

E&A Internal Service Fund: 2015-16

Nancy Kihneman, Ph.D.

EA16-166-4

At-a-Glance

The Internal Service Fund (ISF) of Evaluation and Assessment was established to fund equivalent positions in the Evaluation and Assessment Department utilizing grant or other district funding set-asides. With periodic billings against the set-asides, the department provides products and services to fulfill evaluation/data requirements of specific grants and initiatives where a portion of that grant or initiative funding has been allocated to evaluation/data services and placed in the ISF. Billed amounts from the fund set-asides cover a substantial portion of ISF personnel salaries, equipment, and supplies. However, demands on ISF personnel that are not specifically grant funded require those services to be subsidized by the General Operating Fund.

ISF Practices and Characteristics

For the 2015-16 school year, charges for evaluation services provided by the district's Evaluation and Assessment Department under its Internal Service Fund remained at \$600 per diem. The rate was increased in 2014-15 by \$100 per day from the 2013-14 rate of \$500, established in 2008-09. At that time the rate was based on estimated actual cost to the district, including per diem cost for the evaluator, per diem cost for professional ancillary services (programming, managerial and supervisory), and per diem cost for overhead (administrative services, supplies/equipment, computers, facilities). The rate was kept artificially low for several years due the downturn in the economy, reductions in grant awards, and the necessity for grant-funded projects to cut the overall amount allocated to evaluation so that more money from the grant could go toward direct student services. The small rate increase last year was warranted in order to better reflect the true cost of evaluation services now that the economy has rebounded somewhat. Furthermore, multiple evaluators and/or programmers may be providing services under the same grant simultaneously.

Typically, evaluation activity runs from October through September of the following school year. The majority of projects are billed in one, two or three payments during the course of the year, at the discretion of the project manager. Due to discrepancies among grant beginning and ending cycles, evaluation beginning and ending cycles, and the district's closure of accounting books for a period

at the close of the fiscal year, larger projects typically bill the entire funding set-aside from October through June each year. Evaluation work continues from June through the end of the evaluation cycle as outlined in the evaluation plan. Services provided after the final billing for a project are pro bono; that is, services continue until project completion but no further billing occurs.

Time and Effort Billing

The ISF time and effort billing form attests to the total number of person days billed during each billing period and/or the total charge for the evaluation/data services. For each billing period during the billing cycle, the assigned evaluator submits the form to the program manager for signature, and returns it to ISF management. The ISF manager completes accounting journals to bill all current ISF-funded projects and submits the journals to grants accounting or the general ledger accountants for posting of charges.

2015-16 ISF Funded Evaluations

There were 57 active accounts in the ISF, including Titles I and II, and 42 Focus and Priority School grant accounts. Title III was evaluated by ISF staff; however, funding was provided through an FTE in the Bilingual/ESL Programs Department. Partial funding for the Imagine 2020 Evaluation was provided by an FTE under the Imagine 2020 organization. Two accounts were associated with HIPPY and two accounts were associated with the Refugee Social Services program. ISF grant account names are listed below:

Title I	HIPPY (2)
Title II	Focus and Priority (42)
Title III	Special Education
UIL Student Activities	I2020
College/Career Ready	Summer School
Refugee Social Serv. (2)	Reconnect Program
After School Programs	Carl D. Perkins
McKinney-Vento	
EC/Community Partners	

As of August 2016, a total of \$789,900 was billed for evaluation services provided by the fund. The total includes \$350,000 for Title I evaluation services. Also included is receipt of \$35,000 from the University of Texas at Dallas for data services

provided by Evaluation and Assessment under a contract with the district for an external evaluation of the Teacher Effectiveness Initiative. Evaluation services provided for Focus and Priority schools will continue into the 2016-17 school year; therefore, accounts associated with those grants will be billed in fall 2016. The bulk of services provided for After School Programs occurred after June 30, 2016; consequently services will be billed in early fall of 2016. Grant set-asides have been significantly lower for several years, but demands for services from funded projects and unfunded projects have increased. This reduction reflects continued constraints facing grantors at the state and federal levels, resulting in reduced grant awards and/or elimination of certain types of grants. In many cases, services for a particular program exceeded the amount placed in the fund; however, evaluation charges did not exceed the amount of the grant set-aside and evaluators continued to provide services without billing.

Title I evaluation included an overall Title I data report as well as reports associated with programs funded under Title I such as the African American Success Initiative, Reasoning Mind, College Access Program, and Early Childhood Education K-2. Title II also included an overall report and reports for other Title II funded projects, including the Fellows Academy and Reasoning Mind.

Unfunded Services

As discussed in prior reports, evaluation staff are often called upon by district administrators and the Board of Trustees to conduct evaluations and/or provide data for district initiatives that have not set aside funding. In addition, evaluators are asked to increase the scope of evaluations beyond the amount of the set-aside. Unfunded services are paid by the district's General Operating Fund, as staff salaries not covered by grant set-asides revert to general operating funds. During the 2015-16 school year, unfunded services included evaluation of State Compensatory Education, Accelerated Instruction (SSI), Choice Schools Program, Teacher Excellence Initiative, City Year Program, Teaching Trust, ACE, Future Leaders Program and AVANCE. Further services included Research Review Board, various Public Information/Open Records Requests (PIR), Class Size Waiver report, and the Districtwide Campus Climate Survey (fall and spring administrations and analyses). Internal Service Fund personnel conducted analyses and reports associated with State Accountability, Performance Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS), Data Validation Monitoring, and the Community and Student Engagement Survey and report. ISF staff designed, administered, and analyzed a parent

survey regarding regulations for determining class rank.

Billing Issues/Time and Effort in 2015-16

There were no significant billing issues in 2015-16. However, there were continued concerns on the part of Grants Management with respect to time and effort reporting. Internal Service Fund management did not initiate talks with Grants Management to review and revise time and effort procedures during 2015-16, as recommended in last year's report. The voracity of ISF time and effort reporting was reviewed and revised in past years under former administrations and auditing entities; however, since some aspects of the time and effort process have been questioned, ISF management should revisit the time and effort form, with input from upper level administration and district auditors to ensure that all aspects of time and effort reporting meet current standards, while allowing for timely and accurate processing of bills.

Recommendations

- Maintain daily rate for evaluation services at \$600 per day for 2016-17.
- Work with appropriate district administrators and auditors to review time and effort billing forms and processes, and revise as needed.

For more information on this report, contact Evaluation and Assessment at 972-925-6457.