Louisiana Hunger-Free Campus Innovative Award

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Eligibility and Application Requirements

1. Is the Innovative Award a one-time funding opportunity, or will applications be accepted annually?

The Innovative Award is currently a one-time funding opportunity supported by the $1 million legislative appropriation. While the Louisiana Board of Regents hopes to secure recurring funding, future award opportunities will depend on available appropriations.

2. Are institutions that received a 2026 Hunger-Free Campus Award eligible to apply for the Innovative Award?

Yes. All institutions that currently hold the Louisiana Hunger-Free Campus designation are eligible to apply, including institutions that received awards in previous years. Applications will be reviewed through a new competitive process.

3. Are universities allowed to submit more than one school or campus proposal, or should requests be combined into one institutional application?

No. Only one application may be submitted per institution. Schools, departments, or campuses within the same institution should coordinate their requests and submit one institutional application.

Award Amounts and Project Proposals

4. Must institutions request the full $50,000 award amount?

No. Institutions may request up to $50,000. Applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that reflect their specific project needs, even if the requested amount is less than $50,000.

5. Can an institution propose a project with a total cost exceeding $50,000?

Yes. Institutions may propose projects with total costs exceeding $50,000; however, the maximum Innovative Award request is $50,000. Applicants may describe the full scope of the larger project, including its total cost and any additional funding sources, in the application narrative. The submitted budget template should include only the expenses proposed for support through the Innovative Award, not to exceed $50,000.

6. Will institutional matching funds or additional financial support strengthen an application?

Institutional contributions and additional funding sources may demonstrate sustainability, institutional commitment, and the potential for broader impact. Applicants are encouraged to describe any additional resources supporting their proposed project.

7. Can institutions use the Innovative Award to expand an existing initiative or establish an additional campus resource center?

Yes. Proposals may include projects that expand existing services, establish additional locations, or increase student access to food and basic-needs resources. Applicants should clearly describe how the proposed activities will increase access and benefit students. Only expenditures and project activities occurring within the approved contract period are eligible for reimbursement.

Allowable Expenses

8. Would the purchase of a Mobile Food Unit be considered an allowable expense under the Innovative Award funding guidelines?

All purchases made with Innovative Award funds must comply with applicable institutional and state procurement laws, policies, and procedures. Institutions are responsible for ensuring that proposed purchases meet these requirements and can be completed within the approved contract period. Applicants should carefully consider procurement timelines, particularly for customized equipment or items that may require additional time for fabrication and delivery.

Financial Requirements and Reimbursement

9. How can institutions participate if the proposed expenditures were not included in their approved annual budgets?

Institutions should consult their finance or business offices before applying to determine whether they can cover project expenses in advance of reimbursement. Institutional financial approval is an important part of the application process.

10. How frequently will institutions receive reimbursement?

Reimbursements are anticipated to occur quarterly. Additional guidance regarding reimbursement procedures and required documentation will be provided to award recipients.

11. Who should provide the required financial signature on the application?

The financial signature should come from an institutional official authorized to approve the proposed financial commitment and confirm that expenditures comply with applicable purchasing and financial requirements. The appropriate individual may vary by institution and could include a budget authority, finance administrator, or Chief Financial Officer.

12. Can an institution use foundation funds to cover initial expenditures and receive reimbursement through its foundation account rather than a state account?

The Board of Regents cannot contract with or provide award funding directly to a campus foundation for this purpose. The institution must be the contracting entity, and all reimbursements must be paid directly to the institution. The institution is responsible for maintaining documentation supporting the costs submitted for reimbursement.

13. What happens if an institution receives a $50,000 award but is unable to expend the full amount during the contract period?

Institutions are expected to make every effort to complete their proposed projects and expend funds within the established contract period. While no financial penalty is currently anticipated solely for unspent award funds, an institution’s fulfillment of its contractual commitments may be considered when evaluating applications for similar funding opportunities in the future.

Contract Period and Expenditure Deadlines

14. What is the anticipated contract period for the Innovative Award?

The contract period will be February 1, 2027, through March 31, 2028.

15. Is there a specific deadline by which all awarded funds must be spent?

The funds must be spent by March 31, 2028.

16. Can expenditures incurred before the contract period be reimbursed?

No. Only expenditures and project activities occurring within the approved contract period, and provided for in the contract budget, are eligible for reimbursement. Institutions should review their final award agreements before making purchases or incurring project expenses.