**Section 254.2130 Allocation of Funds for Local Program Improvement Activities**

a) Vocational education funds budgeted by the State Board of Education for the support of local program improvement activities will be allocated only to eligible recipients administering a program of vocational education and approved for funding by the State Board of Education in accordance with applicable provisions of this Part.

b) Funds for local program improvement activities will be allocated only for such professional and curriculum development and other activities as will contribute to achievement of the goals and objectives of the State Plan for Vocational Education. Project proposals will be reviewed by professional staff of the State Board for evidence of:

1) a needs assessment by vocational education personnel of the applicant agency;

2) objectives designed to contribute to attainment of a long-term program improvement goal; and

3) a plan for evaluation of the changes which result from the conduct of project activities.

c) Applications for approval and funding of local program improvement activities shall be submitted to the State Board of Education on forms provided by the State Board of Education. Each such application shall include the project title and the following:

1) The name and address of the eligible recipient together with the names and required signatures of responsible officials and the proposed starting and completion dates. A project may begin any time during the fiscal year but it must be completed by June 30 of the fiscal year.

2) A narrative statement detailing a needs assessment identifying the highest priority problem, the general design of the project, and the anticipated effect or impact of the program improvement activities.

3) A project plan identifying project objectives in terms of desired changes relative to the vocational program and describing the activities proposed to bring about the desired changes together with an evaluation component indicating how the changes will be documented or demonstrated.

4) A proposed budget listing anticipated project expenditures within allowable budget items and limitations set forth in the Request for Applications.

A) Allowable costs are:

i) salaries (stipends only),

ii) employee benefits,

iii) purchased services,

iv) staff travel, and

v) supplies and materials

B) Specific costs must be itemized.

C) Only those expenditures in excess of the regular agency or district operational costs and which are necessary to the project should be shown.

D) Project funds may not be used to maintain a recipient's vocational education program.

E) Consultant fees must be stated, and evidence must be presented that they are in accordance with written policy for consultant reimbursement adopted by the applicant.

F) Out-of-state travel may only be used for technical training experiences not available in Illinois. Written approval must be obtained in advance of such travel from the State Board of Education. Participation in out-of-state professional association meetings and conferences will not be considered for approval.

G) Travel costs to be paid must be stated, and evidence must be presented that they are in accordance with written travel policy adopted by the applicant.

H) Records must be kept to demonstrate that staff travel has been limited to the purposes specified in the approved project application.

I) Unless otherwise approved by the State Board of Education, nonconsumable materials such as resource materials, reference books, and reports remain the property of and must be delivered to the State Board of Education at the end of the project funding period.

d) The State Board of Education will reject any application if it determines that the application does not meet all specifications of the program for which it is submitted or if, for any reason, funds are limited or unavailable. Following the review of the application by State Board of Education staff, agencies may be required to redirect or modify the scope of work involved in their application.

e) If changes become necessary in program objectives or procedures/activities in the management of a project, the following steps must be followed to initiate a program revision request:

1) A letter of request must be sent to the State Board of Education outlining proposed changes and including a detailed justification for the revision.

2) If the changes necessitate a budget revision, it must be requested at this time in accordance with the budget revision provisions in subsection (f) of this Section.

3) The revision request must be signed by the project director.

f) The State Board of Education will not approve budget revisions requested during the last thirty days of a funding agreement nor expenses which have already been incurred and are not part of an existing budget line item. Funded agencies may not transfer funds between object codes. If a budget revision is required, the agency must submit a request which contains the following:

1) A detailed justification for each change and the amount of money involved. Indicate items to be decreased to equal requested increases.

2) Submit one copy of the proposed revised budget.

3) The budget revision request must be signed by the project director; the project director is required to notify the agency official of this change. Any requests for an increase or decrease in the project budget must be signed by the same agency official(s) who signed the original proposal submitted to the State Board of Education.

g) Each eligible recipient awarded a grant of funds for program improvement activities on the basis of a Request for Applications shall complete a final report for each project approved under the application. Each such final report shall be submitted on forms provided by the State Board of Education and shall include:

1) The project title and agreement number together with the name and address of the eligible recipient and the names of responsible officials.

2) A project summary identifying the problem areas addressed in the project, the number of individual teachers, counselors, administrators, students, and other persons who participated directly in the project, and the State Board of Education materials and other products used in the project.

3) An assessment of objectives, indicating for each objective set forth in the project application, the degree to which the objective was achieved and the activities completed, together with a description of the changes which occurred in terms of who or what was changed, the extent of change, and how the change was documented or demonstrated.

h) To verify project expenditures, agencies will be sent a report form, with instructions, to complete and forward to the State Board of Education. Semi-annual and end-of-year expenditure requests are required. Only actual, approved expenditures will be reimbursed. The final payment for project expenditures will be made only after all final performance and expenditure reports have been received by the State Board of Education.

(Source: Amended at 13 Ill. Reg. 8459, effective May 22, 1989)