

2016-17 ARI EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING INNOVATION GRANT APPLICATION



Applications should be e-mailed to:

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PHONE: (606) 305-9347 or (606) 677-6000

Faxed copies will not be considered. E-mail receipt will establish deadlines.



APPLICATION DUE: August 22, 2017

Applications will be scored by an independent panel in a blind scoring process that uses the enclosed application review rubric.



APPALACHIAN RENAISSANCE INITIATIVE

Educational Excellence in the Heart of the Mountains

in•no•vate - v. To begin something new: introduce.

-- Webster's II

Innovation is the spark of insight that leads an inventor or an artist to investigate an issue or phenomenon. That insight is usually shaped by an observation of what appears to be true or the creative jolt of a new idea. Innovation is driven by a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. Innovation is based on curiosity, the willingness to take risks, and experimenting to test assumptions. Innovation is based on questioning and challenging the status quo. It is also based on recognizing opportunity and taking advantage of it.

In the world of education, innovation comes in many forms. There are innovations in the way education systems are organized and managed. There are innovations in instructional techniques or delivery systems. There are innovations in the way students are included in an active learning process. The list goes on and on.

An element of the ARI mission is to identify, support and promote innovative practices in education - and as importantly - support and promote those educators and their students who are daring to be great.

An ARI Learning Innovation Grant must:

1. *Address an important challenge in education.*
2. *Pass through a competitive review process focused on the project's design.*
3. *Demonstrate the promise of tangible improvement in teaching and/or learning and,*
4. *Award recipients agree to present their proposed innovation at the regional Promising Practices Summit and present their associated results at the regional Action Research Summit.*

How can we responsibly promote untested, unproven, but innovative practices and how can we encourage the inventors of innovations to start developing an evidence base so that over time these interventions can be held up to review and demonstrate their effectiveness?

First, we practice transparency. The Learning Innovation Grants awarded through the Appalachian Renaissance Initiative are not yet tried and true. They have not yet been subjected to rigorous scrutiny. Applicants/Recipients attempt to describe the intervention in an

informative and compelling way, while not making claims about its effectiveness until results can be measured and compared.

Second, we provide ongoing support for Learning Innovation Grant recipients. Once awarded an innovation grant, recipients are connected to a broad system of available supports that include regionally based staff, District Innovation Coordinators, colleagues and a growing virtual landscape focused through the lens of www.theholler.org.

Third, we encourage all grantees to use Action Research designs so that, over time, we can learn if these interventions are effective. We do not mandate a specific set of metrics or require a common model, believing that the dynamics in individual classrooms/initiatives require unique designs specific to need and outcome. We provide incentives for grant applicants to embed such studies into their project designs from the beginning as reflected in the scoring rubric.

Fourth, we showcase and highlight the work of Innovation grantees. Grantees are required to present their plan and their findings twice each year at regional Summits focused on Promising Practices and associated Action Research. As a critical mass of grantees develops-- those that have shown positive impacts on student achievement/success or other positive outcomes-- will enable us to promote innovations aggressively, through publications, web sites, and videos.

Fifth, we provide access to an online portal, www.theholler.org to review past grant recipients' work and videos. The video presentations can serve as a resource as you develop your own presentation about the action research you will be conducting during the 2016-17 school year. Each grantee will post updates at least 4 times per year on the Promising Practices Holler so interested followers remain engaged.

A note about Action Research -

Action research is a practical approach to professional inquiry. As its name suggests, action research concerns actors – those people carrying out their professional actions (for our purposes, teaching and learning) from day to day - and its purpose is to understand and to improve those actions. It is about trying to understand professional action from the inside; as a result, it is research that is carried out by practitioners on their own practice, not (as in other forms of research), done by someone on somebody else's practice. Action research in education is grounded in the working lives of teachers, students and families, as they experience them.

Action Research is about:

- the improvement of practice,
- the improvement of the understanding of practice,
- the improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place.

Carr, W. & Kemmis, S. (1986) Becoming Critical: education, knowledge and action research.

ARI Early Childhood Learning Innovation Grant Application Procedures and Requirements:

The Appalachian Renaissance Initiative supports bold and locally-directed improvements in leadership, teaching and learning that directly improve achievement. ARI, member districts, and communities serve as an innovation laboratory for public education with an emphasis on rural communities. The eastern Kentucky region is experiencing a renaissance that is being led by educators. The work underway is a catalytic model that will inform and support other communities working to dramatically improve educational outcomes for students in rural schools and educational settings nationally and beyond.

Educators in the seventeen participating ARI school districts are eligible to apply for the competitive Learning Innovation Grants. Educators may apply for up to \$1,000.00 to enhance classroom learning by implementing innovative strategies and approaches to learning. Up to fifteen Early Childhood Learning Innovation Grants will be awarded.

Proposed innovations should be framed around specific teaching and/or learning goals.

All submissions will be evaluated by an external review team using the enclosed Scoring Guide.

On-going assistance will be available through the ARI Readiness Lead, District Liaisons, District Innovation Coordinators and on www.theholler.org.

Application requirements include:

1. A complete submission of application
2. **Commitment** to present your project and the projected impact at the Promises Practice FIRE Summit (Pikeville, KY on October 25, 2017-travel and substitute paid by ARI if participant stays the entire day)
3. **Commitment** to present your project and the impact at the Action Research FIRE Summit (Pikeville, KY on April 11, 2018-travel and substitute paid by ARI if participants stays the entire day)
4. **Commit** to participating for the entire day at the Promising Practices FIRE Summit and the Action Research FIRE Summit
5. **Commitment** to share project results on the ARI interactive WEB portal (www.theholler.org) throughout the year (Posting must occur on Promising Practices Holler by October 15th, January 15th, March 15th and May 15th.)

Important Dates for ARI Early Childhood Learning Innovation Grants	
August 22, 2017	Deadline for Grant Submission
September 7, 2017	Notification of Grant Award
October 25, 2017	Present at Promising Practices FIRE Summit and participate in activities for the entire day. PP FIRE Summit will be at the East KY Expo Center in Pikeville.
April 11, 2018	Present at Action Research FIRE Summit and participate in activities for the entire day. AR FIRE Summit will be at the East KY Expo Center in Pikeville.
May 15, 2017	Final Report must be submitted to ARI.

Additional Information

Why invest in Early Childhood Learning Innovation Grants?

Research documents heavily investments spent in early childhood education reap great rewards for individuals, families and communities. Providing resources and supports for our young learners from the time they are born until they enter kindergarten remains the joint tasks of families, educators and communities to ensure success. ARI is fully committed to creating an innovative educational foundation in a child's early years, and assisting him/her to reach their fullest potential.

For our Appalachian region to prosper and become a model, early childhood education becomes a logical, yet crucial part of the solution. We must equip our young minds with basic knowledge and skills sets that will form the basis for lifelong learning to take place. Whether these teachable moments occur at home, in a formalized setting (e.g., Head Start, pre-school) or in community-based environments (e.g., daycares, childcare centers), ARI is an active partner in fostering such learning. The ultimate goal in Kentucky is to make sure "each child enters school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that best promote the child's early success". For this reason alone, ARI is fully committed to improving kindergarten readiness for each child across the region.

Who Can Apply?

An Early Childhood Learning Innovation Grant Proposal should target a specific class or grouping of children and may be submitted by any of the following:

- A school-district funded Head Start or pre-school program
- A community-based organization Head Start or pre-school program
- A blended Head Start or pre-school program
- A certified family childcare program
- A not-for-profit childcare program
- A community-based organization leading early childhood development programs
- A Community Early Childhood Council (CECC)

Each of the above-listed applicants' proposals must serve children and families from one or more of the following ARI Counties: Bell, Breathitt, Floyd, Harlan, Johnson, Lee, Letcher, Knott, Magoffin, Owsley, Perry, Pike and Wolfe.

Suggested Areas of Focus

A unique aspect of the ARI initiative believes not only does the challenge or obstacle exist in our own classroom, school, or community, but the solution resides there as well. Who knows best what is impacting student learning and achievement, than those working on the front lines daily? With this belief, grant applicants are strongly encouraged to consider innovative approaches in one of the five areas related to kindergarten readiness:

- Approaches to learning
- Social and emotional development
- Healthy and physical well being
- Cognitive and general knowledge
- Language and communication development

APPLICATION COVER PAGE

(To be included with Application)

Applications must be submitted electronically with signatures. It is suggested that you request a read receipt with your submission.

Teacher's/Grantee's Name	# of Students Involved
Type of Early Childhood Program (Please check all that apply.) <input type="checkbox"/> Public Program <input type="checkbox"/> Private Program <input type="checkbox"/> Blended Program <input type="checkbox"/> Other (_____) <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Child Care <input type="checkbox"/> Day Care <input type="checkbox"/> Head-Start <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool <input type="checkbox"/> Other (_____)	
Grantee E-mail Address	Phone Number
School/Program Name	County
School/Program Address	City
Zip Code	

Application must be signed by all parties and submitted by the District Innovation Coordinator. Failure to do so will result in an incomplete application and it not being reviewed.

(See attached listing.)

Grant Applicant Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Principal's/Supervisor's Signature: _____ **Date** _____

District Innovation Coordinator: _____ **Date** _____

Superintendent: _____ **Date** _____

Project Title (short, creative and on point):

ARI District Innovation Coordinators

School District	Innovation Coordinator	Email Address
Breathitt County	Susan Watts	susan.watts@breathitt.kyschools.us
Floyd County	Courtney DeRossett	courtney.derossett@floyd.kyschools.us
Harland County	David Hensley	david.hensley1@harlan.kyschools.us
Hazard Independent	Vivian Carter	vivian.carter@hazard.kyschools.us
Jackson Independent	Jeff Coots	jeff.coots@jacksonind.kyschools.us
Jenkins Independent	Christle Carter	christle.carter@jenkins.kyschools.us
Johnson County	Jeff Cochran	_jeff.cochran@johnson.kyschools.us
Knott County	Kelly Hall	kelly.hall@knott@kyschools.us
Lee County	Steve Carroll	steve.carroll@lee.kyschools.us
Letcher County	Twyla Messer	twyla.messer@letcher.kyschools.us
Magoffin County	Angela Skaggs	angela.skaggs@magoffin.kyschools.us
Middlesboro Independent	Mary Siler	mary.siler@mboro.kyschools.us
Owsley County	Gary Cornett	gary.cornett@owsley.kyschools.us
Paintsville Independent	Bryan Auxier	bryan.auxier@paintsville.kyschools.us
Pike County	Mary Beth Stiltner	mary.stiltner@pike.kyschools.us
Pikeville Independent	Mary Belcher	mary.belcher@pikeville.kyaschools.us
Wolfe County	Brandy Spencer	brandy.spencer@wolfe.kyschools.us

ARI Action Research Cycle for Learning Innovation Grant

Step 1: Identify area of focus and a research question-what is your problem of practice? (*Identified in the Application Process*)

Step 2: Learn more about your issue. (*Individual and collegial examination independently and at the Learning Innovation Grant Acceptance Meeting.*)

Step 3: Develop your plan of Action- Explain how you are going to Systematically study the impact of a Specific strategy on a Specific problem. This is your promising practice. (*You will present your project overview at the Promising Practices FIRE Summit in October 2017.*) Visit www.theholler.org to see previous presentations, click on SUMMIT tab-top right of screen.

Step 4: Implement plan, Collect, and Analyze Data. (*This takes place between the Promising Practices FIRE Summit and the Action Research FIRE Summit.*)

Step 5: Communicate Results. (*This is the focus of the Action Research FIRE Summit in April 2018.*)

Step 6: Continue Reflection and plan for a new cycle.



Application Requirements:

1. **Application Cover Page (page 6).**
2. **Area of Focus and/or Research Question- (What is your identified Problem of Practice?)**
3. **Action Plan: (250 word maximum) What will you implement to address the problem of practice? What resources are needed? Who is involved? How are your students actively involved –include examples of what students will actually do? What is the timeline? (Please remember you are Systematically studying the impact of a Specific strategy on a Specific problem).**
4. **How will you evaluate your project outcome? What data/evidence will be collected; how will it be evidenced?**
5. **Budget: Provide a budget narrative that defines grant expenditures (page10).**
6. **Completed Project Summary and Digital Photo Request (page 9 of application).**

Project Summary

Below are eight guiding questions that may serve to develop a summary of your proposal.

Based on your response to these questions, write a brief summary of your proposal (a tightly constructed paragraph that compellingly describes your proposed project to your peers and the national and international audience. A digital photograph of yourself should also be submitted.

If your proposal is selected for funding, the summary and picture you submit will be used in the Promising Practices and the Action Research FIRE Summit Program Guides.

1. What is your problem of practice?
2. How do you know this is a problem?
3. What strategy will you implement this year to address the problem?
4. What resources and personnel do you need to implement your strategy?
5. What research question will guide your study of this innovation?
6. What outcomes will prove that your innovation has succeeded?
7. How will you measure those outcomes?
8. How can you be sure that any positive outcomes on these measures are actually due to your innovation and not something else?

Scoring Guide

ARI Early Childhood Learning Innovation Grant

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A. Innovation	Proposal directly addresses innovation with the intent of improving learning and has the potential for direct impact to student learning and/or experience.	Proposal’s innovation may be stated or inferred and/or only minimal evidence is provided to support its claims to improve teaching and learning.	Innovation may be inferred but is not directly addressed to support its claim to improve teaching and learning.
B. Project Goals	Goals for the project are clearly described and thoroughly documented; proposal supports Innovative practices of the ARI mission.	Purpose is stated and some evidence of need is provided. The proposal aligns with the Innovative practices of the ARI mission.	Project’s purpose is unclear or does not address the Innovative practices of the ARI mission.
C. Project Design	Project has a strong and innovative design with procedures and activities that are well defined, fully explained, and link to project goals. Both teacher and students are actively involved in the work.	Project has adequate design with procedures and activities that are defined but somewhat lacks innovation. More teacher focused instead of student focused.	Project design is vague and not clearly linked to project goals or innovation. Program-based relying on software.
D. Impact	Proposal describes the short and long term impact to students, the school, the larger school community and other teachers.	Proposal describes impact but does so only in general terms. Specifics are lacking.	Proposal does not describe either short or long term impact or both.
E. Plans for Project Evaluation	Proposal includes a variety of methods to evaluate the project. Improved teaching and learning outcomes addressed.	Proposal includes at least one method to assess participants or evaluate the project.	Proposal does not include any methods to assess participants or project. Or, the methods are vague.
F. Budget	Budget is complete and contains all required information. Budget is cost effective and linked to activities and outcomes that will be sustainable.	Budget is complete but is not cost effective and/or related to activities and outcomes and does not address sustainability.	Budget lacks required information or includes unallowable expenditures.
G. Sustainability	Proposal directly addresses sustainability and provides compelling evidence to support its claim(s).	Proposal’s sustainability may be stated or inferred and/ or only minimal evidence is provided to support its claim(s).	The proposal does not address or fails to provide evidence of sustainability.

I acknowledge that I will:

	make a commitment to engage in Action Research
	watch video presentation on www.theholler.org of the <i>Overview of ARI Learning Innovation Grant</i> protocols
	attend the Promising Practices FIRE Summit and Action Research FIRE Summit (<i>participation in the entire day is a requirement</i>)
	develop a poster that tells the story of the work you are doing with your grant proposal and deliver a presentation at the Promising Practices FIRE Summit and participate in the entire day.
	develop and deliver a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation and prepare a table to display at the Action Research FIRE Summit and participate in the entire day
	be part of an on-going support network on www.theholler.org, making posts at least four times during the school year – by October 15th, January 15th, March 15th and the final post by May 15th
	complete the appropriate paper work for reimbursements and expenditures by following established KVEC/USDOE procedures
	completing all requirements in a timely manner

(This completed form must be returned with Application or application will not be considered.)

I understand that by accepting this award, I agree to abide by the approved guidelines listed above.

Signature of Grant Recipient

Date

I acknowledge that I will assist in the implementation of this grant if awarded.

Signature of District Innovation Coordinator

Date