



2015-16 Seed Fund Application Overview and Instructions

Thank you for your interest in applying for a Seed Fund grant. The mission of the Seed Fund is to empower Fulton County Schools to improve student outcomes by creating unique solutions that are tailored to the needs of their communities. The Fund aims to inspire and reward creative thinking by recognizing and funding creative concepts which serve identified needs in Fulton County school communities.

The Seed Fund is managed by the Fulton Education Foundation. The Fulton Education Foundation (Foundation) was founded to strengthen the relationship between schools and the community. Governed by a volunteer board of executives and local community leaders, the Foundation enhances the performance and lives of Fulton County students and faculty by facilitating innovative programs in four key areas: Student Achievement, Professional Development and Teaching Methods, Physical Well-Being of Students, and Teacher and Staff Recognition.

Seed Fund proposals will be evaluated by a subset of the Foundation Board members who will evaluate schools' submissions and distribute grant awards based on the strength of the application in the following established criteria:

- School Need/Challenge
- Project Plan
- Project Outcomes
- Budget
- Project Sustainability
- Question & Answer Session (Q&A)

The Fulton Education Foundation, in conjunction with Fulton County Schools, is very excited about the third year of the Seed Fund. In operation since 2013, the Seed Fund has awarded \$8.7 million to eligible charter system schools to fund exciting new programs that will impact student achievement. As a competitive grant process, it is highly likely that some schools will not receive funding during the 2015-16 award cycle. Therefore, it is important that schools put forth their best proposal, focusing on the established criteria outlined above.

This year's round of Seed Fund granting anticipates receiving proposals from 91 charter system schools, with potential average grant distribution of approximately \$55,000. The Foundation will continue to award both smaller and larger grants and will honor its commitment of a minimum of \$2 million per learning community over the first three years of the grant (the 2015-16 year being the third year). This minimum \$2 million commitment is the floor. It is expected that all learning communities will exceed the \$2 million commitment by the end of the 2015-16 award season.

A complete Seed Fund proposal consists of a three-part application process: an **Initial Application**, a **Final Application** that will be reviewed by the Fulton Education Foundation, and an "invitation only" Question and Answer session with members of the Foundation. Guidelines and instructions for the Seed Fund application and Question and Answer session are included below.



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Instructions

Any charter system school interested in applying for Seed Funds must submit all required application materials by their deadlines and according to their specifications. The Seed Fund is a competitive grant process and all deadlines must be met. All Seed Fund materials are available on the [Seed Fund Resources](#) webpage. The required materials for a completed Seed Fund proposal include:

1. Seed Fund **Initial Application** (Due by 5:00 pm, October 19, 2015 to SeedFund@fultonschools.org; cc your Chair, Area Superintendent, and Facilitator)
2. Seed Fund **Final Application** (Due by 5:00 pm, December 10, 2015 to SeedFund@fultonschools.org; cc your Chair, Area Superintendent, and Facilitator)
3. Seed Fund Question and Answer Session – **invitation only** (February 8, 2016)

1. Seed Fund Initial Application

The Seed Fund **Initial Application** allows the Fulton Education Foundation to prepare for the number of proposals that will be submitted by schools and provides FCS leaders with an opportunity to review proposed ideas for feedback and support.

To submit the Seed Fund **Initial Application**, take the following steps:

1. Download the blank Seed Fund **Initial Application** from the [Seed Fund Resources](#) webpage.
2. Complete the **Initial Application** in its entirety (including draft budget worksheet). Be sure to answer all department related questions in as much detail as possible to assist the district in understanding the support you will need should your proposal be granted an award.
3. Include a draft of your budget worksheet. The budget worksheet template is available on the [Seed Fund Resources](#) webpage. Use the budget template to enter the expected costs of your proposed concept for the applicable school years. If you are making personnel requests in your budget, you must enter the quantity of each position type in the Position Count column and the cost will be populated for you. All positions are paid according to the Fulton County Salary Schedule and these populated personnel costs include average position salary and benefits. Include the budget template with your **Initial Application**.

Schools are strongly encouraged to engage their bookkeepers in the development of Seed Fund proposals. School bookkeepers are familiar with budgeting and procurement procedures and can help schools navigate the process.



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4. Solicit School Governance Council feedback on the **Initial Application**. Although Council members are not required to vote on the **Initial Application**, they should have the opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on the proposed concept.
5. The principal must submit the completed Seed Fund **Initial Application** via email to SeedFund@fultonschools.org by **5:00 pm on October 19, 2015**. The Council Chair and Governance & Flexibility Facilitator must be copied on the submission. **Please Note: Initial Applications that are not received by 5:00 pm on October 19th will not be considered for Seed Fund grant awards.**

2. Seed Fund FINAL Application

Seed Fund Application

Your **Final Application** must be submitted to SeedFund@fultonschools.org by 5:00 pm on Dec. 10th. The Council Chair and Governance & Flexibility Facilitator must be copied on the submission. To be considered completed, the Seed Fund **Final Application** must be:

- a. Approved by the School Governance Council (through a majority vote at a School Governance Council meeting);
- b. Signed by the school's principal and Council Chair; and
- c. Reviewed by the heads of all district departments that will be impacted by your project.

Once received, all **Final Applications** will be reviewed by the Area Superintendent. Those submissions that are approved by the Area Superintendent will be forwarded to the Fulton Education Foundation for participation in the grant process. Schools are encouraged to communicate their Seed Fund ideas with their Area Superintendent as early as possible.

Please remember: Your **Initial Application** will be reviewed by FCS leaders and feedback will be provided to you in advance of the **Final Application** deadline. That feedback should be considered and included in the **Final Application**.

General instructions are provided below to assist with completion of the Seed Fund **Final Application**. A copy of the [rubric](#) and a sample completed application are available on the [Seed Fund Resources](#) page of the Charter System website.



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Cover Page

Type of Project – The cover page asks for the type of project being proposed by your school. Please select all options that apply. The options are:

- ***New School Project*** – the project has not been done before at your school
- ***New Seed Fund Project*** – your school has not received a Seed Fund award for this project
- ***Expansion of Existing School Project*** – this project is currently in operation at your school, but is not a project for which your school has received a Seed Fund award
- ***Expansion of Existing Seed Fund Project*** – an addition to a project that was previously granted a Seed Fund award

Progress Update – The last question on the cover page asks previous Seed Fund recipients to provide a progress update on any current Seed Fund grants. The purpose of the progress update is to ensure that Seed Fund award grantees have been good stewards of the funds they were previously awarded. The progress update should state the activities related to the Seed Fund grant that have been completed, are in progress, or have been delayed (including the reason for the delay), and any early project outcomes or results.

Project Summary

Section A: Needs Statement

Question 1 (Needs/Challenges: What is your problem?): The needs statement should state the problem that will be addressed by your proposed project. Provide specific student data, such as test scores for your school and data comparing your school or specific target group to similar groups in your cluster, district, state, and/or nation. Provide any other school related data to substantiate your school's needs/challenges (e.g., TKES, perception surveys, etc.).

Section B: Project Information

Question 2 (Target Population): Identify the school population that will be served by this project. Specifically indicate the number of individuals to be served, grade levels, special populations, etc.)

Question 3 (Project Plan): Use the table to outline your project plan. Outline the following areas:

- ***Implementation*** – How will the program be implemented? What activities are proposed for the project?



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- **Strategic Plan Alignment** - How does this project align with your school's strategic plan (strategic initiatives)?
- **Program Effectiveness** – What are the outcomes for the project? Keep in mind that these are not your long-term outcomes as laid out in your strategic plan, but rather, the immediate goals of the project. For example, if your project focuses on professional development, then measures for your program effectiveness could be survey results from the participating teachers on whether the project was beneficial to their development and how they have implemented new strategies in their classroom as a result of the professional development.
- **Program Impact** – What are the long-term outcomes that are anticipated as a result of this project? (e.g., student achievement measures).
- **Budget** – Align your budget estimations with the project activities in the first column. See sample application for assistance.

Question 4 (Measuring Project Results): Indicate how you will measure your project results for each of the project outcomes and long-term outcomes listed in your project plan (Question 3). Be sure to state where you will get the information to measure your project results. Include expected indicators and data sources to measure your project results. ***Once you have a draft of your project plan, your principal (or his/her school-employee designee) is encouraged to reach out to the district's Dept. of Research and Program Evaluation team (CharaniaM@fultonschools.org) for help with thinking through measuring your program results prior to the submission of your Seed Fund proposal.***

Question 5 (Research-based Project) – Include research or evidence that your proposed project will positively affect your school's student population. If no research exists, articulate the rationale for likelihood of success of the concept, and outline your plans for risk mitigation.

Question 6 (District Departments) – Provide the list of district departments and department personnel that have reviewed your proposal and provided feedback and implications on your request. **Please note: Failure to consult relevant district department personnel on your Seed Fund request may result in delayed implementation of, and/or inability to support, your project.**

Section C: Budget

Question 7 (Budget): The budget worksheet template is available on the [Seed Fund Resources](#) webpage. Use the budget template to enter the expected costs of your proposed concept for the applicable school years. Make sure that your budget worksheet totals match the budget



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totals outlined in your Project Plan table in Question 3. If you are making school-based personnel requests in your budget, you must enter the quantity of each position type in the Position Count column and the cost will be populated for you. All positions are paid according to the Fulton County Salary Schedule and these populated personnel costs include average position salary and benefits. Include the budget template with your **Final Application**.

Question 8 (Project Sustainability): Indicate your plan for sustaining this project beyond the one-year grant award. Use the table to indicate the proposed status of the project beyond the Seed Fund, specifically:

- **Growth/Maintenance/Sunset Plan** – What is the plan for the project beyond the 2016-17 school year? Will the project grow larger? Will it remain the same and need to be maintained? Or will it sunset to non-existence?
- **Items/Activities** – What are the specific items or activities that need to occur for the project to grow, maintain, or sunset?
- **Funding Source and Cost** – What are the funding sources for growth or maintenance of the program? What are the costs to grow or maintain the program?

Signatures

Seed Fund applications must be signed by the school Principal and School Governance Council Chair. Applications that do not contain all required signatures will not be considered for Seed Fund Awards.

Once received, all **Final Applications** will be reviewed by the Area Superintendent. Those submissions that are approved by the Area Superintendent will be forwarded to the Fulton Education Foundation for participation in the grant process. Schools are encouraged to communicate their Seed Fund ideas with their Area Superintendent as early as possible.

3. Seed Fund Question and Answer Session

The Fulton Education Foundation will review all schools' **Final Applications** in early January 2016. The Foundation will rate the strength of the **Final Applications** based on the stated [rubric](#) criteria and determine which schools will move forward to the Question and Answer session of the grant process. An invitation to the Question and Answer session is not a guarantee of a Seed Fund award. It is an opportunity for the Foundation to ask questions and gain clarification on school proposals. Schools that are invited to the Question and Answer session will only answer questions from the Foundation about their proposal. Schools will not draft or make a presentation to the Foundation.



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Schools that are not invited to the Question and Answer session will not continue in the process and will not receive a Seed Fund award.

Schools will be notified of their Question and Answer session status by January 25, 2016. Schools that are invited to continue in the process will participate in the Question and Answer session on February 8, 2016 at the offices of the NorthHighland Consulting Firm (3333 Piedmont Road, NE Suite 1000 Atlanta, GA 30305).