

Fiscal Year 2009
Innovation Grants:
Higher Education Cooperation Grants (HECA)
February 15, 2008

Frequently Asked Questions

- Q. What is the purpose of the HECA grant program?**
- A. HECA Innovation Grants provide start-up funds for new and innovative cooperative projects that will be completed or self-supporting within a one- to three-year period.
- Q. What constitutes an eligible HECA Innovation cooperative?**
- A. Cooperatives eligible to apply for a HECA Innovation Grant must include at least two public or private not-for-profit higher education institutions.
- Q. Can an institution submit more than one HECA Innovation proposal?**
- A. Yes
- Q. What is the focus of HECA Innovation grants for fiscal year 2009?**
- A. The focus of HECA Innovation Grants for fiscal year 2009 is increasing Baccalaureate Completion for all Illinois residents via projects that address access and affordability, P20 initiatives, persistence. Priority consideration will be given to proposals that assist underrepresented student populations.
- Q. Must the external evaluator be external to all participating institutions submitting the grant proposal?**
- A. Yes. In addition, the external evaluator must be qualified to conduct this type of activity; experienced in evaluation and familiar with the subject matter and topics addressed by the grant. Proposals must provide evidence of the recommended evaluator's appropriateness for the project, including a copy of a current resume or curriculum vitae.
- Q. Who must submit the supplemental Attachment #9?**
- A. All participating institutions are required to respond to the supplemental information request indicating participation in the specified statewide initiatives. This includes the fiscal agent institution.
- Q. Once decisions on the grants are made at the board meeting, how soon can I expect my grant funds?**
- A. It depends on how soon you can return required grant materials back to our office. Once we receive your grant materials, the entire process to process this grant takes approximately 6-8 weeks to process your voucher. The Comptroller's office process in itself takes 4-6 weeks.

Q. Can HECA funds be used to purchase consumable items such as food for a meeting?

A. Occasionally, grantees may undertake grant-related activities – such as meetings or conferences – at which meals, beverages, or other light refreshments are appropriately provided. Grant applicants should clearly identify and justify such expenditures in their budgets and budget justifications (Attachments 5 and 6). According to the Statewide Accounting Management System Manual (SAMS), food and drinks purchased directly from a vendor are commodities, while food purchases from a catering service are contractual service expenditures. Food and beverage purchases should be minimal and may not include alcoholic beverages.

Q. Can HECA funds be used for international travel?

A. No. HECA funds cannot be used for international travel.