REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

Innovative Funding RFA 2027

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. PURPOSE OF THIS RFA

Act 3 of the 2026 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature allocated $1 million to the Board of Regents for the Louisiana Hunger-Free Campus designation and award program. Of this investment, $500,000 is available through a competitive Innovation Award opportunity for designated public and private postsecondary institutions.

This RFA supports innovative strategies that expand and strengthen institutional efforts to address student food insecurity and basic food needs.

B. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR; QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS RFA

Written inquiries regarding this RFA and the requirements set forth herein must be directed to Hunger.Free@laregents.edu.

Questions will be accepted only in writing and must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. CST on **November 9, 2026**. All questions submitted regarding this RFA and all answers provided in response to these questions will be posted on the Hunger-Free Campus Initiative page of the Louisiana Board of Regents website (https://www.laregents.edu/hungerfree/) no later than 4:00 p.m. CST on November 16, 2026. To ensure that all interested parties receive the same information, no questions will be accepted after the deadline.

C. PUBLIC NATURE OF APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

Once an application is received by Regents, it becomes a public record. Submitting entities should be aware that if the public requests a copy of an application, a copy must, by law, be provided.

D. ELIGIBILITY

All Louisiana public and private postsecondary institutions that have achieved and currently hold the Hunger-Free Campus designation are eligible to apply for the Innovation Award (see Addendum).

II. PROCEDURES AND DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications must be complete upon submission and submitted via the JotForm link below:

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No other mode of submission will be accepted. Applications must include all required materials and include the approval of the institution's president/chancellor, or designee, through the required signature certification.

The submission deadline is absolute. No materials will be accepted after the date and time specified in Section III of this RFA. An application may be withdrawn for editing before the deadline; however, the revised application must be resubmitted before the deadline to be considered.

A confirmation email will be sent upon receipt of the application.

Applications will be reviewed and scored by a selection committee using the criteria in Section II.C of this RFA. Award selections will be based on those criteria and the availability of funds. Selection committee decisions are final. Award notifications will be emailed on **January 22, 2027**.

A. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS – Included in the JotForm

The application must provide a clear and complete description of the proposed innovative project or initiative. The JotForm application will request the following information:

1. **Name of Institution:**
   - Provide the name of the submitting institution.

2. **Hunger-Free Campus Primary Contact Information:**
   - Provide the name and contact information of the primary contact person for the application.

3. **Innovation Proposal:**
   Guiding Focus: Tell us what you propose and why it is needed – the What and Why.

   - Provide a clear overview of the proposed innovative **project, program, service, technology, partnership, or strategy** the institution proposes to implement with Hunger-Free Campus Innovation Award funding.
   - Identify the specific student food insecurity or basic-needs challenge, service gap, or opportunity the proposal addresses.

4. **Innovation and Implementation Plan:**
   Guiding Focus: What makes it innovative and how will you do it?

   - Describe how the project will introduce a new innovative approach, significantly improve or adapt to an existing practice, or remove a barrier to student access.
   - Provide the anticipated implementation timeline, responsible offices or personnel, and key milestones.
   - Describe the major activities and strategies that will be undertaken to implement the project.

5. **Institutional Support, Partnerships, and Sustainability:**
   Guiding Focus: Who/what will support the project and how can it continue?

- Identify the institutional resources, staffing, facilities, technology, or other support that will contribute to successful implementation.
- Describe any campus, community, nonprofit, business, student, or other partnerships that will support or strengthen the project.
- Describe how the institution plans to sustain, expand, or build upon the project beyond the award period, when applicable.
- Describe whether and how the project could be replicated by, adapted by, or shared with other Louisiana postsecondary institutions as a promising practice.

6. **Student Impact:**
   Guiding Focus: Who will benefit, what will change, and how will you know?

   - Describe how the initiative will improve students' awareness of, access to, or utilization of food or other resources that address basic needs insecurity.
   - Identify any barriers the project is specifically designed to reduce or eliminate.
   - Explain how the institution will track progress, measure results, and determine whether the project achieved its intended goals.

7. **Approval Page:**
   - Submit the Hunger-Free Campus Representative and President/Chancellor Designee Approval Form (attached to the application materials).

8. **Project Budget:**
   - Complete and upload the Project Budget Template (attached to the application materials). This form must be signed by an Authorized Institutional Financial Representative.

B. BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Funding is limited and must be used to support innovative projects that directly advance the Hunger-Free Campus Initiative. Applications must clearly describe and justify all proposed expenditures and demonstrate how each expenditure supports project objectives and student outcomes.

Disallowed Budget Items

Because Innovative Funding is intended to support project-based activities, these funds may not be used for:

- Long-term maintenance contracts for equipment or services.
- Covering institutional budget deficits or shortfalls.
- Tuition payments.
- Salary enhancements for individuals performing regularly assigned duties (except approved merit or cost-of-living increases).
- Unspecified contingency expenditures.
- Expenses unrelated to the proposed innovative project.
- Discounts received for equipment purchases may not be counted as institutional matching support, if applicable.

Allowable Expenses

Subject to state procurement and purchasing guidelines, funds may be used for any reasonable and necessary expense that directly supports the proposed project and is clearly explained and justified in the application.

All travel expenses must comply with State procedures and reimbursement rates as established by the Division of Administration Policy and Procedure Memorandum 49 (State General Travel Regulations).

Funding Availability

The maximum amount awarded is $50,000 per applicant. Applicants may request funding up to, but not exceeding, $50,000. Award amounts will vary based on the proposed project, demonstrated need, anticipated impact, and availability of funds. Institutions should request only the amount necessary to support the proposed activities.

Method of Payment

Selected institutions will be required to enter into a written agreement with the Board of Regents and to comply with all applicable funding and reporting requirements. Funding awarded through this program will be provided on a cost-reimbursement basis. Recipients will not receive funds in advance, but will be required to submit reimbursement requests with appropriate supporting documentation demonstrating eligible expenses incurred in accordance with the approved project budget and program requirements. Reimbursements will be processed following review and approval of submitted documentation.

C. APPLICATION RATING FORM AND SCORING RUBRIC

Applications will be evaluated using the criteria below. A smaller-scale project may receive the same level of consideration as a larger project when it demonstrates strong innovation, student impact, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness.

Criterion	Points	What Reviewers Should Consider
Innovation & Transformative Approach	30	Does the proposal present a new or meaningfully different approach for the institution that moves beyond simply maintaining or increasing the capacity of an existing program? Does the project demonstrate creative problem-solving, significant adaptation, or meaningfully change or improve how the institution addresses student food insecurity or basic food needs such as: improvement of an existing practice, a new service-delivery model or strategy, or a new approach to reducing barriers?
Student Need & Potential Impact	20	Is the need or opportunity clearly demonstrated? Will the project meaningfully improve student awareness of, access to, or utilization of food/basic-needs resources? Is the anticipated reach or depth of impact reasonable? Is the proposed approach responsive to the identified need?
Implementation & Feasibility	15	Does the proposal provide a clear and realistic implementation plan, timeline, and responsible team for the innovative approach? Does the institution demonstrate the capacity and resources necessary to successfully implement the project within the award period?
Measurable Outcomes	10	Are expected outcomes specific and measurable? Will the evaluation approach allow the institution to determine whether the innovative strategy achieved its intended goals and benefited students?
Sustainability & Broader Application	10	Can the initiative be sustained, expanded, integrated, or built upon beyond the Innovation Award period? Could the approach be replicated, adapted, or shared as a promising practice with other Louisiana postsecondary institutions?
Partnerships & Leveraged Resources	5	Does the proposal effectively use campus/community partnerships, institutional resources, or other support to increase impact or sustainability?
Budget & Cost Effectiveness	10	Is the requested amount reasonable and well justified? Do expenditures align with project goals and anticipated impact? Does the proposal represent an appropriate use of state funds?
Total Points	**100**	

III. TIMETABLE

October 30, 2026	RFA issued
November 9, 2026, 4:00 p.m. CST	Deadline for submission of questions about the RFA
December 14, 2026, 4:00 p.m. CST	Application submission final deadline
December 15, 2026 - January 15, 2027	Applications reviewed and scored by the selection committee
January 22, 2027	Selection of application(s) announced by email and posted to the Hunger-Free Campus Initiative page on the Louisiana Board of Regents website