**North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission Agricultural Education Grant**

**Application/Project Do’s and Don’ts**

Below are some critical details that need consideration as you plan your NC TTFC Agricultural Education Program Improvement Grant applications.

1). Make sure that your application provides its readers with a clear and definitive understanding of the purpose and value of the project. This should be clearly explained in the Project Goals and Objectives section of the application. Make sure to reference the NC TTFC project goals and outcomes that are listed in the Scoring Guide.

2). This grant is designed to provide funding for sustainable projects that will affect your present and future students. Grant requests that are for short term, one time purchases of consumable materials, or to fund one time activities are frowned upon.

3). If a project requires more funds than the maximum ($5000) form the grant, share in the application the source and reliability of the additional funds. Indicating that you have requested funds from another source is not sufficient. You need to have a firm commitment from your additional sources detailing the fund amounts and date of delivery of the funds. The grant evaluators will be looking, via your application, for evidence that a project can be started and finished in the time frame of the grant.

4). Don’t let your projects be bigger than you can handle. If you are questioning whether this project is a good idea or bad, I would suggest you not apply. You need to be all in on this project.

5). Make sure you have permission form your local school administration and LEA administration (CTE Director) for your project before you apply. For example, you apply to set up a small animal lab with live animals in your department and then find out after getting your grant that your administration is not going to allow you to have live animals.

6). Construction projects on your school campus likely will require some type of permitting process. New permanent building on school campuses require approval from NC DPI and will require an engineered signed or stamped design drawings. Some municipalities and counties will require additional plans prior to issuing permits. This process can be lengthy and may require more time then this grant cycle to complete. Typically non-permanent construction does not require permits and approvals. Discuss your project ideas with your administration and school system facilities personnel prior to applying for a grant if you plan construction.

7). Grant funds can be handled by your school, school system, FFA Alumni or other sources. Good bookkeeping is a necessity for this grant. These are State of North Carolina funds and are subject to audit by the state auditor. Our suggestion is to run your funds through your school system accounts. They handle state money and know the accounting requirement. I would not suggest that you run the project through an outside FFA account.

8). The point of contact for the grant is the person that we are going to work with in the state office. We expect all reports to be on time and accurate. If the agricultural education teacher (usually the case) is the point of contact we expect good communication between the NCSU project coordinator and yourself.

9). Any middle or high school agricultural education program can apply for the NC TTFC Agricultural Education Program Improvement Grant in public, private or charter schools. Priorities will be given to schools that have not received a previous grant. This does not mean that your applying is automatic. Grant applications will be evaluated and ranked by our grant evaluators. Therefore, if you have received previous grants and have a good grant project idea you should apply.

10). Grant funds can be used to purchase equipment, computers, textbooks, resource materials, FFA equipment, etc. as well as upgrades, additions or to build new labs.

11). Projects should have an impact on your school and community. Refer to the impact table in the application for some of the measurable impacts.

12.). Schools that are awarded grants are required to send one or more persons to a grant meeting prior to the dispersal of the first half of the grant funds. These meetings will be held regionally across the state and announced shortly after the grant winners are chosen. We prefer that the person that will be heading the grant and completing grant reports attend this meeting.

13). The North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission asks that you provide as much public relations of your project as possible within your community, school system and state. We further ask that you display the NC TTFC signage with your projects. The state agricultural education staff and representatives of the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission are likely to visit your school to observe your project anytime in the future.

14). Realize that one half of the grant funds will be provided at the start of the grant. The second half of the funds will be awarded at the end of the grant.

15). This grant will run through parts of two different school years. If you know that you are planning to leave your present school before next year we ask that you do not apply.