



Tennessee Reconnect Community Grant (Round 3): Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- 1. For an applicant who is applying as an “adopter” of this Tennessee Reconnect Community service model, are these applicants *required* to expand to another city or county?**
 - A. An applicant who is applying as an “adopter” of this service model is not required to *specifically* expand to a particular city and/or county; however, the applicant is asked to discuss how they will: 1) expand their reach and service area geographically, 2) expand the profile of clients they currently serve and 3) expand their service model to align with the TRC model of “to and through.”

- 2. What are suggestions as sources of funds to sustain the TRC after the state grant ends?**
 - A. The sustainability of the Tennessee Reconnect Communities is an integral component of this service model and will vary based on the strengths and partnerships of the TRC within their community. Other sites utilizing this model have received sustainability funds, either in-kind support or monetarily via partnerships with higher education institutions, from partner organizations, local foundations, economic development entities and local businesses.

- 3. What is the cost of services per participant?**
 - A. This service model is intended to be *free* for any adult who is interested in pursuing a postsecondary credential. Therefore, there is not a cost per participant that we would recommend. Additionally, we have not made a calculation around cost per participant for TRC budgeting purposes at this point.

- 4. Is the lead applicant required to be the fiscal agent for the grant or can the fiscal agent be a partner applicant? If a partner applicant *can* be the fiscal agent, does it have to be an entity that would have be eligible as the lead applicant? In other words, can an academic institution or local government entity be the fiscal agent for the grant?**
 - A. The lead applicant must also be the fiscal agent for the grant.

- 5. Do business coalitions and/or leadership groups have to have 501(c)(3) status?**
 - A. No; business coalitions and leadership groups do not have to have 501(c)(3) status. However, they must be a formal legal entity.



6. Are Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) eligible applicants? Are LWIAs still eligible if they are a quasi-government organization?

A. Yes, LWIAs are eligible to apply. However, we will want to ensure that they have experience managing grant funds other than federal WIA and WIOA funds. As sustainability is a key feature of the Tennessee Reconnect Community effort, we want to ensure that the success and long-term stability of the community effort is not impacted by election cycles.

7. Is the Tennessee Reconnect Community grant primarily focused on adults who have some college, but no degree? Are deviations to this permitted? For example, adults without any college experience and/or those adults *under* the age of 25?

A. Tennessee Reconnect, the adult-focused efforts of the Drive to 55, strives to engage the over 900,000 Tennessee adults 25 and older who have some college but have not completed their degrees. While the primary outreach efforts of the Tennessee Reconnect Communities (TRCs) will be to these specific adults, all adults (those under the age of 25 and/or those without college experience) will be provided service when the TRCs launch.

8. Are the ten (10) communities' geographic reach expected to cover the entire state of Tennessee? For example, could these services and grants be for one county or a small number of counties?

A. It is THEC's intention to prioritize applicants who have the greatest impact and service area reach within their proposal. The ten communities' geographic reach will cover the entire state, but the two new communities do not need cover all of the currently unserved counties. It is our intention, that by the end of 2017, all Tennessee Counties will be served by TRCs.

It is also our intention that counties and communities will collaborate and leverage their individual strengths to provide these services beyond conventional boundaries.

9. Could you please confirm the amount of funding available for Tennessee Reconnect Communities?

A. Two million dollars will be available over the next two fiscal years to carry out the Tennessee Reconnect Community initiative. These funds will (1) be distributed to communities for the purpose of start-up resources; (2) be used to provide technical assistance to the communities from THEC and the Graduate! Network; and, (3) used to fund Challenge Grants to existing TRCs. The *maximum* allowance for each community through this grant is \$225,000. The amount of funding awarded to each community may vary based on community service area size, number of projected adult students served, project activities,



and resources needed to fully and successfully implement the activities to better serve adult students.

- 10. If an applicant does a regional collaboration (expanding its reach), will the startup funds from this grant be more than \$225,000?**
- A. The amount of funding awarded to each community may potentially vary based on the community service area size, number of projected adult students served, project activities, and resources needed to fully and successfully implement the activities to better serve adult students. The *maximum* allowance for each community through this grant is \$225,000.
- 11. Because academic institutions do not qualify to be a lead applicant on the grant, are they listed as “champions” or “partners” on the collaboration table on page 20 of the RFP?**
- A. Academic institutions should be listed as a “partner” because their participation is necessary for the success and sustainability of the TRC. Institutions will bring expertise, resources, and knowledge to bear throughout the development and provision of services.
- 12. What specifically is included in “postsecondary credentials” as mentioned in the RFP? For example, does this include degrees, certificates and/or certifications?**
- A. Because the Tennessee Reconnect Community Initiative is a component within the larger Drive to 55 effort and Tennessee Reconnect initiatives, postsecondary credentials include degrees and certificates. These credentials will be included within the count of educational attainment as defined by the Drive to 55 effort.
- 13. Regarding the budget allocation requirement of the RFP, are we required to budget for a website, marketing, travel and technology expenditures or are these items a recommendation? What is meant by “include, but not limited to”?**
- A. “Include, but not limited to” means to describe that the items listed under each category (marketing, travel, and technology) are not an exhaustive representation of the expenditures that may be incurred by the TRC site. The Graduate! Network recommends a local website, marketing, travel and technology expenditures are included in the budget as a line item or an in-kind item.
- 14. Could you further describe the data collection and reporting component?**
- A. The Graduate! Network will provide technical assistance for TRC sites to launch with benchmarks for evaluating progress and outcomes. A form of local data analysis to understand the landscape of adults in each community is needed and tracking metrics and



methodology of collecting data must be fully established. The Graduate! Network will provide data and trends for each TRC to set realistic benchmarks and goals. Additionally, the Graduate! Network has a turn-key, data collection, tracking, and reporting platform/CRM that they have successfully used in their sites and they provide extensive training and ongoing support for the system. The Graduate! Network will provide TRCs free installation of this cloud-based customized client management (CRM) software package. TRCs will need to track the number of students who they advise as well as subsequently enroll in higher education. The Graduate! Network, in coordination with THEC, will provide annual student enrollment verification via the National Student Clearinghouse with analyzed results formatted to upload directly into the existing community data platform. The Graduate! Network will provide data analysis and benchmarking, monthly peer-to-peer calls, and additional trainings for advisors and data collection.

15. Will college 501(c)3 foundations be eligible to apply as lead organizations?

- A.** THEC's intention is for the TRCs to remain institution neutral, and therefore, college foundations are not eligible to apply as lead organizations. However, college foundations are encouraged to serve as partners to the TRCs.