

Additionally, because the proposed research activities occur in areas inhabited by species of marine mammals, birds, sea turtles, and fish listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as threatened or endangered, this Draft SPEA evaluates activities that could result in unintentional takes of ESA-listed marine species.

The following two alternatives are currently evaluated in the Draft SPEA:

- Alternative 1—Continue current fisheries and ecosystem research (Status Quo/no action) as described in the 2018 NWFSC PEA.

- Alternative 2—Conduct current research with some modifications, as well as new research activities that are planned for the future (*i.e.*, 2023–2028). New future research proposed under Alternative 2 was not previously analyzed in the 2018 PEA.

The alternatives include a program of fisheries and ecosystem research projects conducted or funded by the NWFSC as the primary Federal action. Because this primary action is connected to a secondary Federal action, to consider authorizing incidental take of marine mammals under the MMPA, NMFS must identify as part of this evaluation “(t)he means of effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species or stock and its habitat” (Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*)). NMFS must therefore identify and evaluate a reasonable range of mitigation measures to minimize impacts to protected species that occur in NWFSC research areas. These mitigation measures are considered as part of the identified alternatives in order to evaluate their effectiveness to minimize potential adverse environmental impacts. The two action alternatives also include mitigation measures intended to minimize potentially adverse interaction with other protected species that occur within the action area. Protected species include all marine mammals, which are covered under the MMPA, all species listed under the ESA, and bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Potential direct and indirect effects on the environment are evaluated under each alternative in the Draft SPEA. The environmental effects on the following resources are considered: physical environment, special resource areas, fish, marine mammals, birds, sea turtles, invertebrates, and the social and economic environment. Cumulative effects of external actions and the contribution of fisheries research activities to the overall cumulative impact on the aforementioned resources is also evaluated in the Draft SPEA for

the geographic regions in which NWFSC surveys are conducted.

NMFS requests comments on the Draft SPEA for Fisheries Research Conducted and Funded by the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center. Please include, with your comments, any supporting data or literature citations that may be informative in substantiating your comment.

Dated: December 13, 2022.

Kevin Werner,

Science and Research Director, Northwest Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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BILLING CODE 3510–22–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals With Disabilities Program—National Center on Technology Systems in Local Educational Agencies

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is issuing a notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2023 for a National Center on Technology Systems in Local Educational Agencies, Assistance Listing Number 84.327T. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1820–0028.

DATES:

Applications Available: December 19, 2022.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: March 6, 2023.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: May 3, 2023.

Pre-Application Webinar Information: No later than December 27, 2022, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will post details on pre-recorded informational webinars designed to provide technical assistance (TA) to interested applicants. Links to the webinars may be found at www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/osep/new-osep-grants.html.

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the **Federal Register** on December 7, 2022

(87 FR 75045) and available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/12/07/2022-26554/common-instructions-for-applicants-to-department-of-education-discretionary-grant-programs>. Please note that these Common Instructions supersede the version published on December 27, 2021.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Anita Vermeer, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Room 5076, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202–5076. Telephone: (202) 987–0155. Email: Anita.Vermeer@ed.gov.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability and wish to access telecommunications relay services, please dial 7–1–1.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities Program (ETechM2 Program) is to improve results for children with disabilities by (1) promoting the development, demonstration, and use of technology; (2) supporting educational media activities designed to be of educational value in the classroom for children with disabilities; (3) providing support for captioning and video description that is appropriate for use in the classroom; and (4) providing accessible educational materials to children with disabilities in a timely manner.¹

Priority: This competition includes one absolute priority. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), this priority is from allowable activities specified in sections 674(c)(1)(D) and 681(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); 20 U.S.C. 1474(b)(2)(B) and 1481(d).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2023 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

¹ Applicants should note that other laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*; 28 CFR part 35) and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794; 34 CFR part 104), may require that State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) provide captioning, video description, and other accessible educational materials to students with disabilities when these materials are necessary to provide equally integrated and equally effective access to the benefits of the educational program or activity, or as part of a “free appropriate public education” as defined in 34 CFR 104.33.

This priority is:
National Center on Technology Systems in Local Educational Agencies.

Background

Technology can transform learning experiences and create greater equity and access for all learners. With the goal of supporting students' diverse needs, education systems have embraced technology for its ability to customize learning more than ever before (Gray & Lewis, 2021). However, whether a student with a disability requires assistive technology (AT) must be determined for each student individually.

Despite the increase in technology used at the instructional level for all students, and the requirement in IDEA that students with disabilities be provided AT if deemed necessary for the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE), many SEAs and LEAs do not address AT in technology planning (Shaheen & Lazar, 2018). As a result, LEAs frequently vary in their ability to implement systems that support the effective use of AT and instructional technology by students with disabilities and their families. Individualized education program (IEP) Team members may lack knowledge of, or experience with the functionality of appropriate technology tools, systems of procurement, and supports for use of technologies in the homes, schools, and communities of students with disabilities (Atanga et al., 2020; Cohen & Popoff, 2022; Maylahan, 2022; U.S. Department of Education, 2022). In addition, policies and practices at the SEA and LEA levels, such as operability, privacy, and security concerns, may impact IEP Teams' decisions, access to appropriate AT, and the timeliness of services (Gray & Lewis, 2021; Maylahan, 2022).

At the LEA level, systems need to be in place to support the identification, procurement, deployment, and effective use of assistive and instructional technology. These systems consist of interrelated components such as funding sources, professional development activities, data collection, program accountability, and quality improvement. To support the IEP Teams' decisions and the timely provision of AT services to students with disabilities, a sound and sustainable framework to implement a "shared vision for how technology can support learning and how to secure appropriate resources to sustain technology" is required and must align with SEA systems (U.S. Department of Education, 2017, p. 44). Implementing a framework requires partnerships with

community stakeholders and leaders to address the digital divide and identify solutions to barriers such as those related to availability, affordability, and adoption for students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2022).

Priority

The purpose of this priority is to fund a cooperative agreement to establish and operate a National Center on Technology Systems in Local Educational Agencies (Center). The Center will provide TA on a framework² for LEAs to implement comprehensive and sustainable assistive and instructional technology³ systems to include (1) effective professional development and training for instructional and support personnel, administrators, families, and other decision makers in the use and acquisition of assistive and instructional technology by students with disabilities; (2) identification of funding sources for costly assistive and instructional devices and services; and (3) coordination of programs to acquire, maintain, and reuse assistive and instructional technology devices and services.

The Center must achieve, at a minimum, the following expected outcomes:

(a) Increased knowledge of providers and decision-makers in LEAs about evidence-based⁴ assistive and instructional technology tools and practices (EBPs) for students with disabilities and their families;

(b) Increased effective use of assistive and instructional technology in LEAs within comprehensive and sustainable SEA-aligned systems⁵ as applicable;

² For purposes of this priority, "framework" refers to the theories, knowledge base, policies, and practices that form the basic conceptual structure of effective systems. A framework is a guide to increase the capacity of LEAs to understand, improve, and implement effective systems.

³ Section 602 of IDEA defines an "assistive technology device" as "any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability." For the purposes of this priority, "instructional technology" is defined as technology processes and resources that facilitate learning and improve student performance for all students.

⁴ For the purposes of this priority, "evidence-based" means, at a minimum, evidence that demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1), where a key project component included in the project's logic model is informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes.

⁵ For the purposes of this priority, "systems" refers to interrelated components (e.g., funding, professional development, data collection, accountability, and quality improvement) that need to be in place to support the identification, procurement, deployment, and effective use of assistive and instructional technology.

(c) Increased partnerships between LEAs and community stakeholders to support sustainable and comprehensive systems; and

(d) Increased capacity of providers and decision-makers to sustain comprehensive LEA and State-aligned systems for the effective use of assistive and instructional technology by students with disabilities and their families.

In addition to these programmatic requirements, to be considered for funding under this priority, applicants must meet the application and administrative requirements in this priority, which are:

(a) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Significance," how the proposed project will—

(1) Address the need for LEAs to build capacity to develop and sustain systems for the equitable and effective use of assistive and instructional technology by students with disabilities and their families. To meet this requirement, the applicant must—

(i) Present applicable national data demonstrating LEA resource gaps and areas of need in supporting equitable and effective use of assistive and instructional technology by students with disabilities and their families;

(ii) Demonstrate knowledge of current educational issues and policy initiatives relating to the equitable and effective use of assistive and instructional technology by students with disabilities and their families;

(iii) Present information about the current capacity of—

(A) Providers and decision-makers in LEAs to use EBPs that improve the effective use of assistive and instructional technology by students with disabilities and their families; and

(B) LEAs to implement components of comprehensive and sustainable systems that address barriers to the availability, affordability, and adoption of assistive and instructional technology by students with disabilities and their families; and

(2) Improve outcomes in equitable and effective use of assistive and instructional technology by students with disabilities and their families and indicate the likely magnitude or importance of the improvements.

(b) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of project services," how the proposed project will—

(1) Ensure equal access and treatment for members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. To meet this

requirement, the applicant must describe how it will—

(i) Identify the needs of the intended recipients for TA and information; and

(ii) Ensure that products and services meet the needs of the intended recipients of the grant;

(2) Achieve its goals, objectives, and intended outcomes. To meet this requirement, the applicant must provide—

(i) Measurable intended project outcomes; and

(ii) In Appendix A, the logic model (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1) by which the proposed project will achieve its intended outcomes that depicts, at a minimum, the goals, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes of the proposed project;

(3) Use a conceptual framework (and provide a copy in Appendix A) to develop project plans and activities, describing any underlying concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, or theories, as well as the presumed relationships or linkages among these variables, and any empirical support for this framework;

Note: The following websites provide more information on logic models and conceptual frameworks: https://osepideasthatwork.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/ConceptualFramework_Updated.pdf and www.osepideasthatwork.org/resources-grantees/program-areas/ta-ta/tad-project-logic-model-and-conceptual-framework.

(4) Be based on current research and make use of EBPs. To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe—

(i) The current research on readiness and capacity in LEAs to adopt a framework to address barriers to the availability, affordability, and adoption of assistive and instructional technology by students with disabilities and their families and related EBPs;

(ii) The current research about adult learning principles and implementation science that will inform the proposed TA; and

(iii) How the proposed project will use a framework and incorporate current research and EBPs in the development and delivery of its products and services;

(5) Develop products and provide services that are of high quality and sufficient intensity and duration to achieve the intended outcomes of the proposed project. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe—

(i) How it proposes to increase the capacity of providers and decision-

makers to use the framework in LEAs to—

(A) Develop and implement comprehensive and sustainable SEA-aligned systems for the equitable and effective use of assistive and instructional technology practices for students with disabilities and their families;

(B) Promote the sustained use of EBPs that improve equitable and effective use of assistive and instructional technology; and

(C) Enhance LEA evaluation and data systems to make informed decisions about the selection and effectiveness of assistive and instructional technology;

(ii) Its proposed approach to universal, general TA,⁶ which must identify the intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services under this approach to include—

(A) A plan to disseminate the framework that incorporates theories, knowledge base, and effective practices, policies, and tools that LEAs can use to develop or enhance comprehensive and sustainable systems for the equitable and effective use of assistive and instructional technology. This plan must include—

(1) Promoting the framework and products at national meetings or conferences;

(2) Publishing the framework in national newsletters or on national partners' websites;

(3) Promoting the framework and products to personnel preparation programs at institutions of higher education (IHEs); and

(4) Collaborating with federally funded resources (e.g., OSEP TA Centers, Comprehensive Centers) and, where appropriate, State TA networks;

(B) A website that houses all the project's products and encourages their use; and

(C) A plan to identify and disseminate other relevant resources, including those currently housed by the Center on Inclusive Technology and Education Systems (<https://cites.cast.org/>), on evidence-based assistive and instructional practices for students with disabilities and their families;

⁶ "Universal, general TA" means TA and information provided to independent users through their own initiative, resulting in minimal interaction with TA center staff and including one-time, invited or offered conference presentations by TA center staff. This category of TA also includes information or products, such as newsletters, guidebooks, or research syntheses, downloaded from the TA center's website by independent users. Brief communications by TA center staff with recipients, either by telephone or email, are also considered universal, general TA.

(iii) Its proposed approach to targeted, specialized TA,⁷ to support a minimum of eight LEAs across three or more States in implementing the framework, which must identify—

(A) The intended recipients, including the type(s) of LEAs, that will receive the products and services under this approach; and

(B) Its proposed approach to measure the readiness of potential LEAs to work with the project, assessing, at a minimum, their current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity at the local level; and

(iv) Its proposed approach to intensive, sustained TA,⁸ to support a minimum of two LEAs in implementing the framework, which must identify—

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services under this approach;

(B) Its proposed approach to measure the readiness of the LEAs to work with the project, including their commitment to the initiative, alignment of the initiative to their needs, current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity among the schools in the LEA;

(C) Its proposed plan for assisting LEAs to build or enhance training systems that include professional development based on adult learning principles and coaching; and

(D) Its proposed plan for working with appropriate levels of the education system (e.g., SEAs, regional TA providers, districts, schools, families) to ensure that there is communication between each level and that there are systems in place to support the effective use of assistive and instructional technology by students with disabilities and their families;

(6) Develop products and implement services that maximize efficiency. To

⁷ "Targeted, specialized TA" means TA services based on needs common to multiple recipients and not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the TA recipient and one or more TA center staff. This category of TA includes one-time, labor-intensive events, such as facilitating strategic planning or hosting regional or national conferences. It can also include episodic, less labor-intensive events that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls on single or multiple topics that are designed around the needs of the recipients. Facilitating communities of practice can also be considered targeted, specialized TA.

⁸ "Intensive, sustained TA" means TA services often provided on-site and requiring a stable, ongoing relationship between the TA center staff and the TA recipient. "TA services" are defined as negotiated series of activities designed to reach a valued outcome. This category of TA should result in changes to policy, program, practice, or operations that support increased recipient capacity or improved outcomes at one or more systems levels.

address this requirement, the applicant must describe—

(i) How the proposed project will use technology to achieve the intended project outcomes;

(ii) With whom the proposed project will collaborate and the intended outcomes of this collaboration; and

(iii) How the proposed project will use non-project resources and initiatives to achieve the intended project outcomes; and

(7) Develop a dissemination plan that describes how the applicant will systematically distribute information, products, and services to varied intended audiences, using a variety of dissemination strategies, to promote awareness and use of the Center's products and services.

(c) In the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the project evaluation," include an evaluation plan for the project developed in consultation with and implemented by a third-party evaluator.⁹ The evaluation plan must—

(1) Articulate formative and summative evaluation questions, including important process and outcome evaluation questions to refine the framework and continuously improve the project's products and services. These questions should be related to the project's proposed logic model required in paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of the application and administrative requirements in this notice;

(2) Describe how progress in and fidelity of implementation, as well as project outcomes, will be measured to answer the evaluation questions. Specify the measures and associated instruments or sources of data appropriate to the evaluation questions. Include information regarding reliability and validity of measures where appropriate;

(3) Describe strategies for analyzing data and how data collected as part of this plan will be used to inform and improve service delivery over the course of the project and to refine the proposed logic model and evaluation plan, including subsequent data collection;

(4) Provide a timeline for conducting the evaluation and include staff assignments for completing the plan. The timeline must indicate that the data will be available annually for the annual performance report (APR) and at the end

of Year 2 for the review process described under the heading, *Fourth and Fifth Years of the Project*;

(5) Dedicate sufficient funds in each budget year to cover the costs of developing or refining the evaluation plan in consultation with a "third-party" evaluator, as well as the costs associated with the implementation of the evaluation plan by the third-party evaluator.

(d) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel," how—

(1) The proposed project will encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, as appropriate;

(2) The proposed key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors have the qualifications and experience to carry out the proposed activities and achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The applicant and any key partners have adequate resources to carry out the proposed activities; and

(4) The proposed costs are reasonable in relation to the anticipated results and benefits.

(e) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the management plan," how—

(1) The proposed management plan will ensure that the project's intended outcomes will be achieved on time and within budget. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe—

(i) Clearly defined responsibilities for key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors, as applicable; and

(ii) Timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks;

(2) Key project personnel and any consultants and subcontractors will be allocated and how these allocations are appropriate and adequate to achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The proposed management plan will ensure that the products and services provided are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients; and

(4) The proposed project will benefit from a diversity of perspectives, including those of families, educators, TA providers, researchers, and policy-makers, among others, in its development and operation.

(f) Address the following application requirements. The applicant must—

(1) Include, in Appendix A, personnel-loading charts and timelines, as applicable, to illustrate the

management plan described in the narrative;

(2) Include, in the budget, attendance at the following:

(i) A one- and one-half day kick-off meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, after receipt of the award, and an annual planning meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, with the OSEP project officer and other relevant staff during each subsequent year of the project period.

Note: Within 30 days of receipt of the award, a post-award teleconference must be held between the OSEP project officer and the grantee's project director or other authorized representative;

(ii) A two- and one-half day project directors' conference in Washington, DC, or virtually, during each year of the project period;

(iii) One annual two-day trip, or virtually, to attend Department briefings, Department-sponsored conferences, and other meetings, as requested by OSEP; and

(iv) A one-day intensive 3+2 review meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, during the last half of the second year of the project period;

(3) Include, in the budget, a line item for an annual set-aside of five percent of the grant amount to support emerging needs that are consistent with the proposed project's intended outcomes, as those needs are identified in consultation with, and approved by, the OSEP project officer. With approval from the OSEP project officer, the project must reallocate any remaining funds from this annual set-aside no later than the end of the third quarter of each budget period;

(4) Maintain a high-quality website, with an easy-to-navigate design, that meets government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility;

(5) Ensure that annual project progress toward meeting project goals is posted on the project website; and

(6) Include, in Appendix A, an assurance to assist OSEP with the transfer of pertinent resources and products from the current Center on Inclusive Technology and Education Systems (CITES) and to maintain the continuity of services during the transition to this new award period and at the end of this award period, as appropriate.

Fourth and Fifth Years of the Project

In deciding whether to continue funding the project for the fourth and fifth years, the Secretary will consider the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a), including—

(a) The recommendations of a 3+2 review team consisting of experts who have experience and knowledge in

⁹ A "third-party" evaluator is an independent and impartial program evaluator who is contracted by the grantee to conduct an objective evaluation of the project. This evaluator must not have participated in the development or implementation of any project activities, except for the evaluation activities, nor have any financial interest in the outcome of the evaluation.

assistive and instructional technology. This review will be conducted during a one-day intensive meeting that will be held during the last half of the second year of the project period;

(b) The timeliness with which, and how well, the requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the project; and

(c) The quality, relevance, and usefulness of the project's products and services and the extent to which the project's products and services are aligned with the project's objectives and likely to result in the project achieving its intended outcomes.

Under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary may reduce continuation awards or discontinue awards in any year of the project period for excessive carryover balances or a failure to make substantial progress. The Department intends to closely monitor unobligated balances and substantial progress under this program and may reduce or discontinue funding accordingly.

References

- Atanga, C., Jones, B.A., Krueger, L.E., & Lu, S. (2020). Teachers of students with learning disabilities: Assistive technology knowledge, perceptions, interests, and barriers. *Journal of Special Education Technology*, 35(4), 236–248.
- Cohen, L., & Popoff, E. (2022). *2022 State EdTech trends report*. SETDA. www.setda.org/priorities/state-trends.
- Gray, C., & Lewis, L. (2021). *Use of educational technology for instruction in public schools: 2019–20* (NCES 2021–017). U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2021017>.
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- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology. (2022). *Advancing digital equity for all: Community-based recommendations for developing effective digital equity plans to close the digital divide and enable technology-empowered learning*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://tech.ed.gov/advancing-digital-equity-for-all/>.

Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking:
Under the Administrative Procedure Act

(APA) (5 U.S.C. 553) the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed priorities. Section 681(d) of IDEA, however, makes the public comment requirements of the APA inapplicable to the absolute priority in this notice.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1474 and 1481.

Note: Projects will be awarded and must be operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in Federal civil rights laws.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian Tribes.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to IHEs only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative agreement.

Estimated Available Funds: The Administration has requested \$29,547,000 for the ETechM2 Program for FY 2023, of which we intend to use an estimated \$700,000 for this competition. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2024 from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Maximum Award: We will not make an award exceeding \$700,000 for a single budget period of 12 months.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. **Eligible Applicants:** SEAs; LEAs, including public charter schools that operate as LEAs under State law; IHEs; other public agencies; private nonprofit

organizations; freely associated States and outlying areas; Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

2. a. **Cost Sharing or Matching:** This program does not require cost sharing or matching.

b. **Indirect Cost Rate Information:** This program uses an unrestricted indirect cost rate. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html.

c. **Administrative Cost Limitation:** This program does not include any program-specific limitation on administrative expenses. All administrative expenses must be reasonable and necessary and conform to the Cost Principles described in 2 CFR part 200 subpart E of the Uniform Guidance.

3. **Subgrantees:** A grantee under this competition may not award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application. Under 34 CFR 75.708(e), a grantee may contract for supplies, equipment, and other services in accordance with 2 CFR part 200.

4. **Other General Requirements:**

a. Recipients of funding under this competition must make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities (see section 606 of IDEA).

b. Applicants for, and recipients of, funding must, with respect to the aspects of their proposed project relating to the absolute priority, involve individuals with disabilities, or parents of individuals with disabilities ages birth through 26, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project (see section 682(a)(1)(A) of IDEA).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission

Instructions: Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the **Federal Register** on December 7, 2022 (87 FR 75045) and available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/12/07/2022-26554/common-instructions-for-applicants-to-department-of-education-discretionary-grant-programs>, which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application. Please note that these Common Instructions supersede the version published on December 27, 2021.

2. *Intergovernmental Review*: This competition is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this competition.

3. *Funding Restrictions*: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

4. *Recommended Page Limit*: The application narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative to no more than 70 pages and (2) use the following standards:

- A “page” is 8.5” × 11”, on one side only, with 1” margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double-space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, reference citations, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.
- Use a font that is 12 point or larger.
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; or the abstract (follow the guidance provided in the application package for completing the abstract), the table of contents, the list of priority requirements, the resumes, the reference list, the letters of support, or the appendices. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative, including all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.

V. Application Review Information

1. *Selection Criteria*: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 and are as follows:

- (a) *Significance (15 points)*.
 - (1) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.
 - (2) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
 - (i) The significance of the problem or issue to be addressed by the proposed project;
 - (ii) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement;
 - (iii) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services

that address the needs of the target population; and

(iv) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

(b) *Quality of project services (30 points)*.

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services;

(ii) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice;

(iii) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services;

(iv) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services;

(v) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services; and

(vi) The extent to which the TA services to be provided by the proposed project involve the use of efficient strategies, including the use of technology, as appropriate, and the leveraging of non-project resources.

(c) *Quality of the project evaluation (20 points)*.

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project;

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of

objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible;

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies;

(iv) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes; and

(v) The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to conduct the project evaluation effectively.

(d) *Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel (20 points)*.

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project and the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel;

(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors;

(iii) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization;

(iv) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project; and

(v) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(e) *Quality of the management plan (15 points)*.

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;

(ii) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project;

(iii) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate; and

(iv) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.

2. Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary requires various assurances, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

3. Additional Review and Selection Process Factors: In the past, the Department has had difficulty finding peer reviewers for certain competitions because so many individuals who are eligible to serve as peer reviewers have conflicts of interest. The standing panel requirements under section 682(b) of IDEA also have placed additional constraints on the availability of reviewers. Therefore, the Department has determined that for some discretionary grant competitions, applications may be separated into two or more groups and ranked and selected for funding within specific groups. This procedure will make it easier for the Department to find peer reviewers by ensuring that greater numbers of individuals who are eligible to serve as reviewers for any particular group of applicants will not have conflicts of interest. It also will increase the quality, independence, and fairness of the review process, while permitting panel members to review applications under discretionary grant competitions for

which they also have submitted applications.

4. Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions: Consistent with 2 CFR 200.206, before awarding grants under this competition the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 200.208, the Secretary may impose specific conditions and, under 2 CFR 3474.10, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

5. Integrity and Performance System: If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), under 2 CFR 200.206(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards—that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant—before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through the System for Award Management. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

Please note that, if the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from the Federal Government exceeds \$10,000,000, the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, require you to report certain integrity information to FAPIIS semiannually. Please review the requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, if this grant plus all the other Federal funds you receive exceed \$10,000,000.

6. In General: In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department will review and consider applications for funding pursuant to this notice inviting applications in accordance with—

(a) Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR 200.205);

(b) Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. 115–232) (2 CFR 200.216);

(c) Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR 200.322); and

(d) Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR 200.340).

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your GAN. We may notify you informally, also.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. Open Licensing Requirements: Unless an exception applies, if you are awarded a grant under this competition, you will be required to openly license to the public grant deliverables created in whole, or in part, with Department grant funds. When the deliverable consists of modifications to pre-existing works, the license extends only to those modifications that can be separately identified and only to the extent that open licensing is permitted under the terms of any licenses or other legal restrictions on the use of pre-existing works. Additionally, a grantee that is awarded competitive grant funds must have a plan to disseminate these public grant deliverables. This dissemination plan can be developed and submitted after your application has been reviewed and selected for funding. For additional information on the open licensing requirements please refer to 2 CFR 3474.20.

4. Reporting: (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must

ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multiyear award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

(c) Under 34 CFR 75.250(b), the Secretary may provide a grantee with additional funding for data collection analysis and reporting. In this case the Secretary establishes a data collection period.

5. *Performance Measures*: For the purposes of Department reporting under 34 CFR 75.110, we have established a set of performance measures, including long-term measures, that are designed to yield information on various aspects of the effectiveness and quality of the ETechM2 Program. These measures are:

- *Program Performance Measure 1*: The percentage of ETechM2 Program products and services judged to be of high quality by an independent review panel of experts qualified to review the substantial content of the products and services.
- *Program Performance Measure 2*: The percentage of ETechM2 Program products and services judged to be of high relevance to improving outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.
- *Program Performance Measure 3*: The percentage of ETechM2 Program products and services judged to be useful in improving results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.
- *Program Performance Measure 4.1*: The Federal cost per unit of accessible educational materials funded by the ETechM2 Program.
- *Program Performance Measure 4.2*: The Federal cost per unit of accessible educational materials from the National Instructional Materials Access Center funded by the ETechM2 Program.
- *Program Performance Measure 4.3*: The Federal cost per unit of video description funded by the ETechM2 Program.

Program Performance Measures 1, 2, and 3 apply to projects funded under this competition, and grantees are required to submit data on Program Performance Measures 1, 2, and 3 as directed by OSEP.

Grantees will be required to report information on their project's performance in annual performance reports and additional performance data to the Department (34 CFR 75.590 and 75.591).

The Department will also closely monitor the extent to which the products and services provided by the Center meet needs identified by stakeholders and may require the Center to report on such alignment in its annual and final performance reports.

6. *Continuation Awards*: In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, whether the grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation award, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: On request to the program contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format. The Department will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may include Rich Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, braille, large print, audiotope, or compact disc, or other accessible format.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. You may access the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations at www.govinfo.gov. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Portable Document Format

(PDF). To use PDF, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the **Federal Register** by using the article search feature at www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Katherine Neas,

Deputy Assistant Secretary. Delegated the authority to perform the functions and duties of the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 2022–27484 Filed 12–16–22; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[Docket ID ED–2022–OPEPD–0082]

Request for Information Regarding Higher Education Act (HEA) Pooled Evaluation

AGENCY: Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Department of Education.

ACTION: Request for information.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Education (Department) is requesting information in the form of written comments that may include information, research, and suggestions regarding the Department's implementation of the new authority provided to the Department in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, to reserve funding from certain programs authorized by the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), for the purpose of carrying out rigorous and independent evaluations and conducting data collection and analysis of such programs. The Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD) solicits these comments to identify potential evaluation, data collection, and analysis activities that could be undertaken with these funds that would increase knowledge about, and improve administration of, programs authorized under the HEA, and build evidence of effective practices to improve student outcomes in these programs. To use and build evidence to support opportunities for students, the Department is particularly interested in evaluation, data collection, and analysis activities that can inform efforts to make higher education more inclusive and affordable and ensure pathways through higher education lead to successful careers. The Department is particularly