**Responses to questions regarding OLA FY26 Grants,** [**FC181 English Learner Education Support**](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2026/0181/) **and** [**FC189 Proficiency Outcomes in World Languages**](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2026/0189/)

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Applications for both the FC181 and the FC189 are due Friday, June 27th by 5:00 pm. Competitive grant applications are not considered submitted until the Superintendent / Chief Executive approves the grant application in GEM$. In order to be considered for competitive funding, the Superintendent/Chief Executive MUST approve the application in GEM$ by 5:00 pm on June 27th.**

# General Questions

**Question:** What is the maximum grant request? Is there a limit to how much funding we can request?
**Response:** There is no application cap on any goal for the FC181. You may apply for any amount you feel is necessary to achieve your goal, but please understand that this is a competitive grant, and we do not guarantee funding of any application. You may receive partial funding or no funding at all.

The FC189 does have funding guidelines which you can access in GEM$ or view a summary of in the FY26 OLA Competitive Grants Webinar presentation.

**Question**: Are previous awardees eligible to apply?

**Response:** Organizations that have previously been awarded FC181 Goal 1 three or more times are no longer eligible to apply for FC181 Goal 1. They are eligible to apply for FC181 Goals 2, 3, and 4, as well as for FC189 Goals 1 and 2.

**Question**: What schools or districts are included in the Strategic Transformation Region?
**Response**: The Strategic Transformation Region includes:

* Dever Elementary School (Boston)
* UP Academy Holland (Boston)
* Lawrence Public Schools
* Southbridge Public Schools
* Holyoke Public Schools
* Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership

**Question**: When will grant funding be available?

**Response:** We can never say with certainty when funding will be available, but we hope for a start date of 9/1/2025.

## FC181 Questions

**Question**: "Districts may apply for up to two goals, *if* one of the goals is Goal 2 or Goal 3. This means that districts may apply for either Goal 1 or Goal 4, but not both." What combination can you do? Can you apply to both #2 and #3?
**Response**: Yes, you may apply for both Goals 2 and 3. The only UNACCEPTABLE combination of two goals would be 1 and 4.

**Question:** Can PD be used to deliver/ attain SEI endorsement? Or is this restricted only to ESL licensure or DL endorsement specifically?
**Response:** FC181 funding can not be used towards SEI Endorsement.

**Question**: Is it worth applying for this grant if there are fewer than 50 Els in our district
**Response**: All districts with ELs are eligible to apply, but this grant does prioritize districts that serve larger numbers of ELs.

**Question:** What is an alternative ELE program?
**Response:** For the purpose of FC181 it’s a Bilingual/Dual Language Education program.

**Question**: Can the funds be used to hire ML Paras to help support our ML classrooms?
**Response**: No, that is not aligned to the goals of FC181.

**Question:** I see the goal of 181 is to promote bilingual/multilingual approaches and programs. Will applications that focus on ESL only, and not bilingual education, be considered competitive?
**Response:** The FC181 would not fund an ESL program under Goal 1, but does fund ESL Hubs under Goal 3 and ESL Curriculum development, enrichment, or alignment under Goal 4.

**Question**: We're applying for a new DL strand in a new school, but we received grant funding for Goal 1 three times in the past already. Does this mean we cannot apply for this again, even though we are applying for a new school?

**Response**: A district may only receive Goal 1 funding three times. If your district has received Goal 1 funding three times, it’s no longer eligible.

**Question**: Can you apply for Goal 2 if you don’t have a bilingual/dual language program implemented yet?

**Response**: You could apply for Goal 2 if you can demonstrate that you have a bilingual program in development.

**Question**: Is the grant available to EPP (Out-of-State Educator Preparation Programs?) The program is accredited by higher learning commission, fully online, no travel required.

**Response**: While EPPs (out of state or otherwise) are not eligible to apply, they are eligible partners for applicant districts, and the out-of-state PPP is an eligible partner if the program meets Massachusetts standards and doesn’t require travel.

**Question**: Can one IHE partner with two hubs submissions - one Bilingual Hub (goal #2) and One ESL Hub (goal #3)- and be included in those two submissions on GEM$?
**Response**: Yes, one IHE may be included as partner in multiple applications.

**Question**: Do we need a university backing to be able to apply for Goal 2? Or can districts establish their own "hub"?

**Response**: Applicants must apply in partnership with an Institute of Higher Education for Goals 1, 2, and 3.

**Question**: Are districts required to partner with another district for goal 3, or only an IHE?
**Response**: Districts are only required to partner with an IHE but are strongly encouraged to partner with other districts as well.

**Question**: Can we partner with more than one institution of higher education to allow choice of program for our candidates?
**Response**: There’s nothing that would disallow this, if the expense can be justified.

**Question**: How can we define what programs or professional development are approved in the grant? For example, if a certificate program leads to a Teaching English Learners endorsement in MA, does this suffice?
**Response**: No, the purpose of Goal 3 is to fund programs that result in ESL Licensure.

**Question**: Can the funding be used for teachers to attain an additional ESL Masters if they already have ex elementary or secondary masters? Can the funding be used towards a MAT plus one ESL? The biggest leak in the teacher pipeline is at the Bachelors level, and this would be a HUGE incentive for our high school students to pursue teaching if they could get a bachelors plus masters in 5 years.
**Response**: The funding can be used toward PD that directly leads to ESL licensure. That PD may be part of a Bachelor’s or Master’s program, but this funding cannot be used toward any aspect of the program that does not lead directly to ESL licensure.

**Question**: Can the funds be used for HS student programming to build skills as ESL educators initially
**Response**: No, Goal 3 funding can’t be used for any HS program.

**Question:** For Goal 4, are we allowed to use the funds to purchase high-quality curriculum and provide related training, or are the funds intended solely for developing our own curriculum?
**Answer:** Goal 4 funding may NOT be used to purchase curriculum materials to use as-is.

**Question**: Can funds be used to pay for a DESE-approved PD consultant to help coach / guide the team working on Priority 4?
**Response**: This use of funds could be approved provided sufficient justification.

### FC189 Questions

**Please be aware that the goal of and eligibility for the FC189 is slightly different than it’s been in previous years:**

Grantees must:

* Commit to three years of data collection, analysis, and engagement with the statewide WLAT;
* Assess representative samples of students at various milestones within their WL programs (including those in HL courses if applicable);
* Convene a local WL Advisory Team to analyze assessment data and study course enrollment trends;
* Actively engage in all DESE WLAT meetings, sharing local analyses with the Department;
* Attend all OLA Network Meetings, and present at least one session;
* Ensure alignment to the 2021 WL Curriculum Framework by designating a representative to attend the World Languages Proficiency Academy, which provides targeted support and guidance, and by participating in quarterly virtual check-ins; and
* Agree to permit DESE to observe and record classroom instruction, staff meetings, and/or advisory team meetings if requested.

**Question**: Are there subgoals for Grant 189 this year?
**Response**: No.

**Question**: How many people should comprise this team?

**Response**: The Department does not prescribe the number. Submissions will be scored based on the thoroughness of consideration of the team and their ability to equitably serve all students.

**Question**: Is the expectation that we will assess all students, or a representative sample?
**Response**: Districts receiving funds under FC189 will commit to assessing representative samples of students at various milestones. Districts will identify their assessment plan in the application, and responses will be scored based on how equitable and representative that data sample is likely to be.

**Question**: Would the grant cover funding for a consultant to help with the process?
**Response**: No. The Department has already secured a partner to provide district support as part of the statewide World Languages Advisory Team.

**Question**: Is there a breakdown of how many assessments can be ordered at the $25 price point? Is there a maximum or recommended number of students to test?
**Response**: FC 189 does not limit a minimum or maximum amount of assessments to be purchased. Districts present their assessment plan in the application.

**Question**: Since this is a multi-year commitment, will there be funding available for assessments in future years, or will we need to re-apply?
**Response**: Future year funding is not guaranteed, you will need to reapply.

**Question**: We would like to present at OLA meetings, but sometimes the dates conflict with a major school-based event (like graduation). Can an alternate date/time be considered?
**Response**: In the event of this sort of conflict an alternate date/time can be considered.

**Question:** Will the FC189 support instructional materials for World Language/Dual language programs this year? Or is it just for assessments and stipends for data teams?
**Answer:** The FY26 FC189 will not provide funding for instructional materials.

**Question:** Is there any funding for language progressional development for world language/heritage teachers?
**Answer:** The FY26 FC189 will not provide funding for professional development.

**GEM$ Question:**

**Question**: I don’t see the grant in GEM$, can you give me access?

**Response**: Rather than searching for the grant please click on “Funding” on the left-hand menu. If you still don’t see the FC181 or FC189, please click on “Address Book” to learn who your User Access Administrator is, then contact them and ask to be assigned as a grant writer on the FC181 and/or FC189.

**Question**: Can districts be provided with printable copies of Part III documents?

**Response:** The Goal Narratives (formerly Part III) can be printed directly from GEM$.

**Question**: Can IHE and other out of district partners be given access to the FC181 or FC189 in GEM$
**Response**: At the district’s discretion, the district’s User Access Administrator(s) may add out of district partners in either LEA Data View (view only access) or Grant Writer (edit access) roles.

**Question:** In the budget, what is the difference between "contracted services" and "contracted services major?" Also, if the intent is to pay stipends to instructors, as opposed to FTEs, would that go under "other salaries?” How should reimbursements for MTELs be categorized? **Response:** Please see the [GEM$ Chart of Accounts Guidance and Crosswalk](https://mass.egrantsmanagement.com/DocumentLibrary/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentKey=1714&inline=true) for the answers to these questions.