**Responses to questions regarding OLA FY25 Grants, FC181 English Learner Education Support and FC189 Proficiency-based Outcomes in Languages Other than English**

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Applications for both the FC181 and the FC189 are due Friday, September 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 September 27th.**

# General Questions

**Question:** Is there a cap on how much we can apply for? If we apply for a large amount, will this cause us to not be funded at all, or is there a possibility that our proposal can receive partial funding?  
**Response:** There is no application cap on any goal for either the FC181 or the FC189. 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.

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

**Response:** We can’t say when funding will be available.

**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.

## FC181 Questions

**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**: Is Grant 181 a result of the Look Act and is it available yearly?  
**Response**: Yes, funding for the FC181 was initiated after the passing of the LOOK Act and is available yearly, pending continued funding from the Commonwealth.

**Question**: We are thinking multiyear,  could we use these funds to provide stipends, training, and travel to learn from other districts as part of our development and year 2 implement the program?  
**Response**: While repeated funding can never be guaranteed, a planning year for a new program or hub is eligible for funding under Goals 1, 2, or 3.

**Question**: Does Goal 3 funding of the FC181 allow SEI classroom teachers to deepen their knowledge of differentiating learning for Multilingual Learners?

**Response:** No, Goal 3 of the FC181 cannot be used to fund professional learning for SEI teachers.

**Question**: Do we need a university backing to be able to apply for Goal 2 with grant fund code 181? Or can districts establish their own "hub"?

**Response**: Applicants must apply in partnership with an Institute of Higher Education for Goals 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 for Goals 2 and 3, but are strongly encouraged to partner with other districts as well

**Question**: We (two districts) are collaborating on Goal 3 the ESL Teacher HUB Goal. We had a question about coursework, we partner with [IHE] already for Goal 2 Bilingual HUB grant and for ease of implementation we met with them about coursework for ESL teacher pipeline. They currently do not have a bachelor’s degree program for BA, but they went through the list of BA programs and one of interest was a program that focuses on moderate disabilities, and they said they could tailor the program to incorporate a dual certification of Moderate Disabilities and ELL. Would that be acceptable and in line with the grant goals?

Response: This may be eligible for funding provided that the following criteria are met:

1. That the program is not weighted toward moderate disabilities, and all SMKs for ESL are covered.
2. That graduates of the program are eligible for ESL licensure

**Question:** We are an SEI district and have seen a significant increase in our ML student population, in particular newcomer and SLIFE students. Can we apply for grant funds to implement a bilingual night school program model at Gloucester High School to support SLIFE and newcomer students even though we are an SEI district?   
**Response:** It’s possible that this project could be funded under Goal 1: Develop and/or implement an alternative bilingual ELE program for English learners, **BUT** – as with any new alternative ELE program – you would have to go through the new program proposal process (preliminary proposal due Nov 15th and final proposal due Jan 1st for programs to open the following year). This grant may be used to fund essential planning for new programs, and districts can submit proposals concurrently while they’re using grant funds to plan, but the funds can’t be used for operating a new SLIFE program this year that hasn’t yet been approved. Whether or not you choose to fund this program through grant funds, the program must go through the new program proposal process.

**Question**: We are starting an ASL program and I was wondering if ASL fell under the banner of the grant [Link](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2024/0181/?utm_source=DA-Commissioner%27s+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=5fc6082e1a-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_09_11_09_54&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-5fc6082e1a-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D)? We are exploring links with [IHE] as a partner but I am not clear if our program development needs to reflect/ support ASL needs in our district.  
**Response**: An ASL Dual Language program for students may be eligible for funding under Goal 1. At this time we would not consider an ASL-focused Dual Language Hub for funding under Goal 2.

**Question**: I'm wondering if you could provide more information about Fund Code 181, Goals 3 & 4. If the district is awarded grant money, what exactly do the funds cover? (resources, materials, and/or professional development, other?)    
**Response**: Funding for each of the FC181 goals could be used to cover salaries, stipends, contractual services (such as PD), supplies and materials, memberships, and in some cases travel for conferences, depending on the strength of the proposal and the justifications provided.

**Question**: Is there a limit to the amount of funding we can request for goal 3? Can funding cover hiring and retention bonuses, tuition reimbursement or other reimbursement (i.e. MTEL)?  
**Response**: There is no established limit to eligibility for Goal 3. Funding is not intended as a primary source for staff salaries, but tuition and other licensing-related reimbursements are allowable.

**Question:** As a partnering organization IHE, can we partner in more than one application? For example, can we partner with a group of districts applying for Goal 2 “grow your own” bilingual education hub and with another group of districts under Goal 3 “grow your own” ESL Teacher hub?  
**Response:** Yes, IHEs may partner with multiple groups of districts who apply.

### Some general guidelines for applying for Goals 2 and/or 3

**Alignment with Grant Outcomes**: The proposed certification program's primary objective should be to increase the number of qualified Bilingual Ed/ESL teachers. It's important to ascertain whether the program will lead to the recruitment and preparation of Bilingual Education/ESL educators who can serve in various ELE program types.

**Recruitment Strategies**: To meet the grant's priorities, it's crucial to evaluate how the program will identify and recruit individuals interested in teaching Bilingual Education or ESL. Ensure that the program incorporates strategies like hosting events, teacher network outreach, and informational events to attract college students, teachers, paraprofessionals, and community members.

**Partnership with Higher Education**: Confirm that the partnership with the higher education institution aligns with the grant's goals. The program should provide learning opportunities for Bilingual Ed/ESL teacher candidates to earn their respective licenses, ideally through fiscal support, and should outline plans for retaining these educators within your districts.

**Mentorship and Support**: Address how the proposed program intends to offer support and valuable learning experiences to Bilingual Ed/ESL teacher candidates, potentially through mentorship initiatives. This aligns with the grant's priority of nurturing candidates throughout their preparation.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**: Ensure that the program has a comprehensive plan for evaluating its success in meeting the grant's objectives and continually improving outcomes over time.

**Sustainability**: Lastly, consider how the Bilingual/ESL Teacher HUB will be sustained beyond the grant period if funding becomes unavailable. A clear plan for long-term sustainability is crucial.

By thoroughly addressing these points and ensuring that the certification program is designed to meet the grant outcomes and priorities, you can increase the likelihood of approval and successful implementation.

**Question**: As with many districts, we had a recent influx of EL students and would like to apply to use the grant to enrich our existing curriculum by purchasing 2 supplemental programs, Lexia for English Learners and Finish Line 2.0.  Both programs are aligned with WIDA standards and would fit well in support of our English Learner students.  We currently have 80 students in our SEI program, but we expect our number to increase.  Would the purchase of supplemental curricular materials meet the requirements of Goal 4 of the grant?

**Answer**: The purpose of Goal 4 is to assist districts to develop high quality ESL and/or dual language curriculum or enrich the existing ESL and/or dual language curriculum, or align purchased curricular materials to WIDA Standards, MA Frameworks that prioritizes deeper learning and the linguistic and academic needs of multilingual learners. Simply purchasing curricular materials would not meet the requirements of the grant.

**Question:** I am working with two other districts to apply for the 181 grant. I have two questions; 1. Do we each submit for the grant in GEM$ Submitting as individual districts or does one district apply as the grant lead? 2. Do we submit one budget for the three districts, or should the budget be broken down by district?  
**Answer:** For Goal 4 each district may apply separately, each with its own budget. Please include information in the narrative of each application about how the districts will work together.

### FC189 Questions

**Please be aware that the goal of and eligibility for the FC189 are different than they’ve been in previous years:**

“The purpose of this competitive grant program is to support **World Languages programs** in schools, districts, and/or partnerships collect data as to how their implementation of the 2021 MA World Languages advances proficiency in students and partners with the Department's World Languages Advisory Team and the Heritage Languages Advisory Team (if applicable) to share and analyze data to improve programs and develop resources and to provide advice for potential upcoming guidance for varied world language programs.

* Applicants **must** have administered Seal of Biliteracy (SOBL) assessments in SY2023-24.
* Applicants **must** commit to attending all 4 World Languages Advisory Team meetings and Heritage Language Advisory Team meetings (if they offer Heritage Language courses — dates of advisory meetings: 12/6/2024, 1/31/2025, 3/28/2025, and 5/30/2025) and OLA Network Meetings (10/9/2024 — virtual, 3/19/2025 — virtual, 6/6/2025 — in-person).
* Applicants **must** commit to engaging and sharing WL student SOBL assessment data with the DESE World Languages Advisory Team for 3 years or the duration of funding.”

**Question:** Will the FC181 support instructional materials for World Language/Dual language programs this year? Or is it just for assessments and stipends for data teams?  
**Answer:** The FY25 FC189 will not provide funding for instructional materials.

**Question:** Is there any funding for language progressional development for world language/heritage teachers?  
**Answer:** The FY25 FC189 will not provide funding for professional development.

**Question:** Can funding be used to support testing logistics (training teachers, registering students, reviewing data)?  
**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** When you say data collection for DESE, do you mean the regular reporting for Seal of Biliteracy?  
**Answer:** No. We are looking for language proficiency data for world language courses. This is different than what is reported on the SIMS report.

**Question:** If we were in a partnership last year, can we apply on our own this year?  
**Answer:** Yes, you can apply as an individual district.

**Question:** We worked with three schools on last year's grant. One of our schools is still looking to implement the tests towards biliteracy. Could we still include them even if they haven't implemented the tests last year? We had such a strong partnership, and I know they want to continue to strengthen their program. The other two schools did administer exams.  
**Answer:** If this is a pre-established partnership, as long as at least one district in the partnership implemented the assessments, then this is acceptable.

**Question:** If we were in a partnership last year, can we apply on our own this year?  
**Answer:** Yes, you can apply as an individual district.

**Question:** Are the Advisory Team meetings in-person or virtual? Are they during school hours?  
**Answer:** The Advisory Team meetings are virtual and will be held during school hours.

**Question:** What is the hourly commitment for the advisory meetings?  
**Answer:** There will be 4 meetings for the Heritage Languages Advisory Team and 4 meetings for the World Languages Advisory Team, each lasting 2-3 hours. In addition, it is expected that awardees will hold district-based meetings with varied stakeholders - hour expectations determined by district.

**Question:** Does the same person need to attend all four meeting dates?   
**Answer:** We would prefer that the same person attend all meetings, but we understand that this may not be possible and will not require it.