

2010-2011 Golden LEAF STEM Initiative Letter of Inquiry

Golden LEAF STEM Initiative: Building the Pipeline for a High Skilled Workforce in Rural NC through Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education

We appreciate your interest in the Golden LEAF Foundation and our work to assist rural, economically distressed and/or tobacco dependent counties with economic transition. This new workforce initiative seeks to support evidence-based, best practices in STEM education targeting students in grades 4 through 9 in rural, economically distressed and/or tobacco dependent counties of North Carolina. Priority will be given to projects that represent collaborative efforts aimed at preparing students to be college and/or career ready in disciplines that require strong science, technology, engineering, and mathematics skills.

As North Carolina and the nation strive to transition to a 21st Century, knowledge based economy there is a growing need for workers who possess strong technical competencies in the STEM disciplines. Currently, the number of students graduating from North Carolina's high schools prepared for success in STEM careers and/or advanced education is inadequate to meet demands of industry [*Crisis at the Core: Preparing all Students for College and Work*, ACT 2005]. Further, research shows [*i.e.* EDSTAR, Inc. 2009; *Taking Science to School*, National Research Council of the National Academies, 2007] that the number of students taking advanced STEM courses is not keeping pace with demands and student performance is falling behind when compared to other global competitors. An achievement and enrollment gap exists for minority and limited resource students. National trends also reveal that female students tend to drop out of the STEM pipeline when making career decisions.

In response to these challenges, the Foundation is requesting proposals from direct providers of training that address the workforce development challenges of rural communities through best practices in STEM education that are supported by data demonstrating successful outcomes in student enrollment and achievement. Preference will be given to programs that represent collaborative arrangements among educational partners and industry targeting the current and future employment opportunities of a region or local area.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Golden LEAF STEM Initiative is a special program of Golden LEAF intended to address some of the urgent workforce requirements North Carolina faces in transitioning to a 21st Century economy and educational challenges in preparing all students to be college and career ready upon graduation. Golden LEAF has set aside approximately \$4 million for this program and will support projects with funding of up to \$750,000 over a three year period. This new program is a workforce development grant initiative that supports collaborative programs targeting STEM educational initiatives in tobacco-dependent, economically distressed and/or rural communities. Programs priorities include the following criteria.

- ✓ Comprehensive programs that are evidence-based and represent systemic approaches to STEM education that include in-school, out-of-school or extended day and support programs that provide assistance to students transitioning from elementary to middle and middle to high school.
- ✓ Programs that represent collaboration among public schools, higher education, community and relevant industry partners.
- ✓ Initiatives that target improved academic performance in and preparation for advanced STEM curricula by minorities, females and students from limited resource families.

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- ✓ Programs to serve students in 4th through 9th grades that place priority on curricular approaches that are integrated, utilize project and inquiry based learning concepts and prepare students for successful completion of Algebra I by 8th or 9th grade as a gateway to participation in advanced placement courses. Competitive proposals will target under-represented minorities, females and limited resource students. Proposals should include strategies that are comprehensive, use integrated curricular approaches, inquiry and project based learning experiences, prepare students for success in Algebra I and advanced math and science courses, incorporate content specific professional development for teachers, and provide relevant career and work connections for teachers and students.
- ✓ Applicants are encouraged to think regionally, draw connections to industry sectors, and align with outcome measures in college and career readiness, student achievement, participation and engagement, teacher effectiveness, and other economic impact measures important to the state.
- ✓ Applicants may seek funds to cover programmatic costs. Requests for capital and/or construction costs are considered low priority.
- ✓ Priority will be given to rural, Tier I & II counties that currently have low concentrations of STEM programs

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible for a grant:

1. Be a governmental entity or 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization,
2. Serve the people of North Carolina,
3. Be a local education agency, university, community college or direct provider of training.

APPLICATION DEADLINES:

Letter of Intent due September 7, 2010

October 7, 2010 Board Review & Invitations for full application

Full STEM due Application December 17, 2010

February 3, 2011 Board Review and Award Announcements

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STEP 1: LETTER OF INQUIRY (LOI)

The Golden LEAF Foundation seeks to fund STEM programs and initiatives that most closely align with its mission and the stated priorities of this special initiative. Applicants are invited to submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) using the forms and process described below. Submission of an LOI is the first step in pursuing Golden LEAF funding under the Golden LEAF STEM Initiative. Applicants may submit supplemental information and letters of support; however, the LOI form must be complete and stand on its own. The Golden LEAF Board of Directors will review LOIs and invite some organizations that submitted those LOIs to submit a full application for consideration. **Applicants that are not invited to submit a full application will not receive funding. An invitation to submit a full application does not imply the proposal will be funded.**

To submit the LOI online:

- At the Golden LEAF Web site, click the “on-line application form” link for the “Golden LEAF STEM Initiative” section. Respond to all questions, fill in all blanks on the form, and upload all required attachments ([certification and signature form](#) and the [project budget form](#)). If you cannot upload the attachments, you may mail them to Golden LEAF. If you cannot complete the online form at once, you may save the form at any time and complete it later. Before exiting the program, you *must* create an Applicant Account or your form will not be saved. When you have completed the form, click “Submit.” Once you have submitted the LOI, you will receive a confirmation e-mail with further instructions. If you have not received a confirmation e-mail within two (2) business days of your submission, please contact a member of the Golden LEAF Programs staff.

To complete the LOI using the Microsoft Word interactive form on our Web site:

- Select the “Forms and Guidelines” interactive version of the LOI in the “Golden LEAF STEM Initiative” section of the Golden LEAF Web site. Save it to your own computer before beginning to fill it out. Once you have completed the form, save it. You may then e-mail it to LOI@goldenleaf.org (If you choose to e-mail the application form, you must first print the signature page, sign it, scan it, and then upload it as an attachment to your e-mail before sending **or** mail your signature page separately and indicate that you have mailed the signature page in the body of your e-mail), **or** print it and mail it to the Foundation to the attention of “Golden LEAF STEM Initiative.” If you have not received a confirmation e-mail within two (2) business days of your e-mail submission or within five (5) business days if LOI was sent by post, please contact a member of the Golden LEAF Programs staff. Though not required, we recommend that applicants submitting materials by mail use a service that allows the sender to track the receipt of materials.

If you would like to receive a hard copy of any forms, please contact [Golden LEAF staff](#).

A Letter of Inquiry that is incomplete, faxed, or e-mailed to an address other than LOI@goldenleaf.org will be not be eligible for review. If you have not received confirmation of receipt in the time frames outlined above, please contact [Golden LEAF staff](#) to make certain your LOI was properly submitted and received.

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STEP 2: LOI REVIEW

Once an LOI is received by Golden LEAF, it will be reviewed by staff and by the Golden LEAF Board of Directors. The Board, at its October 7th board meeting, will determine interest in receiving a full application for the project. All organizations that submitted a Letter of Inquiry will be notified of the Board's decision whether or not to invite a full proposal. Notification will be made to the contact person listed on the LOI.

Organizations invited to submit a full application will receive further instructions. **Grants will not be awarded to organizations that are not invited to submit a full application. An invitation to submit a full application does not imply a proposal will be funded, but indicates an interest by the Golden LEAF Board to learn more about the project.**

APPLICATION DEADLINES: Letter of Intent due September 7, 2010

****DO NOT PROCEED WITH STEP 3 UNLESS INVITED BY GOLDEN LEAF TO SUBMIT A FULL APPLICATION.****

STEP 3: GRANT APPLICATION (BY INVITATION ONLY)

If your organization is invited by Golden LEAF to submit a full application, you will **be required to submit a complete application by December 17, 2010. The following information is intended to provide details about what will be required if your organization is invited to submit a full application. This information is not required to be submitted with the LOI.**

Access to the full application materials will be provided in your invitation letter. You will have the option to complete the application by using our online application system or by downloading a Microsoft Word interactive application form from our Web site.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS (FOR FULL APPLICATIONS ONLY—NOT REQUIRED FOR LOIS)

In addition to completing the application form, applicants that are invited to submit a full application will be required to provide ALL required attachments. Electronic files of attachments may be uploaded in the online application system or attached to an e-mailed application. Attachments may also be sent by mail or delivery service. **An application is not considered complete or eligible for review unless ALL blanks have been appropriately filled in, questions answered and attachments provided, and all documents have been received by Golden LEAF.**

For applicants' information we have set out below a checklist of attachments that must comply with the guidelines provided and must accompany the application form in order for a full application to be considered complete and eligible for review. **These attachments are not required for the initial LOI submission.**

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- Organization Information (Maximum length: 1 page)**
Provide a more detailed summary of your organization's history, current programs, activities and accomplishments, as well as its mission statement, goals and objectives.

- Proposal Description (Maximum length: 3 pages)**
Provide a more detailed, written description of the proposed project that:
- Explains how your project will meet the funding priorities of the GLF STEM Initiative, and will benefit tobacco-dependent, economically distressed and/or rural communities;
 - Identifies the geographic area and population your project will serve;
 - Explains how the population served will benefit from your project;
 - Describes how you will implement the project to achieve its desired outcomes; and,
 - Defines the specific role of any collaborating organizations involved in the project.

- Expected Outcomes (Maximum length: 1 page)**
List the outcomes you expect the project to accomplish, describing both the short-term and long-term impacts. Describe how you will evaluate progress toward achieving those outcomes, the milestones that indicate the project is on track. How will people and/or places be better off economically as a result of this project?

- Agreement and Certification**
Document should be signed and dated by two authorized officials of the applicant organization:
- If you choose to e-mail the application form, you must first print the form, sign it, scan it, and then upload it as an attachment to your e-mail before sending **OR** mail your signature page separately and indicate that you have mailed the signature page in the body of your e-mail.
 - If you choose to submit an online application, you must download the [certification and signature form](#), print it, sign it, scan it and upload it to your online application **OR** mail in the signature page separately.

- Board of Directors**
List should include organization's board members along with their addresses and occupations.

- Use a font no smaller than 10 points.
- Use only black as the font color—no colored text.
- Documents should be single-spaced with 1" margins.
- Format to standard, letter-sized paper (8.5" x 11").

Additionally, if not using the online application system or sending by e-mail:

- Print documents on white or off-white paper, without background patterns or designs.
- Do not staple or bind any part of the proposal

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- Staff**
List of staff and other collaborators who will be involved in the project, brief job descriptions, and their roles in the implementation of the project
- Project Timeline**
A projected timeline for the life of the project that identifies tasks to be accomplished.
- Major Contributors**
List the major contributors to the organization and the amounts given for the current year.
- Evidence of Tax-Exempt Status**
A copy of the current IRS determination letter of exemption
- Financial Statements**
- Most recent fiscal year-end financial statement
- The organization's budget for the current year
The organization's most recent IRS Form 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N (if applicable)
- The organization's budget for the period covered by the grant request
- Community/County Partners**
A list providing contact information for your partners in the communities and/or counties served by your project
- Business plan/Strategic plan/Feasibility studies (as applicable and if available)**

STEP 4: GRANT APPLICATION REVIEW AND NOTIFICATION

Completed full applications will be reviewed by Golden LEAF staff, by the Golden LEAF Board of Directors and possibly by other experts in education. The Board will decide whether or not to fund the proposal, request more information about the proposal(s) submitted, or take some other action. Notification of the Board's determination will be sent to the contact person on the application form.

The Public Records Act

Information submitted to Golden LEAF is subject to the North Carolina Public Records Act and thus subject to inspection by the public. For information on limited exceptions to the Public Records Act, please contact [Golden LEAF staff](#).



301 North Winstead Avenue, Rocky Mount, NC 27804

Phone: 252-442-7474 Toll Free: 888-684-8404

www.goldenleaf.org

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**Form may be mailed or hand-delivered to the attention of: Golden LEAF STEM Initiative at
301 North Winstead Avenue, Rocky Mount, NC 27804**

or e-mailed to: LOI@goldenleaf.org

You may also opt to complete an on-line LOI.

Please respond to all questions and fill in all blanks on this form. Using a 12-pt font, limit answers to questions to the space provided. An incomplete Letter of Inquiry ("LOI") will be considered ineligible for review. Provide only the information that is requested in this form. Additional information will be required of the applicant if invited to submit a full application for further consideration. If you have questions prior to submitting this LOI, please contact a member of the Golden LEAF staff.

Organization

Applicant Organization: _____

Executive Director/President: _____

Applicant's Tax ID/EIN#: _____ **Applicant County:** _____

Applicant is a: Government entity or 501(c)(3) nonprofit

Contact Person: _____ **Title:** _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: () - _____ **E-mail address:** _____

Project Title: _____

		Amount Requested from	
Total Project Cost:	\$ _____	Golden LEAF:	\$ _____

Agreement and Certification

By signing below, I affirm that I am an authorized representative and have the authority to act on behalf of the organization applying for this Golden LEAF grant. I further agree and acknowledge the following: The information provided in this material is correct and complete. The funds granted by Golden LEAF will be used exclusively for charitable, scientific, educational or other tax-exempt public purposes. Requests for funding and all supporting information submitted to Golden LEAF are subject to the Public Records Act, and therefore available for public inspection.

Signature _____ Date (mm/dd/yyyy) / / _____

Name

Title

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Project Description

Briefly describe how the project will meet the GLF STEM Initiative priorities, and how it will benefit tobacco-dependent, economically distressed and/or rural communities and the people who live there. Describe how you will implement the program of work for the project. (Character limit 1500)

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Describe what the project's outcomes will be and how they will be measured. How do these measures align with best practices and data supporting prior success with targeted strategies identified in the program of work? (Character limit 784)

Describe the project's sustainability. Is the project ongoing? Will the project require additional funding beyond an initial grant? If so, what is the plan for securing additional funds? (Character limit 784)

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Organizational History – Briefly describe the organization’s history, current programs and accomplishments that are related to the proposed STEM project. Include a short summary of the organization’s mission, goals and objectives, and provide an explanation of how these correspond with the project. (Character limit 750)

Partners – Briefly describe the role of each collaborating partner. (Character limit 750)

