



Illinois Board of Higher Education

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Illinois Private, Not-for Profit Higher Education Community
FROM: Ginger Ostro, Executive Director
DATE: August 29, 2022
RE: Request for Proposals: Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER II) for Underrepresented, First Generation, and High-Need Students
Due Date: September 26, 2022 @ 12:00pm

The Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER II) is intended to overcome barriers created by the COVID-19 pandemic. A portion of the GEER II monies have been allocated for Illinois not-for-profit, independent, four-year higher education institutions to continue to provide educational services. Specifically, \$1 million is set aside to support targeted initiatives to enroll and retain underrepresented, first-generation, and high-need students. These funds must be used to provide academic and social emotional learning supports as described below **for students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including African American, Latinx, low-income**, first generation, working adult, or rural students. The P-20 Council's [Learning Renewal Guide](#) has helpful resources.

Examples of academic and social emotional learning supports are provided below. This list is not exhaustive; additional proposed ways to support students are encouraged and may be officially approved upon review.

Institutions should outline the supports they will provide.

Academic Supports

- Support **enrollment, retention, and re-engagement initiatives that ensure academic progression for students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including African American, Latinx, low-income**, first generation, working adult, or rural students.
- Enhance the **accessibility of academic advising and counseling resources** for students most disadvantaged by COVID-19 circumstances.
- Evaluate and **improve hybrid/remote learning models** to develop long term digital strategic priorities.
- Improve quality of learning through **altered classroom structures, educator professional development, and digital tools**.

Social Emotional Learning Supports

- Develop and enhance **partnerships with community organizations** that connect students to comprehensive student support.
- Enhance the **behavioral health resources or other supports** for students most **impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including African American, Latinx, low-income**, first generation, working adult, or rural students.
- Invest in **infrastructure for mental health and wellness**, a non-exhaustive list of examples include: addressing gaps in mental health services on your campus, develop a web resource that features information dedicated solely to the mental health resources available to students, and to distribute messages related to mental health resources through the online learning platform, during high stress periods of the year.
- Support students with **structured engagement and enhanced communications**.

Eligible Institutions: *Illinois* non-profit, independent four-year institutions holding accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission.

Grant Period: The anticipated grant period will be November 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023.

Grant Funding: Institutions may apply for grants in the amount required to implement the initiatives within the term of the grant. IBHE anticipates funding eight individual grants at a maximum of \$125,000.

Grants to institutions will be supported by \$1,000,000 in federal funds as authorized by Section 312 of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021, Pub.L.No. 116-260, and subject to all other applicable laws.

The funds will be used to provide academic and social emotional learning supports as described above for students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including African American, Latinx, low-income, first generation, working adult, or rural students. The P-20 Council's Learning Renewal Guide has helpful resources.

Application Deadline: The application materials must be submitted via email to geer@ibhe.org. Applications must be received by 12:00 pm on September 26, 2022 to be considered for funding.

Contact Person: For more information on this application, contact Sophia Gehlhausen Anderson at gehlhausen@ibhe.org and geer@ibhe.org.

Background and Program Specifications

The Illinois Board of Higher Education is offering a competitive grant opportunity to non-profit, independent four-year institutions in Illinois holding accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission

Under the Governors Emergency Education Relief (GEER II) Fund, the U.S. Department of Education awarded grants to Governors for the purpose of providing institutions of higher education assistance as a result of the Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The funds will be used to provide academic and social emotional learning supports as described below for students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including African American, Latinx, low-income, first generation, working adult, or rural students. The P-20 Council's Learning Renewal Guide has helpful resources.

The aim of this grant opportunity is to award \$1 million in grants at a maximum of \$125,000 each to provide academic and social emotional learning supports in higher education by underrepresented, first-generation, and high-need students most impacted by COVID-19.

Grant Priority

During the review process, priority will be given to institutions which enroll student populations that predominately include a combination of the following:

- Underrepresented (e.g., African American, Latinx)
- First generation
- Rural
- Low income as defined by Pell-eligibility

Funding Allowances

Funding may be used to support target initiatives that enroll and retain underrepresented, first generation, and high-need students with targeted academic and social emotional supports as described above.

Those indirect costs approved as part of the institution’s Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate are allowable at a rate of 8% through GEER II funds.

Review of Proposals

Proposals will be reviewed, scored according to the rubric below, and selected by a committee convened by the Illinois Board of Higher Education. All applicants will be notified of the panel’s recommendations via an email message to each institution’s primary grant contact.

Submitted the Required Documents:

- Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance – Attachment 1
- Proposal Narrative – Attachment 2
- Uniform Budget Template – Attachment 3

Institutional Eligibility:

- Independent, Non-Profit 4-year institution in Illinois: YES NO
- Higher Learning Commission accreditation
(Institution provides statement or support for accreditation) YES NO

If any of the above is NO, the institution is not eligible for the grant.

GRANT PRIORITIES	MAX. POINTS
Institution describes need due to COVID-19 to enroll and retain the following student populations:	
High need as defined by Pell-eligibility (5 point for every quartile of Pell students served) 2020-2021 Pell Eligible students = _____ 2020-2021 Total Student Enrollment = _____	15
Extent to which the institution’s plan serves additional underrepresented population(s) to support enrollment and/or retention:	20

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underrepresented (e.g. African American, Latinx)* • First-generation • Rural 	
<p>Institution describes and justifies the approaches it will use to provide one or more of the following Academic and Social Emotional Supports to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic advising and counseling • Hybrid/remote learning models • Altered classroom structures, educator professional development, and digital tools • Improved access to comprehensive support through enhanced university partnerships with community organizations • Enhanced behavioral health resources or supports • Improved infrastructure for mental health and wellness • Structured engagement and enhanced communications <p>Please see the P-20 Council’s Learning Renewal Guide for additional explanation of these resources.</p>	45
Strength of institution’s plan to evaluate the success of these initiatives in terms of the enrollment, retention, and completion outcomes of the identified student population(s)	10
Strength of institution’s plan to use this grant to create systemic institutional change that will live on past the grant period.	10
TOTAL SCORE	<u>100</u>

***Five (5) bonus points will be awarded to institutions with status as [Minority Serving Institutions](#) as defined by the United States Department of Education (e.g. Hispanic-Serving Institution, Predominantly Black Institution, etc.).**

Proposal Format

Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please review the attachments carefully. The following may be used as a checklist in assembling your completed proposal.

1. **Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance (Attachment 1):**
This form must be completed, dated, and signed by the President/CEO of the fiscal agent.
2. **Proposal Narrative (Attachment 2):**
Limit to 5 double spaced pages. Within the proposal narrative, please:
 - Indicate you are an eligible institution.
 - Describe the need at the institution due to the COVID-19 crisis to enroll and retain the following student populations:
 - Underrepresented
 - First generation
 - Low income as defined by Pell-eligibility
 - Describe the initiative(s) the institution will use to provide academic and social emotional support to students.

3. **Uniform Budget Template (Attachment 3):**

Complete the budget form for each category including a detailed narrative of the estimated expenditures in the budgeted category. Examples of allowable activities and costs include the following:

Academic Supports

- Support **enrollment, retention, and re-engagement initiatives that ensure academic progression for students most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including African American, Latinx, low-income**, first generation, working adult, or rural students.
- Enhance the **accessibility of academic advising and counseling resources** for students most disadvantaged by COVID-19 circumstances.
- Evaluate and **improve hybrid/remote learning models** to develop long term digital strategic priorities.
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Social Emotional Learning Supports

- Develop and enhance **partnerships with community organizations** that connect students to comprehensive student support.
- Enhance the **behavioral health resources or other supports** for students most **impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including African American, Latinx, low-income**, first generation, working adult, or rural students.
- Invest in **infrastructure for mental health and wellness**, including, but not limited to: addressing gaps in mental health services on your campus, develop a web resource that features information dedicated solely to the mental health resources available to students, and to distribute messages related to mental health resources through the online learning platform, during high stress periods of the year.
- Support students with **structured engagement and enhanced communications**.

Items #4 to #5 are for informational purposes only and not required as part of the request for proposal submission.

4. **Project, Expenditure Reporting and Grant Payments:**

Each grantee will be required to submit project and expenditure reports. The reports will describe the progress of the project in mitigating barriers for enrolling and retaining students most impacted by COVID-19 and the expenditure of grant funds. The anticipated submission and period of these reports will be the following:

<u>Project Period</u>	<u>Submission Due Date</u>
Period 1 – November 1 to December 31, 2022	January 31, 2023
Period 2 – January 1 to March 31, 2023	April 30, 2023
Period 3 – April 1 to June 30, 2023	July 31, 2023
Period 4 – July 1 to September 30, 2023	October 31, 2023

5. **Uniform Grant Agreement Sample (Attachment 4):**

This is a sample of the agreement that will be used between the IBHE and grantee. This is not required to be completed and submitted with the request for proposal.