Indiana Employability Skills Innovation & Implementation Grant

Program Name	Indiana Employability Skills Innovation & Implementation Grant
Fiscal Year of Award	2022-2023

Application Release Date	April 21, 2022
Application Due Date	May 27, 2022
Electronic Submission Process	**Online Form**
Eligibility	Traditional public schools/districts, charter schools, non-public schools, and education service centers.
Award	ESSER Funding will be awarded to eligible high quality grant applications.
Grant Award Notification Date	July 2022

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Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

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Indiana Employability Skills Innovation & Implementation Grant

According to the "The High Demand for Durable Skills" report from America Succeeds, the demand for employability skills is as important to a student's career path as our focus on increasing educational attainment. After reviewing over 80 million job postings, the researchers learned that employers sought employability skills such as communication and collaboration nearly four times more than the top technical skills (Cole, L. & et al 5). Therefore, to ensure our K-12 students are set up for success beyond high school, we must prepare them academically AND help them master the transferable employability skills necessary to succeed in the career pathways they choose.

The purpose of this grant is to encourage and support schools as they work to embed into their curriculum the three Indiana Employability Skills highlighted within the Indiana Graduates Prepared to Success (Indiana GPS) framework: communication, collaboration and work ethic. This includes supporting opportunities to implement these skills throughout the K-12 continuum and designing competency-based platforms, badges and/or micro-credentials that assess student readiness in communication, collaboration, and work ethic using the standards of the Indiana Employability Skills. By supporting the development of skills-based performance assessments and competency-based rubrics, we can ensure these micro-credentials and badges will carry currency with external stakeholders alongside a high school diploma and other credentials students earn in high school.

Grant Overview

Indiana's Employability Skills Innovation Implementation (ESII) Grant provides competitive, discretionary grants to eligible traditional public schools/districts, charter schools, non-public schools, and education service centers. Applicants will submit innovation implementation plans focused on the Indiana Employability Skills of communication, collaboration, and work ethic for K-12 students. These skills have been identified as key characteristics most important to a student's preparation for success after high school, and therefore, have been embedded in our state's effort to launch the Indiana Graduates Prepared to Succeed (Indiana GPS) dashboard.

The IDOE will conduct an external evaluation of the data that examines the implementation process, validity of the micro-credentials and/or badges as a measure of skills readiness, and proposed recommendations to support continuous improvement.

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Successful applications will incorporate the following components:

- Transferability
  - Student proficiency of the Indiana Employability Skills means these essential qualities can be applied in any environment.
  - Successful applications will demonstrate how students will master communication, collaboration and work ethic throughout the K-Career continuum.

- Validity
  - Successful applications will demonstrate how:
    - Skill development is measured;
    - Skill measurement is differentiated between internal experiences (classroom) and external experiences (extracurricular, co-curricular, work-based learning);
    - Local/regional industry partners helped support skills being developed;
    - Student completion of micro-credentials provide external currency (preferential hiring, mentorship, career ladder, scholarships, college credit, etc.) to students; and
    - Skill development qualifies for Graduation Pathways (work-, project-, and service-based learning).

- Data collection
  - Data will help us understand the value of micro-credentials and badges, effectiveness of school implementation, and ultimately, determine the success of the ESSI grant.
  - All data must be reported to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) in the required data sharing format.

- High Quality Partnerships
  - Defined as partnerships with local and/or regional/state businesses, universities and/or colleges, or other stakeholders who provide external endorsement and engagement.

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Grant Goals

Primary goals of the grant:

1. Schools, in partnership with external stakeholders, will develop programming to measure student readiness and proficiency in the skills of communication, collaboration and work ethic.
2. Schools will increase the number of students mastering the Indiana Employability Skills standards of communication, collaboration and work ethic as measured through micro-credentials and badges.
3. Schools will implement systemic programming that has transferability with and validity from internal and external stakeholders around the skills of communication, collaboration, and work ethic.

Employability Skills Community of Practice

The IDOE believes innovation should be celebrated, supported, and propagated, at the community level with many opportunities to share insights and outcomes amongst school districts and community stakeholders. To encourage the transfer of ideas and notable findings, school districts and partner organizations are expected to participate in Communities of Practice, while implementing the ESII Grant. Your Community of Practice will be facilitated and maintained by IDOE. By executing the Community of Practice, IDOE aims to inspire creativity and recognize local success stories taking place throughout Indiana. Participation also allows IDOE to determine how these Indiana Employability Skills, specifically communication, collaboration and work ethic, can be measured to determine positive outcomes for all students.

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Application Process
The Application Components & Rubrics begin on page 10.

1. Important Dates
   - **April 21, 2022:** Applications open
   - **May 27, 2022:** Applications due; must be submitted through the **Online Form**
   - **July 2022:** Anticipated date of awards announcement
   - **September 30, 2023:** Encumbrance date
   - **December 15, 2023:** Reimbursement date deadline

2. Grant Timeline
   - **July 2022 - December 2023**

3. Applicant Support
   - For technical support or application clarity, applicants can contact Engagement@doe.in.gov. IDOE staff may not advise on application content.

4. Selection of Grant Awards

   Once all applications have been submitted, they will be reviewed internally. Reviewers attend required training sessions that cover the application and rubric used to evaluate programs. The link for the rubrics can be found on page 10.

   Once scored by the reviewers, application scores are screened for a significant score variance. IDOE will rank applications by final application scores. Top-scoring grant applications will be awarded until all funds have been exhausted.

   IDOE reserves the right to determine individual award amounts based on application content and funding availability.

5. Required Information for Submission
   - Online form application with required documents
     - Project Narrative, Budget Proposal, Budget Summary

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Grant Components

Applicants must develop and submit a grant narrative and budget that clearly articulates a plan that satisfies each of the evaluation criteria outlined below. Applications must:

- Describe the intended use of the grant funds in detail;
- Ensure proficiency of skills in communication, collaboration and work ethic are transferable by being applicable and having validity in any environment;
- Provide a strategic plan to evaluate program implementation, collect, share, and submit all relevant student data; and
- Describe and create high quality partnerships with local and/or regional businesses, universities and/or colleges, or other stakeholders to gain external endorsement that provides currency.

Project Narrative

The project narrative will include:

- Program Abstract
- Demonstration of Need and Local Data

Component 1: Transferability & Portability

The applicant's Indiana Employability Skills Implementation plan will:

- **1.1 -** Utilize Indiana Employability Skills to address college and career readiness.
- **1.2 -** Identify how students will **achieve proficiency** of the Indiana Employability Skills standards with an emphasis on **communication, collaboration and work ethic** through use of project-based, service-based or work-based learning experiences that are aligned to Graduation Pathways guidelines and vision.
- **1.3 -** Procure, license, or create **evidence-based learning resources** to ensure students have access to **high quality instructional material** to achieve proficiency of the Indiana Employability Skills with an emphasis on communication, collaboration and work ethic.
- **1.4 -** Demonstrate how the skills of communication, collaboration and work ethic are **transferable** for students throughout the K-12 school system and beyond.
- **1.5 -** Describe **previous experiences** implementing similar programming and provide information on the capacity to implement the proposed program.

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Component 2: Data Collection

The applicant's Indiana Employability Skills Implementation plan will:

- **2.1 -** Capture information to evaluate and subsequently inform growth, achievement, and/or other locally identified student outcome data indicators.
- **2.2 -** Outline the data that will be collected throughout the grant period and how it will be consistently collected and communicated to stakeholders and IDOE.
- **2.3 -** Affirm how data will have the capability to inform the IDOE data system and Indiana GPS Dashboard.

Component 3: Quality Partnerships

The applicant's Indiana's Employability Skills Implementation plan will:

- **3.1 -** Be aligned to local/regional workforce needs, local/regional employer needs; collaboration and communication with these stakeholders will be essential to ensure the acquired skills carry currency beyond the K-12 school system.
- **3.2 -** Include ways that skills' transferability and portability will be valuable to postsecondary institutions; collaboration and communication with these stakeholders will be essential to ensure currency beyond the K-12 school system.

*Eligible traditional public schools/districts, charter schools, non-public schools or education service centers must serve as the lead applicant. The school/district/education service center will be the recipient of grant funds and may then distribute funding to partners as detailed in their budget.

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Grant Requirements

Eligible Entities

- Traditional public schools/districts, charter schools, and non-public schools
- Education service centers

*More than one traditional public school/district, charter school, and non-public school can apply together under one application if utilizing the same external partner or within the same school district as long as there is one lead applicant responsible for fund distribution.

Assumptions regarding data and use of funds

- A data sharing agreement will be established between schools and partner organizations.
- Funds are restricted solely for execution of the ESII Grant.
- IDOE will serve as the fiscal agent for the grant. Terms of engagement between schools/districts and partner organizations(s) are the responsibility of the local parties.

Partnerships

As part of the program's design, schools may contract with partners to carry out the function(s) necessary to meet the established goals for grant implementation; however, such contracts must be entered into with the understanding that the school is the sole grantee and administrator of the program. Subcontractors must carry out the work specified in the contract agreement and may be reimbursed for goods and services reasonably necessary to carry out such functions in accordance with the objectives of the grant and parameters of the contract. Such reimbursement may be made only after the agreed-upon goods and services have been provided and documented. Schools may use grant funds under this program and/or other budgetary resources to support the successful execution of their Indiana Employability Skills Innovation and Implementation programs, including the reimbursement of those contracted to provide goods and/or services.

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Application Components and Rubrics

Applications should only be submitted once so please ensure applications are finalized before submitting. The online form for submitting applications can be found **here**. Applicants should submit a completed Project Narrative, Budget Summary (Excel format), and Budget Narrative in the online form application.

Section	Points Possible
1. Project Narrative	0
a. Program Abstract	8
b. Need & Local Data	12
c. Component 1 - Transferability & Portability	20
d. Component 2 - Data Collection	12
e. Component 3 - Quality Partnerships	8
2. Budget Summary	5
3. Budget Narrative	5
TOTAL	70

Please ensure you are following the rubrics that outline the points per category and requested information as you fill out the application narrative. ***Rubrics can be found at this*** *link*.

1. Project Narrative

Complete the Project Narrative document and upload it as an Excel file to the online application.

Program Abstract

1. Describe a typical day in the life of a student participating in this programming. In your abstract, please identify the following:

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    a. The primary focus for the program

    b. The district (if applicable), school, student grade levels, and number of students that will be served.

    c. The instructional materials or programs that will be used. IDOE has a list of [Evidence Based Interventions](#) and [Title IV Resources](#) that may be useful, but it is not required to guide your choice of resources.

    d. How does this programming address academic needs, student wellbeing, and/or college and career readiness needs exacerbated by the pandemic?

Demonstration of Need & Local Data (12 points)

1. What are local economic and workforce conditions in the district/school? What skills are needed most by employers surrounding this district/school?

2. How will your programming work to provide increased access among student populations, **including low income students, children with disabilities, English Learners, racially and ethnically diverse students, students experiencing homelessness, and children and youth in foster care?**

3. What local data will be reviewed to identify student needs (i.e. achievement data, discipline data, etc.)?

4. What stakeholder feedback informed the local needs?

Transferability & Portability (24 points total 1.1-1.5)

1. Describe the programming you will use to implement the Indiana Employability Skills and address college and career readiness for students grade K-12.

2. How will students demonstrate proficiency of communication, collaboration and work ethic as outlined in the Indiana Employability Skills? How will you use the guardrails defined in the [Graduation Pathways policy document](#) to validate the proficiency of these skills through project-, service-, and work-based learning opportunities?

3. What learning resources will you use to ensure students have access to a high quality curriculum to achieve proficiency in communication, collaboration and work ethic as outlined in the Indiana Employability Skills?

4. Describe the capability of these skills to transfer with the individual student. If the student leaves your school system, how will these skills be applicable in their new setting?

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5. Has your school/district had previous experience implementing programming similar to the proposed program? What is your capacity to implement this in the 2023-2024 school year?

Data Collection 2.1-2.3

1. How will the program capture information to evaluate and inform growth, achievement, and/or other data indicators?
2. What data will be collected throughout the grant period? How will this data be communicated to IDOE?
3. Will this data collection be able to be reflected on the Indiana GPS dashboard?

Data *Example*:

Grant Data Metrics		
Metric	**Current State: Baseline Data** (Number & Percentage of Students Engaged)	**Future State: Data Goal** (Number & Percentage of Students Engaged)
K-8th Grade Student Engagement in Indiana Employability Skills		
9th-12th Grade Student Engagement in Indiana Employability Skills		
11th & 12th Grade Student Engagement in Work Based Learning Experiences		
Other Metrics		
Other Metrics		

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Quality Partnerships 3.1-3.2

1. Describe the alignment of your programming to **workforce and local/regional employer needs**. How will you collaborate and communicate with stakeholders to ensure value beyond K-12?
2. Describe the alignment of your programming to **postsecondary institutions**. How will you collaborate and communicate with stakeholders to ensure value beyond K-12?

2. Budget Summary & Narrative

Complete the Budget Summary document and upload it as an Excel file to the online application.

Complete the Budget Narrative document and upload it as a PDF file to the online application.

Grant funds may not be used for the following unallowable expenses:
- Non-academic entertainment
- Preparation of the initial grant application
- Pre-award costs (incurred before the grant effective date)
- Decorative items
- Purchase of facilities or vehicles
- Land acquisition
- Capital improvements
- Permanent renovations
- Food including refreshments/snacks
- Indirect costs

Examples of allowable expenses:
- Grant funds must be reasonable, allocable, and necessary to fulfill the objectives of the grant. Evaluators will cross reference the budget to the Application Narrative. Any expenses listed on the Budget Summary or Narrative that do not line up with the described program may result in a failed budget.

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Reimbursement

- Final reimbursements will be due by December 15, 2023.
- Reimbursement funding will be provided to grant recipients after the expenses within the grant period have occurred.
- Grant recipients will follow procedures to obtain reimbursement monthly.
- Reimbursement forms and directions will be provided after the grant contracts have been fully executed.

Submission

Please submit the Application Narrative, Budget Summary, and Budget Narrative to the [ESII Grant Application Form](#) no later than 11:59 PM EDT on May 27, 2022. Grant notifications are anticipated to be released in July of 2022. Please reach out with questions or concerns to the following:

- K-8 application - Engagement@doe.in.gov
- 9-12 application - StudentPathways@doe.in.gov

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