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Adjusted Allocation: 0.00
Remaining: -106,000.00
Applicants shall respond to the prompts or questions in the areas listed below in a narrative form.

**A) APPLICANT INFORMATION - General Information, Experience and Capacity**

1. **Project Title:** Business Process Study

2. **Executive summary:** Provide an executive summary of your project proposal and which goal(s) in question 9 you seek to achieve. Please limit your responses to no more than three sentences.

   The goal of this project is to modernize the business processes in the Treasury, Business, and Human Resource departments of the Youngstown City Schools. It is believed that with better processes the district could ultimately save $214,000 per year in these three departments. Those savings could then be used in the classroom for the purpose of improving student achievement.

3. **Total Students Impacted:**

   300

4. **Lead applicant primary contact:** Provide the following information:

   - First Name, Last Name of contact for lead applicant: James Reinhard
   - Organizational name of lead applicant: Youngstown City School District.
   - Unique Identifier (RN/Fed Tax ID): 045161
   - Address of lead applicant: 20 West Wood Street, Youngstown, Ohio 44501
   - Phone Number of lead applicant: 330-744-6996
   - Email Address of lead applicant: james.reinhard@youngstown.k12.oh.us

5. **Secondary applicant contact:** Provide the following information, if applicable:

   - First Name, Last Name of contact for secondary applicant: N/A
   - Organizational name of secondary applicant: N/A
   - Unique Identifier (RN/Fed Tax ID): N/A
   - Address of secondary applicant: N/A
   - Phone number of secondary applicant: N/A
   - Email address of secondary applicant: N/A

6. **List all other participating entities by name:** Provide the following information for each additional participating entity, if applicable: Mention First Name, Last Name, Organizational name, Unique Identifier (RN/Fed Tax ID), Address, Phone Number, Email Address of Contact for All Secondary Applicants in the box below.

   N/A

7. **Partnership and consortium agreements and letters of support:** (Click on the link below to upload necessary documents).

   * Letters of support are for districts in academic or fiscal distress only. If school or district is in academic or fiscal distress and has a commission assigned, please include a resolution from the commission in support of the project.

8. **Brief description of the team or individuals responsible for the implementation of this project:** Provide a brief description of the team or individuals responsible for the implementation of this project including relevant experience in other innovative projects. You should also include descriptions and experiences of partnering entities.

9. **Which of the stated Straight A Fund goals does the proposal aim to achieve?** (Check all that apply)

   - Student achievement
   - Spending reductions in the five-year fiscal forecast
   - Utilization of a greater share of resources in the classroom

10. **Which of the following best describes the proposed project?** (Select one)

    - New - never before implemented
    - Existing and researched-based - never implemented in your district or community school but proven successful in other educational environments
    - Mixed Concept - incorporates new and existing elements
    - Enhancing/Scale Up - elevating existing or implementing an effective program that is already implemented in your district, school, or consortium partnership

11. **Describe the innovative project.**

    Over the years, the enrollment in Youngstown City Schools has decreased faster than cost reductions. As a result, the cost per pupil has increased especially in non-instructional areas. The goal of this grant is to modernize the business processes in the treasurer’s office, business department and human resource department to reduce positions through attrition. This will be accomplished by utilizing an expert in business processes to study current practices and recommend a new system. The savings will be used for the science program, to expand the early college concept throughout the district, and to complete the learning aspirations program.

12. **Describe how it will meet the goal(s) selected above.** If school/district receives school improvement funds/support, include a brief explanation of how this project will advance the improvement plan.

   By reducing non-instructional costs in the business operation, more general fund dollars will be available for instruction. The main areas for the additional dollars will be science, to expand the early college concept throughout the district, and to complete the learning aspirations program.

**B) PROJECT DESCRIPTION - Overall description of project and alignment with Outcomes**

13. **Financial Documentation** - All applicants must enter or upload the following supporting information. Responses should refer to specific information in the financial documents when applicable:

   - Enter a project budget
   - Upload the Straight A Financial Impact Template forecasting the expected changes to the five-year forecast resulting from implementation of this project. If applying as a consortia or partnership, please include the five-year forecasts of each school district, community school or STEM school member for review.

**C) SUSTAINABILITY - Planning for ongoing funding of the project, cost breakdown**

14. **Provide a cost breakdown:**

   - Describe the sustainability of the project by including a cost breakdown and how the project will be funded after the grant period.

   - Identify any partnerships or consortia agreements that support the sustainability of the project.

   - Describe how the project will be sustained beyond the grant period.
14. What is the total cost for implementing the innovative project?

$106,000.00 * Total project cost

* Provide a brief narrative explanation of the overall budget. The narrative should include the source and amount of other funds that may be used to support this concept (e.g., Title I funding, RLF money, local funding, foundation support, etc.), and provide details on the cost of items included in the budget (i.e., staff counts and salary/benefits, equipment to be purchased and cost, etc.). The most important part of the budget is to pay for a consultant to study the current business processes currently being used in the Youngstown City Schools. The estimated cost of the study is $60,000. This expert would make a recommendation to develop a new system that would improve quality and reduce costs. The grant request also allows for $20,000 to purchase new computer software and $5,000 to customize that software. The request also includes $20,000 for temporary and overtime help during the implementation period. It is estimated that with improved processes the district could eliminate one administrative position and one clerical position in the first year and a second clerical position in the second year. Ultimately resulting in a savings to the district of $214,000 per year.

15. What new/recurring costs of your innovative project will continue once the grant has expired? If there are no new/recurring costs, please explain why.

* Narrative explanation/rationale: Provide details on the cost of items included in the budget (i.e. staff counts and salary/benefits, equipment to be purchased and cost, etc.). If there are no new/recurring costs, please explain why.

The only recurring cost would be an increase in software maintenance agreements which is estimated to be $1,000 per year. The study, the purchase of hardware and software will be a one time expense completed by June 30, 2014.

16. Are there expected savings that may result from the implementation of the innovative project?

$24,000.00 * Specific amount of expected savings (annual)

* Narrative explanation/rationale: Provide details on the anticipated savings (i.e. staff counts and salary/benefits, equipment to be purchased and cost, etc.)

By eliminating an administrative position in the Treasurer’s office there will be an annual savings of $85,000 in salary and $30,000 in benefits beginning in FY 2015. Reducing a clerical position in FY 2015 will save $40,000 in salary and $20,000 in benefits. A second clerical position can be reduced through attrition in FY 2016 as the district becomes more efficient with the new system. It is assumed that there will be a need for additional temporary help and/or overtime during the implementation period. That amount is estimated to cost $20,000 during FY 2014 and will be gradually phased out by FY 2017.

17. Provide a brief explanation of how the project is self-sustaining. If there are ongoing costs associated with the project after the term of the grant, this explanation should provide details on the cost reductions that will be made that are at least equal to the amount of new/recurring costs detailed above. If there are no new/recurring costs, explain in detail how this project will sustain itself beyond the life of the grant.

* Specific amount of new/recurring cost (annual cost after project is implemented)

The project is designed to save money. By putting in place improved processes and technology, a significant portion of the district’s overhead will be permanently reduced.

E) IMPLEMENTATION - Timeline, communication and contingency planning

18. Fill in the appropriate dates and an explanation of the timeline for the successful implementation of this project. In each explanation, be sure to briefly describe the largest barriers that could derail your concept or timeline for implementation and your plan to proactively mitigate such barriers. In addition, the narrative should list the stakeholders that will be engaged during that stage of the project and describe the communication that occurred as the application was developed.

The district needs to shift its budget priorities toward spending more dollars per-pupil in the classroom and less dollars on things such as buildings, transportation, and administration. Because the Youngstown City School District is a high poverty district they face many instructional challenges that other districts do not. Because of this, the district needs to spend a disproportionate amount on instruction. The cost per pupil for non-instructional expenditures is extremely high even though as a percent of the total cost per-pupil it is not as high. This is the result of enrollment declining faster than seed costs can be adjusted. This project is one of several initiatives that aim to put more dollars into the classroom.

19. Describe the expected changes to the instructional and/or organizational practices in your institution.

The district needs to shift its budget priorities toward spending more dollars per-pupil in the classroom and less dollars on things such as buildings, transportation, and administration. Because the Youngstown City School District is a high poverty district they face many instructional challenges that other districts do not. Because of this, the district needs to spend a disproportionate amount on instruction. The cost per pupil for non-instructional expenditures is extremely high even though as a percent of the total cost per-pupil it is not as high. This is the result of enrollment declining faster than seed costs can be adjusted. This project is one of several initiatives that aim to put more dollars into the classroom.

20. Describe the rationale, research or past success that supports the innovative project and its impact on student achievement, spending reduction in the five-year fiscal forecast or utilization of a greater share of resources in the classroom.

As mentioned in number 19, Youngstown needs to shift its budget priorities to spending more on instruction and less on other things. This project is one of several district initiatives to achieve that goal. Another initiative is to close the administration building and relocate administrative personnel in the school buildings (this is a separate Straight A Fund application). The Business Process study (this application) is an important first step. If successful, this project will provide better and more relevant information for district leaders so that they can make better decisions to reduce costs in other areas such as transportation and building operations. This will allow even more dollars to flow to the classroom.

21. Is this project able to be replicated in other districts in Ohio?

Yes

If so, how?

Youngstown operates under the same rules and regulations as every other school district in Ohio. Like many districts in the State, we are utilizing old technologies and concepts that could be improved with new ideas and technology. The Uniform School Accounting System (USAS) which most districts use, was developed in the late 1970s. Although it has served its purpose and has been improved with several tweaks over the years, there are new products and procedures that could save millions of dollars if applied state wide. Businesses throughout the United States have decreased their transaction costs with products like QuickBooks and Paychex. School districts should be able to do the same with similar products.

22. Describe the substantial value and lasting impact that the project hopes to achieve.

One possible outcome of the study is that Youngstown may discover that they could greatly benefit by changing their basic accounting software package. If that were to happen, the whole state could benefit from that experience. It may be possible to purchase a cheaper, more efficient, simpler, more user friendly package. If that does not happen, other solutions such as plug-ins, workarounds, or other independent sub-systems that tie in with the State software might be developed. This would also benefit other Ohio school districts. Regardless of what improvements are made, there would be no reason to go back to a less efficient way and hopefully improvements would be made on top of the improvements in the future.

23. Describe the specific benchmarks related to the fund goals identified in question 9 that the project aims to achieve in five years? Include any other anticipated outcomes of the project that you hope to achieve that
may not be easily benchmarked. We surveyed four similar size districts in the area and determined that Youngstown had more staff in the three departments being studied. With the projected reductions, we would be similarly staffed as those other districts. We would continue to compare ourselves with other districts, especially if there are significant changes in our enrollment. Several years ago the district was in fiscal emergency and the fiscal commission made reductions in these departments without changing any of the business processes. As a result things quickly deteriorated. Expectations were lowered, services and information provided were reduced. We do not want to repeat that mistake while attempting to right size the departments. Improved customer service, financial analysis and business practices are the expected outcomes despite reducing the cost.

25. Describe the plan to evaluate the impact of the concept, strategy or approaches used.

* Include the method by which progress toward short- and long-term objectives will be measured. (This section should include the types of data to be collected, the formative outputs and outcomes and the systems in place to track the program's progress).

* Include the method, process and/or procedure by which the program will modify or change the program plan if measured progress is insufficient to meet program objectives.

The ratio of instructional expenditures versus non instructional expenditures will be an important measurement. The district plans to implement other initiatives to improve this ratio. By itself, the best measure of the success of this project is to compare the current cost of the three departments with the future cost after the improved processes are put in place. The savings will be very tangible. Although things like improved customer service are highly subjective, I think most people will know it when they see it.

* By virtue of applying for the Straight A Fund, all applicants agree to participate in the overall evaluation of the Straight A Fund for the duration of the evaluation timeframe. The Governing Board of the Straight A Fund reserves the right to conduct evaluation of the plan and request additional information in the form of data, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and any other related data to the legislature, governor, and other interested parties for an overall evaluation of the Straight A Fund.

**PROGRAM ASSURANCES:** I agree, on behalf of this applicant agency and/or all identified partners to abide by all assurances outlined in the Assurance section of the CCIP. In the box below, enter "I Accept" and indicate your name, title, agency/organization and today's date.

I accept James Reinhard Treasurer Youngstown City School District 10/24/2013