



How Can Afterschool and Summer Programs Access Federal Stimulus Education Title I Funds?

As we foster innovation in where our children are learning, let's also foster innovation in when our children are learning. That's why I'm calling for us not only to expand effective afterschool programs, but to rethink the school day to incorporate more time – whether during the summer or through expanded-day programs for children who need it.

-President Barack Obama

Background

Through the federal economic stimulus package, officially called the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (ARRA) **Georgia's schools will receive an estimated \$351 million in Title I, Part A funding.** Title I refers to the section of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) targeted at "Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged." These funds will flow through the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to local school systems, referred to as Local Education Agencies (LEAs), based on the existing Title I formula.

ARRA Title I dollars provide school systems with a unique opportunity to "think outside the box" and consider new options to support students and educators to not only improve academic achievement, but ensure students graduate from high school ready to compete in our complex, interconnected, global economy. With that in mind, school systems and out-of-school time programs should take advantage of the opportunities that afterschool, summer and extended learning programs provide to help kids succeed in the classroom and beyond.

How Much Money is My District Going to Receive?

GaDOE has provided a breakdown of funds for individual school districts on its stimulus information website. To access the district breakdown visit <https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=1262&AID=178417>.

What Can Title I Dollars Be Spent On?

In its guidance, US Department of Education (ED) explains Title I, Part A funds should be allocated in alignment with the core goals of ARRA: **to save and create jobs and to improve student achievement** through school improvement and reform. US DOE further suggests appropriate uses of these funds including teacher training, expanding preK programs to more children, implementing longitudinal data systems, and **establishing or expanding extended learning opportunities including afterschool and summer programs.**

What is the Timing?

Title I dollars will flow to Georgia in two rounds. The first 50% came to Georgia April 1, 2009 and the second half will be awarded by September 30, 2009 after the GaDOE submits an application to ED reporting on how the first half was spent. School systems are already planning for and may be spending the first 50% of the funds.

Who Decides How to Spend These Dollars?

LEAs will decide how to spend these dollars. LEAs will submit Consolidated Applications to GaDOE for approval before LEAs are able to receive funds. These applications will lay out the plan for Title I stimulus funds as well as other federal funding streams.

Who Do I Talk to?

Because local school systems decide how to spend the money, you should contact your principal, superintendent, or district Title I coordinator. If you do not have a relationship with these officials yet, this is a great opportunity to build one!

How Do I Make My Case?

- First things first: Not only are **afterschool and summer learning specifically encouraged as a good use of Title I stimulus funding**, but President Obama and US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan have consistently stressed the importance of more time for learning through before and afterschool programs and summer learning opportunities in their public statements about education reform. **Share this with the education officials.**
- Make sure to show **how your program helps the schools meet their academic goals**. Share data showing increases in academic achievement and engagement in learning or reductions in disruptive behavior and absenteeism on the part of students in your program. In addition, explaining how your program aligns with Georgia Performance Standards and school curriculum will help bolster support.
- As mentioned above, a major goal of ARRA is to save and create jobs. In your pitch, **provide data on the number of jobs you will save and/or create by serving more students, opening new sites or expanding programming.**

Is There Anything Else I Should Know?

The unfortunate reality is that school systems across Georgia are struggling due to budget cuts and thus, may be focusing on how to support current personnel and programs. Luckily, schools will receive federal support for their general budgets via the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF), another stimulus funding stream. While this might not completely close the budget gap, schools are in a much better fiscal situation with the SFSF than they would have been without it.

Unlike SFSF funds, Title I dollars are expected to be targeted to help improve teaching and learning for students most at risk of not meeting academic standards. Moreover, Title I stimulus funds must be used to **supplement, not supplant** state or local funds. Secretary Duncan has urged schools to move beyond budget holes and instead to **use stimulus funding to focus on implementing innovative ideas and bringing proven strategies to scale.**

Recommendations

Depending on your program, you may propose serving more students in your current program or opening new sites in additional schools or communities. Perhaps you will want to expand your current program offerings to better meet students' academic needs. We've provided some ideas for you to consider but remember that **you know best what your program offers kids and schools.**

- Support **cross-training and professional development for teachers and afterschool providers** to align classroom content and out-of-school time programming. When in-school and out-of-school educators work together on behalf of students, they are able to create a seamless day of learning and better help students meet academic goals.
- Invest in **technology for afterschool and summer programs to assist them in engaging students**. Out-of-school time programs are often able to provide students with experiential learning and innovative projects that connect kids to education in different ways than traditional schools. Yet out-of-school time programs seldom have adequate technological resources. Using Title I, Part A funds to support technology would ensure the benefits of the investment are in place long after the stimulus funds are depleted.
- Support **summer learning for middle and high school students with a goal of stemming the dropout crisis in Georgia**. Kids drop out of school for a number of reasons, but an apparent disconnect between school and the "real world" is an often cited cause. Innovative summer learning programs geared towards the needs of older youth can prevent students from disengaging in their education and bring those who have mentally dropped out, back in. Summer programs that incorporate apprenticeships, service learning, or opportunities to earn money will help make the connection between education and life beyond high school.