school and comprehensive AVTS/CTC core curricular instructional setting as a Classroom for the Future.

Q: If we receive a grant, what do we get from the state - money or laptops and other equipment?

A: Grant recipients will receive cash awards that must be used in the following manner:

▷ Up to $6,000 per eligible school to enhance or acquire appropriate infrastructure to support Classrooms for the Future hardware (this is a one-time award).
For example, wiring, switches, and power.

▷ Up to $250 per eligible instructional setting to enhance or acquire technical assistance to support Classrooms for the Future implementation.
 For example, installation and imaging.

▷ An amount appropriate to the local need to be used for specific equipment purchases as identified by PDE such as student laptops and "smart" classroom technologies.

This amount is based upon a formula that examines the percentage of core curricular instruction and available classrooms. (see above)

▷ An amount appropriate to support a half-time on-site Classrooms for the Future Coach to guide technical needs

assessments and strategic recommendations, identification of appropriate instructional technologies, and the delivery of local hands-on relevant professional development.

The coach money is IN ADDITION to grant funding.

Grant recipients will also receive:

▷ Online and face to face PDE-sponsored professional development for administrators and educators.

Q: Do we include the money for the coach in our grant application?

A: No, do not include the coach money when creating your budget. There is additional state and federal funding for the coach. After you are notified that you have received the grant, you will be directed how to receive that money.

Q: What if we already have technology in our classrooms?

A: You will only be awarded enough funds to supplement the existing comparable technologies reported in your eGrants application. You must report not only those technology items in the eligible instructional settings, but also those technology items that are accessible to the eligible instructional setting (e.g., mobile laptop lab).

Q: If we submit an application for a multi-year project, are we assured funding for all of the years or just the first year?

A: No. Multi-year funding requests will be accepted for the 2008-2009 school year.

Q: May we purchase the teacher laptops, electronic whiteboards, and other 'smart' classroom technologies in the first year and the student laptops in the second year?

A: 2008-2009 grantees must plan for full classroom solutions in their implementation which includes teacher laptops, electronic whiteboards and other "smart" classroom technologies as well as student laptops.

Q: What if we don't want to put laptops in all of our core curricular classrooms?

A: We recognize that some schools' strategic plans may include alternative solutions (such as tablet PCs in Math classes); therefore, you do not have to equip every core curricular high school classroom through this grant. However, you may not use the Classrooms for the Future monies to purchase equipment or services other than that which is on the DGS statewide contract for Classrooms for the Future.
You may not partially equip a classroom (for example, you may not acquire the teacher computer and not the electronic whiteboard) unless the classroom already contains comparable equipment (such as an electronic whiteboard) that would be combined with the equipment purchased through this initiative creating a Classroom for the Future. The 21st century instructional setting as envisioned by Classrooms for the Future is the design basis for relevant professional development, resources and tools, and therefore, is necessary to maintain the integrity of a Classroom for the Future classroom.

Q: What are allowable expenses under infrastructure and technical assistance?

A: Grant awardees will receive up to $6,000 per eligible school and up to $250 per instructional setting to install the technology, support equitable connectivity, provide security (including online and physical property), and fund other related infrastructure and technical assistance activities.
The monies may not be used to purchase curriculum software.

Q: May we use any of these funds for administrative or indirect costs?

A: No.

Q: May we use any of these funds for release time, substitute fees, or other similar costs incurred through the required or other professional development activities?

A: No.

Q: What additional expenses will be incurred locally?

A: Although you will not be required to provide matching funds, you may:

▷ Need to release teachers as per your local contract for professional development activities.

▷ Have specific needs for additional items (such as the curriculum software) that will enhance your local Classrooms for

the Future program but that are not allowable expenditures under Classrooms for the Future.

▷Have supplementary logistical expenses incurred through technology deployment and maintenance, as well as additional expenses incurred through technology integration into teaching and learning.

Q: Is the money for the Classrooms for the Future Coach part of the grant allocation award?

A: No. Additional state and federal money will be used to fund the coaches. You will receive specific instructions about how you will receive these funds when you are awarded the grant.