https://www2.ed.gov/programs/rped/index.html

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Postsecondary Education
Washington, DC 20202

FY 2023
APPLICATION FOR GRANTS UNDER THE RURAL POSTSECONDARY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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I. DEAR APPLICANT LETTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the fiscal year (FY) 2023 Rural Postsecondary & Economic Development (RPED) program. This grant competition is administered by the Office of Postsecondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education (the Department). The purpose of the RPED program is to support projects at eligible institutions of higher education (IHE) (as defined in section 101 of the HEA (20 U.S.C. 1001)) that are public or private nonprofit IHEs, and public and private nonprofit organizations and agencies that partner with IHEs to improve rates of postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion among rural students through development of high-quality career pathways aligned to high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the region.

For information on the absolute priorities, competitive preference priority, invitational priorities, selection criteria, and other program and competition details, refer to the *Federal Register* Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) published on April 18, 2023, and this application package. This application package contains the instructions and forms needed to submit a complete application for the RPED program. Applications for FY 2023 grants under the RPED program must be submitted electronically using Grants.gov at http://www.grants.gov. Applicants are required to follow the Revised 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 www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-26554. This document contains requirements and information on how to submit an application.

You are reminded that the NIA published in the *Federal Register* is the official document and you should not rely upon any information that is inconsistent with the guidance contained within the official document. We also encourage applicants to review the "Competition Highlights" found in this application package for an overview of important items. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Kurrinn Abrams at (202) 987-1920 or Kurrinn.Abrams2@ed.gov.

We appreciate your interest in the Rural Postsecondary & Economic Development program and look forward to receiving your application.

Sincerely,

/s/

Nasser H. Paydar, Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education

II. COMPETITION HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Eligible Applicants**
   Eligible applicants are IHEs (as defined in section 101 of the HEA (20 U.S.C. 1001)) that are public or private nonprofit IHEs, and public and private nonprofit organizations and agencies that partner with IHEs.

2. An eligible applicant may submit only one (1) grant application.

3. **Priorities:** The notice contains two (2) absolute priorities, one (1) competitive preference priority, and three (3) invitational priorities.

   The Department will only consider applications that meet both absolute priorities. Applicants that do not meet the absolute priorities will not move forward for review.

   The Priorities are as follows:

   - Absolute Priorities:
     - Absolute Priority 1: Rural Applicants.
     - Absolute Priority 2: Increasing Postsecondary Education Access, Affordability, Completion, and Post-Enrollment Success.

   - Competitive Preference Priority:
     - Competitive Preference Priority: Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change.

   - Invitational Priorities:
     - Invitational Priority 1: Supporting Secondary Students to Access Postsecondary Education.
     - Invitational Priority 2: Supporting the Development of Academic Programs with Career Pathways.
     - Invitational Priority 3: Supporting Transition from Community College to a 4-Year Institution of Higher Education.

4. **Electronic Submission of Applications**
   Applications must be submitted electronically using Grants.gov, accessible through its portal page at: http://www.grants.gov. Applicants are required to follow the Revised 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 www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-26554, which contains requirements and information on how to submit an application.

   The Grants.gov site does not allow applicants to "un-submit" applications. Therefore, if you discover that changes or additions are needed once your application has been accepted and validated by the Department, you must "re-submit" the application. Please know that, if the Department receives duplicate applications, we will accept and process the application with the latest "date/time received" validation.

The application must be received on or before the deadline date and time. **Late applications will not be accepted.** We suggest that you submit your application several days before the deadline. The Department must adhere to the established deadline to ensure fairness to all applicants. No changes or additions to an application will be accepted after the deadline date.

5. **Format of Application**
We recommend that you limit the application narrative to no more than 50 pages and use the following standards: a "page" is 8.5" x 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, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs; use a font that is either 12 point or larger, and no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch); and use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial. The Notice contains additional information governing formatting instructions.

The recommended 50-page limit applies only to the application narrative and does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances, and certifications; or the one-page abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, or the letters of support. We recommend that any application addressing the competitive preference priority and invitational priorities include no more than three additional pages for the priority, or priorities, if addressed.

All attachments must be in PDF format only. Other types of files will not be accepted. If you submit your application electronically, you must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a PDF (Portable Document) read-only, non-modifiable format. Do not upload an interactive or fillable PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable PDF or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material. Please note that this could result in your application not being considered for funding because the material in question--for example, the application narrative--is critical to a meaningful review of your proposal. For that reason, it is important to allow yourself adequate time to upload all material as PDF files. The Department will not convert material from other formats to PDF.

6. **Notice to Successful Applicants**
The Department's Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs will inform the Congress regarding applications approved for new program grants. Successful applicants will receive award notices by mail or e-mail shortly after the Congress is notified. No funding information will be released before the Congress is notified.

7. **Notice to Unsuccessful Applicants**
Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing following the notice to successful applicants.

8. **Application Components**
This application package contains detailed instructions for every required component of your application. It also includes an Application Checklist for your convenience. Note: If all required documents are not submitted with your application, it may be deemed ineligible.

9. Carefully review the eligibility information within the NIA. There are multiple subparts for the eligibility requirement.

10. 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.

11. Applicants must complete a supporting budget narrative for each line item on the ED-524 form.

12. **Abstract:** Applicants must indicate in the recommended one-page abstract how the proposed project meets the absolute priorities, including the relevant NCES locale codes, and, if applicable, the competitive preference priority and invitational priorities. The abstract narrative should identify the partners the applicant will be working with, the target population (e.g., faculty, staff, students), the services that will be provided, and the proposed activities to be conducted during the 4-year performance period. It should also include anticipated results and citations.

13. If you receive a FY 2023 new grant award, you will be required to submit annual and final performance reports.

14. This application package contains detailed instructions for every required component of your application. It also includes an Application Checklist for your convenience. Note: If all required documents are not submitted with your application, it may be deemed ineligible.

15. Applicants are reminded that the NIA published in the Federal Register is the official document. You should not rely upon any information that is inconsistent with the guidance contained within the official document.

16. A Pre-Application webinar will be provided by the program office. Please contact Kurrinn Abrams at (202) 987-1920 or via email at kurrinn.abrams2@ed.gov.

III. GRANTS.GOV SUBMISSION PROCEDURES AND TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

Revised 12/2022

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ FIRST

U.S. Department of Education

Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants

To facilitate your use of Grants.gov, this document includes important submission procedures you need to be aware of to ensure your application is received in a timely manner and accepted by the Department of Education.

Browser Support

The latest versions of Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE), Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, and Apple Safari are supported for use with Grants.gov. However, these web browsers undergo frequent changes and updates, so we recommend you have the latest version when using Grants.gov. Legacy versions of these web browsers may be functional, but you may experience issues. Grants.gov no longer provides support for Microsoft Internet Explorer 9 or below.

For additional information or updates, please see the Grants.gov Browser information in the Applicant FAQs: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html#browser.

ATTENTION – Workspace, Adobe Forms and PDF Files

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different web forms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement (FOA), you can create individual instances of a workspace.
Below is an overview of applying on Grants.gov. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html.

1) Create a Workspace: Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.

2) Complete a Workspace: Add participants to the workspace to work on the application together, complete all the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the state of your application process as you apply. As you apply using Workspace, you may click the

blue question mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page to access context-sensitive help.

a. Adobe Reader: If you decide not to apply by filling out web forms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader.
NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html.

b. Mandatory Fields in Forms: In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.

c. Complete SF-424 Fields First: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

3) Submit a Workspace: An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

4) Track a Workspace Submission: After successfully submitting a workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html.

Helpful Reminders

1) **REGISTER EARLY** – Grants.gov registration involves many steps including registration on SAM (www.sam.gov), which usually takes approximately 7 to 10 business days, but can take longer depending on the completeness and accuracy of the data entered into the SAM database by an applicant. You may begin working on your application while completing the registration process, but you cannot submit an application until all of the Registration steps are complete. Please note that once your SAM registration is active, it will take 24-48 hours for the information to be available in Grants.gov, and before you can submit an application

through Grants.gov. For detailed information on the Registration Steps, please go to: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html. Please note that your organization will need to update its SAM registration annually.

To register in SAM.gov, click on the "Get Started" link under the "Register Your Entity…" heading in SAM.gov. Grantees, and other entities wanting to do business with the U.S. Department of Education (e.g., entities applying for a grant), that are not already registered in SAM.gov must complete the "Register Entity" registration option and NOT the "Get a Unique Entity ID" option. The "Get a Unique Entity ID" option, which is not a full registration, is only available to entities for reporting purposes. Failing to complete the "Register Entity" option may result in loss of funding, loss of applicant eligibility, and/or delays in receiving a grant award. Information about SAM is available at www.SAM.gov. To further assist you with registering in SAM or updating your existing SAM registration, see the Quick Start Guide for Grant Registrations and the Entity Registration Video at https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration.

2) **SUBMIT EARLY – We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the last day to submit your application. Grants.gov will put a date/time stamp on your application and then process it after it is fully uploaded.** The time it takes to upload an application will vary depending on a number of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection, and the time it takes Grants.gov to process the application will vary as well. If Grants.gov rejects your application (see step three below), you will need to resubmit successfully to Grants.gov before 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the deadline date.

   You must provide the UEI on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov. This UEI is assigned to your organization in SAM at the time your organization registers in SAM. If you do not enter the UEI assigned by SAM on your application, Grants.gov will reject your application.

3) **VERIFY SUBMISSION IS OK** – You will want to verify that Grants.gov received your application submission on time and that it was validated successfully. To see the date/time your application was received, login to Grants.gov and click on the Track My Application link. For a successful submission, the date/time received should be earlier than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on the deadline date, AND the application status should be: Validated, Received by Agency, or Agency Tracking Number Assigned. Once the Department of Education receives your application from Grants.gov, an Agency Tracking Number (PR/award number) will be assigned to your application and will be available for viewing on Grants.gov's Track My Application link.

   If the date/time received is later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on the deadline date, your application is late. If your application has a status of "Received" it is still awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will either change to

"Validated" or "Rejected with Errors." If the status is "Rejected with Errors," your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found on the Grants.gov site: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/encountering-error-messages.html. For more detailed information on troubleshooting Adobe errors, you can review the Adobe Reader Software Tip Sheet at: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html. If you discover your application is late or has been rejected, please see the instructions below. Note: You will receive a series of confirmations both online and via e-mail about the status of your application. Please do not rely solely on e-mail to confirm whether your application has been received timely and validated successfully.

Submission Problems – What should you do?

If you have problems submitting to Grants.gov before the closing date, please contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or email at: mailto:support@grants.gov or access the Grants.gov Self-Service Knowledge Base web portal at: https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants

We discourage paper applications, but if electronic submission is not possible (e.g., you do not have access to the internet), (1) you must provide a prior written notification that you intend to submit a paper application and (2) your paper application must be postmarked by the application deadline date. If you submit your prior written notification by email, it must be received by the Department no later than 14 calendar days before the application deadline date. If you mail your notification to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than 14 calendar days before the application deadline date (See the 2022 Common Instructions for detailed instructions regarding this procedure).

Helpful Hints When Working with Grants.gov

Please go to http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html for help with Grants.gov. For additional tips related to submitting grant applications, please refer to the Grants.gov Applicant FAQs found at this Grants.gov link: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html as well as additional information on Workspace at https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html#workspace.

Slow Internet Connections

When using a slow internet connection, such as a dial-up connection, to upload and submit your application, it can take significantly longer than when you are connected to the Internet with a high-speed connection, e.g., cable modem/DSL/T1. While times will vary depending upon the size of your application, it can take a few minutes to a few hours to complete your grant submission using a dial up connection. Failure to fully upload an application by the deadline date and time will result in your application being marked late in the G5 system. **If you do not have**

access to a high-speed internet connection, you may want to consider following the instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than 14 calendar days before the application deadline date. (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions and the 2022 Common Instructions.)

Attaching Files – Additional Tips

- Please note the following tips related to attaching files to your application:

  - When you submit your application electronically, you must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in either Portable Document Format (PDF) or Microsoft Word. Although applicants have the option of uploading any narrative sections and all other attachments to their application in either PDF or Microsoft Word, we **recommend** applicants submit all documents as read-only flattened PDFs, meaning any fillable PDF files must be saved and submitted as non-fillable PDF files and not as interactive or fillable PDF files, to better ensure applications are processed in a more timely, accurate, and efficient manner.
  - Grants.gov cannot process an application that includes two or more files that have the same name within a grant submission. Therefore, each file uploaded to your application package should have a unique file name.
  - When attaching files, applicants should follow the guidelines established by Grants.gov on the size and content of file names. Uploaded file names must be fewer than 50 characters, and, in general, applicants should not use any special characters. However, Grants.gov does allow for the following UTF-8 characters when naming your attachments: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore, hyphen, space, period, parenthesis, curly braces, square brackets, ampersand, tilde, exclamation point, comma, semi colon, apostrophe, at sign, number sign, dollar sign, percent sign, plus sign, and equal sign. Applications submitted that do not comply with the Grants.gov guidelines will be rejected at Grants.gov and not forwarded to the Department.
  - Applicants should limit the size of their file attachments. Documents submitted that contain graphics and/or scanned material often greatly increase the size of the file attachments and can result in difficulties opening the files. For reference, the average discretionary grant application package with all attachments is less than 5 MB. Therefore, you may want to check the total size of your package before submission.

IV. APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

ATTENTION ELECTRONIC APPLICANTS: Please note that you must follow the application procedures as described in the Federal Register notice announcing the grant competition.

This program requires the electronic submission of applications; specific requirements and waiver instructions can be found in the Federal Register notice.

According to the instructions found in the Federal Register notice, those requesting and qualifying for an exception to the electronic submission requirement may submit an application by mail, commercial carrier, or hand delivery.

If you want to apply for a grant and be considered for funding, you must meet the following deadline requirements:

Applications Submitted Electronically:

You must submit your grant application through the Internet using the software provided on the Grants.gov Web site (http://www.grants.gov) by 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on or before the deadline date of June 20, 2023.

If you submit your application through the Internet via the Grants.gov Web site, you will receive an automatic acknowledgement when we receive your application.

For more information on using Grants.gov, please refer to the "Notice Inviting Applications" that was published in the Federal Register or visit http://www.grants.gov.

Submission of Paper Applications by Mail:

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may submit your application in paper format by mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier). You must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
OFO/G5 Functional Application Team
Mail Stop 5C231
Attention: Assistance Listing Number (ALN) 84.116W
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

You must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:
(1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
(2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
(3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
(4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:
(1) A private metered postmark.
(2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will **not** consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

Note for Mail Delivery of Paper Applications:

If you mail your application to the Department—

(1) You must indicate on the envelope—and, if not provided by the Department, in Item 11 of the SF 424—the Assistance Listing Number (ALN), including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and

(2) The G5 Functional Application Team will notify you of the Department's receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should contact the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of the competition NIA.

Late Applications:

If your application is late, we will notify you that we will not consider the application.

V. NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Rural Postsecondary and Economic Development Grant Program

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is issuing a notice inviting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2023 for the Rural Postsecondary and Economic Development (RPED) Grant Program, conducted under the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), Assistance Listing Number 84.116W. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1894-0006.

DATES:

Applications Available: April 18, 2023.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: June 20, 2023.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: August 16, 2023.

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 www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-26554. Please note that these Common Instructions supersede the version published on December 27, 2021.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kurrinn Abrams, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-4260. Telephone: (202) 987-1920. Email: kurrinn.abrams2@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 RPED Grant Program is to improve rates of postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion among rural students through development of career pathways aligned to high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the region.

Background: Rural students account for 9.7 million—about 19 percent—of public elementary and secondary school students in the United States and face many challenges accessing

postsecondary education.[1] According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), only 29 percent of individuals from rural areas who are between the ages of 18 and 24 are enrolled in higher education, compared to almost 48 percent of individuals in that age range who come from urban areas and 42 percent from suburban areas.[2] In fact, an analysis of National Education Longitudinal Study data found urban students nationally were 74 percent more likely to enroll in college than rural students and 106 percent more likely than rural students to attain a bachelor's degree.[3]

For rural students, and particularly low-income and underserved rural students, barriers to accessing postsecondary education include difficulties in accessing high speed internet, transportation, child care, and healthcare; as well as challenges of experiencing poverty, food insecurity, and housing insecurity. Furthermore, many rural students who do decide to attend college are first-generation students who lack sufficient college preparation in high school,[4] and are unfamiliar with the inner workings of postsecondary institutions, including the college application process and how to finance a college

[1] nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/tables/dt20_203.72.asp?current=yes
[2] nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled/tables/b.3.b.-1.asp
[3] files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED557072.pdf
[4] files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1101249.pdf

education.[5] These students may feel underprepared for higher education and typically face challenges once in college; many experience hurdles that leave them unable to complete their programs.[6] Accordingly, these inequities in college readiness and knowledge may discourage individuals from underserved student populations from continuing their education beyond high school.[7] These and other challenges may negatively affect rural students' ability to be academically successful and in turn be competitive in the job market.[8]

Many of these challenges result from geographic isolation, distance from services, and a lack of resources and institutions to support community members. Rural communities are often located in education deserts, which may limit students' exposure or convenient access to postsecondary institutions.[9] For many rural students, transportation is a barrier to accessing colleges where they can earn a bachelor's degree, and thus they begin their postsecondary education at 2-year colleges.[10]

[5] files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1193574.pdf
[6] files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1193574.pdf
[7] files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED557072.pdf
[8] files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1101249.pdf
[9] files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1193574.pdf
[10] edsource.org/2019/too-far-away-distance-is-a-barrier-to-bachelors- degrees-for-rural-community-college-students/621189

For rural students who do attend postsecondary education, research has shown that rural high school graduates were more likely to enroll in 2-year colleges (44 percent) compared to their urban counterparts (39 percent). However, even after controlling for differences in academic achievement, poverty, and distance between high schools and colleges, students who graduate from rural high schools are still more likely than students who graduate from nonrural schools to enroll in a 2-year rather than a 4-year college.[11] In academic year 2018-2019 alone, there were 298 public community and technical colleges that were designated by NCES with the rural locale designations rural fringe (41), rural distant (42), or rural remote (43). In the same academic year, these colleges enrolled 84.8 percent of the 1.14 million undergraduates attending rural postsecondary institutions.[12]

To overcome these barriers, many States are beginning to introduce early college programs that expose secondary students to postsecondary education and improve their college readiness, often through creating partnerships with community colleges.[13] Research has shown that 2-year colleges play a significant role

[11] files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED557072.pdf
[12] journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00915521221087280
[13] journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0091552119898880

in postsecondary access for rural students and create a broader set of entry points to 4-year schools for many students who cannot afford or access 4-year institutions upon high school graduation. Furthermore, 2-year institutions have been shown to enroll a higher number of traditionally underserved students, such as minority students, working-class students, and first-generation college students.[14] Although there are many barriers that do play a significant role in postsecondary access for rural students, it is important to highlight the role 2-year institutions can play in helping rural students succeed academically and transition into a career.[15]

Furthermore, higher education attainment is correlated with increased career opportunities, higher individual lifetime earnings, better quality of life, and positive contributions to society.[16] Therefore, it is critical to undertake efforts that better prepare students in rural communities for the changing needs of the current workforce, and to create a more skilled workforce that will attract better jobs and provide economic support to the community. Such improvements in the educational outcomes for rural communities highlight the need for

[14] link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11162-017-9449-z.pdf?pdf=button
[15] link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11162-017-9449-z.pdf?pdf=button
[16] files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1101249.pdf

partnerships between schools and Federal, State, or local agencies or community-based organizations that can help students succeed both academically and in their career. However, many rural areas have fewer resources with which to access services and partnerships that are key to quality rural education. Research shows that creating partnerships can "help schools get assistance with special resource needs; supplement classroom learning; understand the business world, its resources, its requirements, and its concerns; and gain expertise in technical and management areas. The private sector and community organizations can also provide rural schools with tutoring, apprenticeships, speakers, equipment, scholarships, and motivation."[17] Therefore, institutions in rural communities must be given the tools to develop strategies and plans that best serve their population of rural students.[18]

Rural postsecondary institutions, specifically 2-year rural postsecondary institutions, are best positioned to enhance and develop programs that improve the preparation, support, and retention of rural students in higher education, and that help them to graduate from college and transition into in-demand and

[17] eric.ed.gov/?id=ED243621#:~:text=Because%20rural%20areas%20have%20fewer%20resources%20with%20which,public%20sectors%20are%20essential%20to%20quality%20rural%20education

[18] files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1101249.pdf

well-paying occupations. To this end, the RPED Grant Program is designed to support postsecondary enrollment and completion by addressing the challenges rural students face accessing postsecondary education that will prepare them for high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations.

Priorities: This notice contains two absolute priorities, one competitive preference priority, and three invitational priorities. Absolute Priority 1 is from the Administrative Priorities for Discretionary Grant Programs published in the *Federal Register* on March 9, 2020 (85 FR 13640) (Administrative Priorities). Absolute Priority 2 and the competitive preference priority are from the Secretary's Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grants Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on December 10, 2021 (86 FR 70612) (Supplemental Priorities).

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

These priorities are:

Absolute Priority 1--Rural Applicants.

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate one or more of the following:

(a) The applicant proposes to serve a community that is served by one or more LEAs with a locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43;

(b) The applicant proposes a project in which a majority of the schools served have a locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43;

(c) The applicant is an institution of higher education (IHE) with a rural campus setting, or the applicant proposes to serve a campus with a rural setting. Rural settings include any of the following: Town-Fringe, Town-Distant, Town-Remote, Rural Fringe, Rural-Distant, Rural-Remote, as defined by the NCES College Navigator search tool.

Note: Applicants are encouraged to retrieve locale codes from the NCES School District search tool (https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/), where LEAs can be looked up individually to retrieve locale codes, and the Public School search tool (https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/), where individual schools can be looked up to retrieve locale codes. Applicants are encouraged to retrieve campus settings from the NCES College Navigator search tool (https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/) where IHEs can be looked up individually to determine the campus setting.

Absolute Priority 2--Increasing Postsecondary Education Access, Affordability, Completion, and Post-Enrollment Success.

Projects that are designed to increase postsecondary access, affordability, completion, and success for underserved students by addressing one or more of the following priority areas:

(a) Increasing postsecondary education access and reducing the cost of college by creating clearer pathways for students between institutions and making transfer of course credits more seamless and transparent.

(b) Increasing the number and proportion of underserved students who enroll in and complete postsecondary education programs, which may include strategies related to college preparation, awareness, application, selection, advising, counseling, and enrollment.

(c) Supporting the development and implementation of student success programs that integrate multiple comprehensive and evidence-based services or initiatives, such as academic advising, structured/guided pathways, career services, credit-bearing academic undergraduate courses focused on career, and programs to meet basic needs, such as housing, child care and transportation, student financial aid, and access to technological devices.

(d) Supporting the development and implementation of high-quality and accessible learning opportunities, including learning opportunities that are accelerated or hybrid online; credit-bearing; work-based; and flexible for working students.

(e) Supporting the development and implementation of evidence-based strategies to promote students' development of knowledge and skills necessary for success in the workforce and civic life.

(f) Providing secondary school students with access to career exploration and advising opportunities to help students make informed decisions about their postsecondary enrollment decisions and to place them on a career path.

Competitive Preference 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 a competitive preference priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), we award up to an additional 10 points to an application, depending on how well the application meets this priority, which encompasses up to 5 points per subcomponent described below.

This priority is:

Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change (Up to 10 points).

Projects that are designed to take a systemic evidence-based approach to improving outcomes for underserved students in coordinating efforts with Federal, State, or local agencies, or community-based organizations, that support students, to address college readiness (Up to 5 points), workforce development (Up to 5 points), or both.

Invitational Priorities: For FY 2023, and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are invitational priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1), we do not give an application that meets these invitational priorities a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

These priorities are:

Invitational Priority 1--Supporting Secondary Students to Access Postsecondary Education.

Projects that are designed to provide long-term academic and career advising relationships, and exposure to postsecondary opportunities to students as early as 8th grade to support them through their transition to postsecondary education, including potential transitions from 2- to 4-year programs.

Invitational Priority 2--Supporting the Development of Academic Programs with Career Pathways.

Projects that include partnerships with regional economic development or workforce agencies, regional employers, or other relevant nonprofit organizations and support alignment of academic programs with, and development of, high-quality career pathways aligned to high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the region.

Invitational Priority 3--Supporting Transition from Community College to a 4-Year Institution of Higher Education.

Projects that are designed to provide strategies for developing and maintaining long-term academic and career advising relationships with community college students to support them through their transition to a 4-year IHE.

Definitions: For FY 2023 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, the following definitions apply. The definition of "in-demand industry sector or occupation" is from section 3(23) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA). The definitions of "demonstrates a rationale," "evidence-based," "logic model," "project component," and "relevant outcome" are from 34 CFR 77.1. The definitions of "disconnected youth," "English learner," "underserved student", and "child or student with a disability" are from the Supplemental Priorities.

Demonstrates a rationale means 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.

Disconnected youth means an individual, between the ages 14 and 24, who may be from a low-income background, experiences homelessness, is in foster care, is involved in the justice system, or is not working or not enrolled in (or at risk of dropping out of) an educational institution.

English learner means an individual who is an English learner as defined in section 8101(20) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, or an individual who is an English language learner as defined in section 203(7) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Evidence-based means the proposed project component is supported by evidence that demonstrates a rationale.

In-demand industry sector or occupation means—

(a) In General. (i) An industry sector that has a substantial current or potential impact (including through jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) on the State, regional, or local economy, as appropriate, and that contributes to the growth or stability of

other supporting businesses, or the growth of other industry sectors; or

(ii) An occupation that currently has or is projected to have a number of positions (including positions that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) in an industry sector so as to have a significant impact on the State, regional, or local economy, as appropriate.

Logic model (also referred to as a theory of action) means a framework that identifies key project components of the proposed project (i.e., the active "ingredients" that are hypothesized to be critical to achieving the relevant outcomes) and describes the theoretical and operational relationships among the key project components and relevant outcomes.

Note: In developing logic models, applicants may want to use resources such as the Regional Educational Laboratory Program's (REL Pacific) Education Logic Model Application, available at https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/index.asp. Other sources include:

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014025.pdf,

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014007.pdf, and

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2015057.pdf.

Project component means an activity, strategy, intervention, process, product, practice, or policy included in a project. Evidence may pertain to an individual project component or to a combination of project components (e.g., training teachers on instructional practices for English learners and follow-on coaching for these teachers).

Relevant outcome means the student outcome(s) or other outcome(s) the key project component is designed to improve, consistent with the specific goals of the program.

Underserved student means a student (which may include students in K-12 programs and students in postsecondary education or career and technical education) in one or more of the following subgroups:

(a) A student who is living in poverty or is served by schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty.

(b) A student of color.

(c) A student who is a member of a federally recognized Indian Tribe.

(d) An English learner (as defined in this notice).

(e) A child or student with a disability (as defined in this notice).

(f) A disconnected youth (as defined in this notice).

(g) A technologically unconnected youth.

(h) A student experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

(i) A pregnant, parenting, or caregiving student.

(j) A student who is the first in their family to attend postsecondary education.

(k) A student enrolling in or seeking to enroll in postsecondary education for the first time at the age of 20 or older.

(l) A student who is working full-time while enrolled in postsecondary education.

(m) A student who is enrolled in or is seeking to enroll in postsecondary education who is eligible for a Pell Grant.

(n) A student performing significantly below grade level.

For the purpose of the definition of *underserved student* only--

Child or student with a disability means children with disabilities as defined in section 602(3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. 1401(3)) and 34 CFR 300.8, or students with disabilities, as defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 705(37), 705(202) (B)).

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1138-1138d; the Explanatory Statement accompanying Division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Pub. L. 117-328).

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, 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. (d) The Administrative Priorities. (e) The Supplemental Priorities.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grant.

Estimated Available Funds: $44,550,000.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in subsequent

years from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards: $1,782,000 to $2,227,500.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: $1,900,000.

Maximum Award: $2,227,500. We will not make an award exceeding $2,227,500 for a single budget period of 48 months.

Note: The maximum award is based on a 4-year budget period. Applicants will need to prepare a multiyear budget request for up to 4 years.

Estimated Number of Awards: 23.

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

Project Period: Up to 48 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: Eligible applicants are IHEs (as defined in section 101 of the HEA (20 U.S.C. 1001)) that are public or private nonprofit IHEs, and public and private nonprofit organizations and agencies that partner with IHEs.

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

b. Supplement-Not-Supplant: This program does not involve supplement-not-supplant funding requirements.

c. 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.

d. 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 Cost Principles described in 2 CFR part 200 subpart E of the Uniform Guidance.

3. Subgrantees: Under 34 CFR 75.708(b) and (c) a grantee under this competition may award subgrants--to directly carry out project activities described in its application--to entities listed in the grant application.

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 www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-26554, 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 program 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 program.

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 50 pages and (2) use the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 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, except titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended 50-page limit applies only to the application narrative and does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, or the letters of support. We recommend that any application addressing the priorities include no more than three additional pages for each priority addressed.

5. Program Profile: Applicants must indicate in the recommended one-page abstract how the proposed project meets the absolute priorities, including the relevant NCES locale codes, and, if applicable, the competitive preference priority and invitational priorities. The abstract narrative should identify the target population (e.g., faculty, staff, students), the services that will be provided, and the proposed activities to be conducted during the 4-year performance period. It should also include anticipated results and citations, if applying for competitive priority points.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this program are from 34 CFR 75.210. Applicants should address each of the selection criteria. The points assigned to each criterion are indicated in the parentheses next to the

criterion. An applicant may earn up to a total of 100 points based on the selection criteria and up to 10 additional points under the competitive preference priority, for a total score of up to 110 points. All applications will be evaluated based on the selection criteria as follows:

(a) Quality of the project design. (Maximum 35 points)

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.

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

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (Up to 10 points)

(ii) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs. (Up to 10 points)

(iii) The extent to which the design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives. (Up to 5 points)

(iv) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in this notice). (Up to 5 points)

(v) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance. (Up to 3 points)

(vi) 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. (Up to 2 points)

(b) Quality of the management plan. (Maximum 35 points)

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

(2) In determining the quality of the management plan, 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. (Up to 10 points)

(ii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. (Up to 5 points)

(iii) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project. (Up to 5 points)

(iv) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (Up to 5 points)

(v) 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. (Up to 10 points)

(c) Adequacy of resources. (Maximum 10 points)

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (Up to 5 points)

(ii) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (Up to 5 points)

(d) Quality of the project evaluation. (Maximum 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:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. (Up to 10 points)

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies. (Up to 10 points)

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 also 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).

For this competition, a panel of external reviewers will read, prepare a written evaluation of, and score all eligible applications using the selection criteria and the competitive preference priority, if applicable, provided in this notice. The individual scores of the reviewers will be added and the sum divided by the number of reviewers to determine the peer review score. The Department may use more than one tier of reviews in evaluating grantees. The Department will prepare a rank order of applications based solely on the evaluation of their quality according to the selection criteria and competitive preference priority points.

Tiebreaker. In the event there are two or more applications with the same final score, and there are insufficient funds to fully support each of these applications, the Department will apply the following procedure to determine which application or applications will receive an award:

First Tiebreaker: The first tiebreaker will be the highest average score for the selection criterion "Quality of the Project Design". If a tie remains, the second tiebreaker will be utilized.

Second Tiebreaker: The second tiebreaker will be the highest average score for the selection criterion "Quality of the Management Plan." If a tie remains, the third tiebreaker will be utilized.

Third Tiebreaker: The third tiebreaker will be the highest average score for the selection criterion "Quality of the Project Evaluation." If a tie remains, the fourth tiebreaker will be utilized.

Fourth Tiebreaker: The fourth tiebreaker will be the applicant that serves the highest number of LEAs, schools, and/or institutions located in a rural area as identified by the rural locale codes outlined in Absolute Priority 1. Please refer to the NCES locale lookup map: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/maped/LocaleLookup/.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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. No. 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 or subgrantee 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.

5. Performance Measures: For purposes of Department reporting under 34 CFR 75.110, the Department will use the following performance measures to evaluate the success of the RPED Grants Program:

a. The number of rural students that received direct student services supported by the grant.

b. The change in the annual enrollment rate at grantee institutions of rural students that received direct student services supported by the grant from one year to the next.

c. The number of rural students that received direct student services supported by the grant that transfer to a 4-year institution or obtain a degree or certificate of completion.

d. The number of rural students that received direct student services supported by the grant who obtain an internship, apprenticeship, or employment.

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, audiotape, 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.

Dated:

Nasser Paydar,
Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.

VI. PROGRAM AUTHORITY

The Rural Postsecondary & Economic Development Program is authorized under 20 U.S.C. 1138-1138d; the Explanatory Statement accompanying Division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Pub. L. 117-328).

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

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 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. (d) The Administrative Priorities. and (e) The Supplemental Priorities.

VII. EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

This program falls under the rubric of Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs) and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive order is to strengthen federalism—or the distribution of responsibility between localities, States, and the Federal government—by fostering intergovernmental partnerships. This idea includes supporting processes that State or local governments have devised for coordinating and reviewing proposed Federal financial grant applications.

The process for doing this requires grant applicants to contact State Single Points of Contact for information on how this works. Multi-state applicants should follow procedures specific to each state.

Further information about the State Single Point of Contact process and a list of names by State can be found at:

https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf.

Absent specific State review programs, applicants may submit comments directly to the Department. All recommendations and comments must be mailed or hand-delivered by the date indicated in the actual application notice to the following address: The Secretary, EO 12372—ALN# 84.116W, U.S. Department of Education, room 7E200, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202.

Proof of mailing will be determined on the same basis as applications (see 34 CFR 75.102). Recommendations or comments may be hand-delivered until 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Time) on the closing date indicated in this notice.

Important note: The above address is not the same address as the one to which the applicant submits its completed applications. ***Do not send applications to the above address.***

VII. GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS ACT (GPRA)

What is GPRA?

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) is a straightforward statute that requires all federal agencies to manage their activities with attention to the consequences of those activities. Each agency is to clearly state what it intends to accomplish, identify the resources required, and periodically report their progress to the Congress. In so doing, it is expected that the GPRA will contribute to improvements in accountability for the expenditures of public funds, improve Congressional decision-making through more objective information on the effectiveness of federal programs, and promote a new government focus on results, service delivery, and customer satisfaction.

How has the Department of Education Responded to the GPRA Requirements?

As required by GPRA, the Department of Education has prepared a strategic plan for 2022-2026. This plan reflects the Department's priorities and integrates them with its mission and program authorities and describes how the Department will work to improve education for all children and adults in the U.S. The Department's goals, as listed in the plan, are:

Goal 1: *Promote equity in student access to education resources, opportunities, and inclusive environments.*

Goal 2: *Support a diverse and talented educator workforce and professional growth to strengthen student learning.*

Goal 3: *Meet students social, emotional, and academic needs.*

Goal 4: *Increase postsecondary value by focusing on equity-conscious strategies to address access to high-quality institutions, affordability, completion, post-enrollment success, and support for inclusive institutions.*

Goal 5: *Enhance the Department's internal capacity to optimize the delivery of its mission.*

What are the performance indicators for the Rural Postsecondary & Economic Development Program?

The performance measures for the Rural Postsecondary & Economic Development Program are part of the Department's plan for meeting Goal 4. The specific purpose of the program is to support projects at eligible institutions of higher education (IHE) (as defined in section 101 of the HEA (20 U.S.C. 1001)) that are public or private nonprofit IHEs, and public and private nonprofit organizations and agencies that partner with IHEs to improve rates of postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion among rural students through development of career pathways aligned to high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the region.

For the purposes of Department reporting under 34 CFR 75.110, the Department will use the following performance measures to evaluate the success of the RPED Grants Program.

The performance measures are:

a. The number of rural students that received direct student services supported by the grant.
b. The change in the annual enrollment rate at grantee institutions of rural students that received direct student services supported by the grant from one year to the next.
c. The number of rural students that received direct student services supported by the grant that transfer to a 4-year institution or obtain a degree or certificate of completion.
d. The number of rural students that received direct student services supported by the grant who obtain an internship, apprenticeship, or employment.

How does the Department of Education determine whether performance goals have been met?

An applicant that receives a grant award will be required to submit Annual Performance Reports and a Final Performance Report as a condition of the award. The reports will document the extent to which project-specific goals and objectives are met. As part of the reporting process, grantees will also respond to the program-specific measures, to the extent that they are able, based on their project design. As such, applicants should consider the program measures as they are developing their evaluation plan.

The most recent version of this program's annual performance report can be viewed at https://hepis.ed.gov. To access your institution's annual performance reports, go to the Contact Us tab to make the request.

IX. INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

The application for the Rural Postsecondary & Economic Development Program within Grants.gov consists of standard forms and assurances along with forms that allow you to upload attachments. All attachments must be in .pdf format. Although Grants.gov allows various file types to be uploaded, you must only upload .pdf files when submitting applications to the Department of Education. This is due to functionality constraints within the Department's grants system which interfaces with Grants.gov to receive applications.

The forms are as follows:

Part I: SF 424 Forms

- Application for Federal Assistance – (SF 424)
- Department of Education Supplemental Information Form for SF 424

Note:

- Applicants must complete the Standard Form (SF) 424 first because some of the information provided here is automatically inserted into other sections of the Grants.gov application package.
- Do not attach any narratives, supporting files, or application components to the SF 424. Although the form accepts attachments, the Department of Education will only review materials/files attached to the forms listed below.

Part II: ED Form 524 & Budget Narrative Forms

- Department of Education Budget Summary Form – (ED 524)
  Sections A, B & C
- Budget Narrative Attachment Form

The Budget Narrative Form is where you provide an itemized budget breakdown, and justification by project year, for each budget category listed in Sections A and B of the ED Form 524.

Note:

- The non-federal funds that will be supplied by the institution should be included in Section B.
- The use of non-federal funds is not required for this program.
- This program does not require cost sharing or matching.
- Applicants are required to prepare a detailed and comprehensive Budget Narrative for all proposed line items listed in ED Form 524 (Sections A and B). This narrative should be attached as the "Budget Narrative Attachment Form."

- The detailed Budget Narrative will be included in the "Budget Narrative Attachment Form."
- The detailed Budget Narrative is for each year of the budget period.
- Refer to "Instructions for ED 524 Budget Summary Form, Section C" for additional instructions on the Budget Narrative.

Part III: Abstract, Project Narrative, and Other Attachments Forms

- ED Abstract Form
- Project Narrative Attachment Form
- Other Attachments Form
- GEPA Section 427 Form

Note:

- You should include a Table of Contents as the first page of the Project Narrative.
- Refer to the NIA for recommendations on the page limit and format for the project narrative.

The **ED Abstract Form** is where you provide a one-page abstract narrative that provides an overview of the proposed project.

Note:

- On the "ED Abstract Form" the abstract should clearly indicate a response to each of the absolute priorities, and, if applicable, the competitive preference priority and invitational priorities.
- The abstract should indicate the institutions and/or partners that the applicant is proposing to partner with for the purpose of meeting the priorities.
- The abstract narrative should identify the target population (e.g., faculty, staff, students), the services that will be provided and the proposed activities to be conducted during the 4-year performance period. It should also include anticipated results and citations.

The **Project Narrative Attachment Form** includes the narrative sections addressing the program selection criteria that will be used to evaluate applications submitted for this competition. A Table of Contents should be included as the first page of the Project Narrative. This section has page limit recommendations listed in the NIA. Responses to the Absolute Priorities should be included in this section. Additionally, for those responding to the Competitive Preference Priority and/or Invitational Priorities, the responses should be clearly marked as Competitive Preference Priority and Invitational Priorities. These priorities should also be included as part of the project narrative.

The **Other Attachments Form** is where you attach the Curriculum Vitae (CV) of project personnel/participants, letters of commitment and support, business information that you consider proprietary, and the bibliography, if applicable.

Note:

- It is recommended that the CV be no more than three (3) pages.
- Attach all CVs as a single document.
- Attach all letters of commitment and support as a single document.

The **GEPA Section 427 Form** is where applicants may identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.

Note:

- This form is now integrated into the grants.gov environment and will not require a separate PDF submission or upload.
- We encourage applicants to take the computer-based training, Ensuring Equitable Opportunities Under the GEPA Section 427 on the ED.gov website at Grants Training and Management Resources Online Grants Training Courses and to visit the Department of Education Equity Action Plan website

Part IV: Assurances and Certifications

- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) (Optional)
- Grants.gov Lobbying Form (ED form 80-0013)

All attachments must be in a .PDF format only. Other types of files will not be accepted.

Grants.gov Uploading Requirements:

You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a PDF (Portable Document) read-only, non-modifiable format. Do not upload and interactive or fillable PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable PDF or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material.

PART I
INSTRUCTIONS FOR SF 424

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 60 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0348-0043), Washington, DC 20503.

PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET. SEND IT TO THE ADDRESS PROVIDED BY THE SPONSORING AGENCY.

This is a standard form required for use as a cover sheet for submission of pre-applications and applications and related information under discretionary programs. Some of the items are required and some are optional at the discretion of the applicant or the federal agency (agency). Required fields on the form are identified with an asterisk (*) and are also specified as "Required" in the instructions below. In addition to these instructions, applicants must consult agency instructions to determine other specific requirements.

<table>
<tr><th>Item</th><th>Entry:</th><th>Item:</th><th>Entry:</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">1.</td><td rowspan="2">Type of Submission: (Required) Select one type of submission in accordance with agency instructions.
• Pre-application
• Application
• Changed/Corrected Application – If requested by the agency, check if this submission is to change or correct a previously submitted application. Unless requested by the agency, applicants may not use this form to submit changes after the closing date.</td><td>10.</td><td>Name of Federal Agency: (Required) Enter the name of the federal agency from which assistance is being requested with this application.</td></tr>
<tr><td>11.</td><td>Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number/Title: Enter the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number and title of the program under which assistance is requested, as found in the program announcement, if applicable.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">2.</td><td rowspan="3">Type of Application: (Required) Select one type of application in accordance with agency instructions.

• New – An application that is being submitted to an agency for the first time.
• Continuation - An extension for an additional funding/budget period for a project with a projected completion date. This can include renewals.
• Revision - Any change in the federal government's financial obligation or contingent liability from an existing obligation. If a revision, enter the appropriate letter(s). More than one may be selected. If</td><td>12.</td><td>Funding Opportunity Number/Title: (Required) Enter the Funding Opportunity Number (FON) and title of the opportunity under which assistance is requested, as found in the program announcement.</td></tr>
<tr><td>13.</td><td>Competition Identification Number/Title: Enter the competition identification number and title of the competition under which assistance is requested, if applicable.</td></tr>
<tr><td>14.</td><td>Areas Affected by Project: List the areas or entities using the categories (e.g., cities, counties, states, etc.)specified in agency</td></tr>
</table>

	"Other" is selected, please specify in text box provided. A. Increase Award B. Decrease Award C. Increase Duration D. Decrease Duration E. Other (specify)		instructions. Use the continuation sheet to enter additional areas, if needed.
3.	**Date Received:** Leave this field blank. This date will be assigned by the Federal agency.	15.	**Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:** (Required) Enter a brief descriptive title of the project. If appropriate, attach a map showing project location (e.g., construction or real property projects). For pre-applications, attach a summary description of the project.
4.	**Applicant Identifier:** Enter the entity identifier assigned by the Federal agency, if any, or the applicant's control number if applicable.		
5a.	**Federal Entity Identifier**: Enter the number assigned to your organization by the federal agency, if any.	16.	**Congressional Districts Of**: 16a. (Required) Enter the applicant's congressional district. 16b. Enter all district(s) affected by the program or project. Enter in the format: 2 characters state abbreviation – 3 characters district number, e.g., CA-005 for California 5th district, CA-012 for California 12 district, NC-103 for North Carolina's 103 district. If all congressional districts in a state are affected, enter "all" for the district number, e.g., MD-all for all congressional districts in Maryland. If nationwide, i.e. all districts within all states are affected, enter US-all. If the program/project is outside the US, enter 00-000.
5b.	**Federal Award Identifier**: For new applications, enter NA. For a continuation or revision to an existing award, enter the previously assigned federal award identifier number. If a changed/corrected application, enter the federal identifier in accordance with agency instructions.		
6.	**Date Received by State:** Leave this field blank. This date will be assigned by the state, if applicable.		
7.	**State Application Identifier:** Leave this field blank. This identifier will be assigned by the state, if applicable.		
8.	**Applicant Information**: Enter the following in accordance with agency instructions:		
	a. Legal Name: (Required) Enter the legal name of applicant that will undertake the assistance activity. This is the organization that has registered with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). Information on registering with CCR may be obtained by visiting www.Grants.gov.	17.	**Proposed Project Start and End Dates**: (Required) Enter the proposed start date and end date of the project.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>b. Employer/Taxpayer Number (EIN/TIN): (Required) Enter the employer or taxpayer identification number (EIN or TIN) as assigned by the Internal Revenue Service. If your organization is not in the US, enter 44-4444444.</td><td>18.</td><td>Estimated Funding: (Required) Enter the amount requested, or to be contributed during the first funding/budget period by each contributor. Value of in-kind contributions should be included on appropriate lines, as applicable. If the action will result in a dollar change to an existing award, indicate only the amount of the change. For decreases, enclose the amounts in parentheses.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2"></td><td>c. UEI: (Required) Enter the organization’s UEI received from SAM. The UEI is a unique 12 character organization identifier. Information on registering with System for Award Management (SAM.gov) may be obtained by visiting the Grants.gov website</td><td>19.</td><td>Is Application Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process? (Required) Applicants should contact the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Federal Executive Order 12372 to determine whether the application is subject to the State intergovernmental review process. Select the appropriate box. If “a.” is selected, enter the date the application was submitted to the State.</td></tr>
<tr><td>d. Address: Enter address: Street 1 (Required); city (Required); County/Parish, State (Required if country is US), Province, Country (Required), 9-digit zip/postal code (Required if country US).</td><td>20.</td><td>Is the Applicant Delinquent on any Federal Debt?

(Required) Select the appropriate box. This question applies to the applicant organization, not the person who signs as the authorized representative. Categories of federal debt include; but, may not be limited to: delinquent audit disallowances, loans and taxes. If yes, include an explanation in an attachment.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2"></td><td>e. Organizational Unit: Enter the name of the primary organizational unit, department or division that will undertake the assistance activity.</td><td rowspan="2">21.</td><td rowspan="2">Authorized Representative: To be signed and dated by the authorized representative of the applicant organization. Enter the first and last name (Required); prefix, middle name, suffix. Enter title, telephone number, email (Required); and fax number. A copy of the governing body’s authorization for you to sign this application as the official representative must be on file in the applicant’s office. (Certain federal agencies may require that this authorization be submitted as part of the application.)</td></tr>
<tr><td>f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application: Enter the first and last name (Required); prefix, middle name, suffix, title. Enter organizational affiliation if affiliated with an organization other than that in 7.a. Telephone number and email (Required); fax number.</td></tr>
<tr><td>9.</td><td colspan="2">Type of Applicant: (Required) Select up to three applicant type(s) in accordance with agency instructions.

A. State Government
B. County Government
M. Nonprofit
N. Private Institution of Higher Education
O. Individual</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

	C. City or Township Government D. Special District Government E. Regional Organization F. U.S. Territory or Possession G. Independent School District H. Public/State Controlled Institution of Higher Education I. Indian/Native American Tribal Government (Federally Recognized) J. Indian/Native American Tribal Government (Other than Federally Recognized) K. Indian/Native American Tribally Designated Organization L. Public/Indian Housing Authority	P. For-Profit Organization (Other than Small Business) Q. Small Business R. Hispanic-serving Institution S. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) T. Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs) U. Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions V. Non-US Entity W. Other (specify)		

PART I
INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION FOR SF 424

1. Project Director. Name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address of the person to be contacted on matters involving this application. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory.

2. New Potential Grantee or Novice Applicant. If applicable, for (a), check "Yes" if you meet the definition for new potential grantees or novice applicants specified in the program competition's notice inviting applications (NIA) and included on the attached page entitled "Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424". By checking "Yes" the applicant certifies that it meets the new potential grantee or novice applicant requirements. Check "No" if you do not meet the definition for new potential grantees or novice applicants. For (b), if the program competition NIA is giving competitive preference points for new potential grantees or novice applicants, indicate how many points you are claiming for your application. The NIA will indicate how many are available depending on the design of the competition. Some competitions may provide more than one category of new potential grantees with differing levels of points.

3. Qualified Opportunity Zones. If applicable, provide the Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZ) census tract number(s) if the NIA includes a QOZ Priority in which you propose to either provide services in QOZ(s) or are located in a QOZ.

4. Human Subjects Research. (See I. A. "Definitions" in attached page entitled "Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424.")

4a. If Not Human Subjects Research. Check "**No**" if research activities involving human subjects are not planned at any time during the proposed project period. The remaining parts of Item 3 are then not applicable.

4a. If Human Subjects Research. Check "**Yes**" if research activities involving human subjects are planned at any time during the proposed project period, either at the applicant organization or at any other performance site or collaborating institution. Check "Yes" even if the research is exempt from the regulations for the protection of human subjects. (See I. B. "Exemptions" in attached page entitled "Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF-424.")

4b. If Human Subjects Research is Exempt from the Human Subjects Regulations. Check "**Yes**" if all the research activities proposed are designated to be exempt from the regulations. Check the exemption number(s) corresponding to one or more of the eight exemption categories listed in I. B. "Exemptions." In addition, follow the instructions in II. A. "Exempt Research Narrative" in the attached page entitled "Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424."

4b. If Human Subjects Research is Not Exempt from Human Subjects Regulations. Check "**No**" if some or all of the planned research activities are covered (not exempt). In addition, follow the instructions in II. B. "Nonexempt Research Narrative" in the attached page entitled "Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424."

4b. Human Subjects Assurance Number. If the applicant has an approved Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, that covers the specific activity, insert the number in the space provided. (**A list of current FWAs is available at:** https://ohrp.cit.nih.gov/search/search.aspx?styp=bsc.) If the applicant does not have an approved assurance on file with OHRP, enter "None." In this case, the applicant, by signature on the SF-424, is declaring that it will comply with 34 CFR 97 and proceed to obtain the human subjects assurance upon request by the designated ED official. If the application is recommended/selected for funding, the designated ED official will request that the applicant obtain the assurance within 30 days after the specific formal request.

4c. If applicable, please attach your "Exempt Research" or "Nonexempt Research" narrative to your submission of the U.S Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424 form as instructed in item II, "Instructions for Exempt and Nonexempt Human Subjects Research Narratives" in the attached page entitled "Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424."

Note about Institutional Review Board Approval. ED does not require certification of Institutional Review Board approval with the application. However, if an application that involves non-exempt human subjects research is recommended/selected for funding, the designated ED official will request that the applicant obtain and send the certification to ED within 30 days after the formal request.

No covered human subjects research can be conducted until the study has ED clearance for protection of human subjects in research.

Public Burden Statement:

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (20 USC 3474 General Education Provisions Act). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0007. Note: Please do not return the completed ED SF 424 Supplemental Form to this address.

PART I
DEFINITIONS FOR U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION FOR THE SF-424

Definitions:

Novice Applicant (See 34 CFR 75.225)

For discretionary grant programs, novice applicant means any applicant for a grant from ED that—

- Has never received a grant or subgrant under the program from which it seeks funding;
- Has never been a member of a group application, submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129, that received a grant under the program from which it seeks funding; and
- Has not had an active discretionary grant from the Federal government in the five years before the deadline date for applications under the program. For the purposes of this requirement, a grant is active until the end of the grant's project or funding period, including any extensions of those periods that extend the grantee's authority to obligate funds.

In the case of a group application submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129, a group includes only parties that meet the requirements listed above.

PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

I. Definitions and Exemptions

A. Definitions.

A research activity involves human subjects if the activity is research, as defined in the Department's regulations, and the research activity will involve use of human subjects, as defined in the regulations.

—**Research**

The ED Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects, Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 97, define research as "a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge." *If an activity follows a deliberate plan whose purpose is to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge it is research.* Activities which meet this definition constitute research whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program that is considered research for other purposes. For example, some demonstration and service programs may include research activities.

—Human Subject

The regulations define human subject as "a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains (i) information or biospecimens through intervention or interaction with the individual and uses through intervention or interaction with the

individual and uses, studies, or analyzes the information or biospecimens, or (ii) obtains, uses, studies, analyzes, or generate identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens. ”

If an activity involves obtaining information about a living person by manipulating that person or that person's environment, as might occur when a new instructional technique is tested, or by communicating or interacting with the individual, as occurs with surveys and interviews, the definition of human subject is met. If an activity involves obtaining private information about a living person in such a way that the information can be ***directly or indirectly*** *linked to that individual), the definition of human subject is met.* Private information includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, and information which has been provided for specific purposes by an individual and which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (for example, a school health record).

B. Exemptions.

Research activities in which the **only** involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following eight categories of ***exemptions*** are not covered by the regulations:

(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, that specifically involves normal educational practices that are not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction. This includes most research on regular and special education instructional strategies, and research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods. *If an educational practice is being introduced to the site and is not widely used for similar populations, it is not covered by this exemption.*

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recordings) if at least one of the following criteria is met: (i) the information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; (ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement or reputation; or (iii) the information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a "limited IRB review" to make the determinations required by 34 CFR 97.111(a)(7).

If the subjects are children, exemption 2 applies only to research involving educational tests and observations of public behavior when the investigator(s) do not participate in the activities being observed.

Exemption 2 does not apply if children are surveyed or interviewed or if the research involves observation of public behavior and the investigator(s) participate in the activities being observed. Children are defined as persons who have not attained the legal age for consent to treatments or procedures involved in the research, under the applicable law or jurisdiction in which the research will be conducted.

(3) Research involving benign behavioral interventions in conjunction with the collection of information from an adult subject through verbal or written responses (including data entry) or audiovisual recording if the subject prospectively agrees to the intervention and information collection and at least one of the following criteria is met: (A) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; (B) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject' financial standing, employability, educational advancement or reputation; or (C) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by 34 CFR 97.111(a)(7).
For the purpose of this provision, benign behavioral interventions are brief in duration, harmless, painless, not physically invasive, not likely to have a significant adverse lasting impact on the subjects, and the investigator has no reason to think the subjects will find the interventions offensive or embarrassing. Provided all such criteria are met, examples of such benign behavioral interventions would include having the subject play an online game, having them solve puzzles under various noise conditions, or having them decide how to allocate a nominal amount of received cash between themselves and someone else.

If the research involves deceiving the subjects regarding the nature or purposes of the research, this exemption is not applicable unless the subject authorizes the deception through a prospective agreement to participate in research in circumstances in which the subject is informed that he or she will be unaware of or misled regarding the nature or purposes of the research.

(4) Secondary Research for which Consent is not required. Secondary research uses of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens, if at least one of the following criteria is men: (i) The identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens are publicly available; (ii) Information, which may include information about biospecimens, is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, the investigator does not contact the subjects, and the investigator will not re-identify subjects; (iii) the research involves only information collection and analysis involving the investigators' use of identifiable health information when that use is regulated under 45 CFR parts 160 and 164, subparts A and E, for the purposes of "health care operations" or "research" as those terms are defined at 45 CFR 164.501 or for "public health activities and purposes" as described under 45 CFR 164.512 (b); or (iv) The research is conducted by, or on behalf of, a Federal department or agency using government-generated or government-collected information obtained for nonresearch activities, if the research generates identifiable private information that is or will be maintained on information technology that is subject to and in compliance with section 208(b) of the E-Government Act of 2002, 44 USC 3501 note, if all of the identifiable private information collected, used or generated as part of the activity will be maintained in systems of records subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 USC 552a, and, if applicable, the information used in the research was collected subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, 44 USC 3501 et seq.

(5) Research and demonstration projects that are conducted or supported by a Federal department or agency, or otherwise subject to the approval of department or agency heads (or otherwise subject to the approval of department or agency heads (or the approval of the heads of bureaus or other subordinate agencies that have been delegated authority to conduct the research and demonstration projects), and that are designed to study, evaluate, improve, or otherwise examine public benefit or service programs, including procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs, possible changes in or

alternative to those programs or procedures, or possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs. Such projects include, but are not limited to, internal studies by Federal employees, and studies under contracts or consulting arrangements, cooperative agreements, or grants. Exempt projects also include waivers of otherwise mandatory requirements using authorities such as sections 1115 and 1115A of the Social Security Act as amended.

Each Federal department or agency conducting or supporting the research and demonstration projects must establish, on a publicly accessible Federal website or in such other manner as the department or agency head may determine, a list of the research and demonstration projects that the Federal department or agency conducts or supports under this provision. The research or demonstration project must be published on this list prior to commencing the research involving human subjects.

(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (a) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (b) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

(7) Storage or Maintenance for Secondary Research for which Broad Consent is required. Storage or maintenance of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens for potential secondary research use if an IRB conducts a limited IRB review and makes the determinations requires by 34 CFR 97.111(a)(8).

(8) Secondary Research for which Broad Consent is Required. Research involving the use of identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens for secondary research use if the following criteria are met: (i) Broad Consent for the storage, maintenance and secondary research use of the identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimens was obtained in accordance with 34 CFR 97.116(a) (1)-(4), (a) (6) and (d); (ii) Documentation of informed consent or waiver of documentation of consent was obtained in accordance with 34 CFR 97.117. (iii) an IRB conducts a limited IRB review and makes the determination that the research to be conducted is within the scope of the broad consent referenced in paragraph (d)(8)(i) of this section; and (iv) The investigator does not prevent an investigator from abiding by any legal requirements to return individual research results.

II. Instructions for Exempt and Nonexempt Human Subjects Research Narratives

If the applicant marked "Yes" for Item 3.b. of the U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF 424, the applicant must attach a human subjects "exempt research" or "nonexempt research" narrative to the U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424 form. If you have multiple projects, include information about each, labeling the responses as to the project they address. For applications that include multiple research projects this can be done in a single narrative or in more than one narrative as appropriate.

A. Exempt Research Narrative.

If you marked "Yes" for item 3.b. and designated exemption numbers(s), attach the "exempt research" narrative to the U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424. The narrative must contain sufficient information about the involvement of human subjects in the proposed research to allow a determination by ED that the designated exemption(s) are appropriate. The narrative must be succinct.

B. Nonexempt Research Narrative.
If you marked "No" for item 3.b. you must attach the "nonexempt research" narrative to the U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424. The narrative must address the following seven points. Although no specific page limitation applies to this section of the application, be succinct.

(1) **Human Subjects Involvement and Characteristics:** Provide a detailed description of the proposed involvement of human subjects. Describe the characteristics of the subject population, including their anticipated number, age range, and health status. Identify the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of any subpopulation. Explain the rationale for the involvement of special classes of subjects, such as children, children with disabilities, adults with disabilities, persons with mental disabilities, pregnant women, prisoners, institutionalized individuals, or others who are likely to be vulnerable

(2) **Sources of Materials:** Identify the sources of research material obtained from individually identifiable living human subjects in the form of specimens, records, or data. Indicate whether the material or data will be obtained specifically for research purposes or whether use will be made of existing specimens, records, or data.

(3) **Recruitment and Informed Consent:** Describe plans for the recruitment of subjects and the consent procedures to be followed. Include the circumstances under which consent will be sought and obtained, who will seek it, the nature of the information to be provided to prospective subjects, and the method of documenting consent. State if the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has authorized a modification or waiver of the elements of consent or the requirement for documentation of consent.

(4) **Potential Risks:** Describe potential risks (physical, psychological, social, legal, or other) and assess their likelihood and seriousness. Where appropriate, describe alternative treatments and procedures that might be advantageous to the subjects.

(5) **Protection Against Risk:** Describe the procedures for protecting against or minimizing potential risks, including risks to confidentiality, and assess their likely effectiveness. Where appropriate, discuss provisions for ensuring necessary medical or professional intervention in the event of adverse effects to the subjects. Also, where appropriate, describe the provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.

(6) **Importance of the Knowledge to be Gained:** Discuss the importance of the knowledge gained or to be gained as a result of the proposed research. Discuss why the risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits to subjects and in relation to the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result.

(7) **Collaborating Site(s)**: If research involving human subjects will take place at collaborating site(s) or other performance site(s), name the sites and briefly describe their involvement or role in the research.

Copies of the Department of Education's Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects, 34 CFR Part 97 and other pertinent materials on the protection of human subjects in research are available from the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4331, telephone: (202) 245-8090, and on the U.S. Department of Education's Protection of Human Subjects in Research Web Site: http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/humansub.html

NOTE: The **State Applicant Identifier** on the SF-424 is for State Use only. Please complete it on the SF-424 in the upper right corner of the form (if applicable).

PART II
INSTRUCTIONS FOR ED 524 BUDGET SUMMARY FORM

General Instructions

This form is used to apply to individual U.S. Department of Education (ED) discretionary grant programs. Unless directed otherwise, provide the same budget information for each year of the multi-year funding request. Pay attention to applicable program specific instructions, if attached. You may access the Education Department General Administrative Regulations cited within these instructions at:

http://www.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.html. You may access requirements from 2 CFR 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards" cited within these instructions at: https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards.

You must consult with your Business Office prior to submitting this form.

Section A - Budget Summary

U.S. Department of Education Funds

All applicants must complete Section A and provide a break-down by the applicable budget categories shown in lines 1-11.

Lines 1-11, columns (a)-(e): For each project year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.

Lines 1-11, column (f): Show the multi-year total for each budget category. If funding is requested for only one project year, leave this column blank.

Line 12, columns (a)-(e): Show the total budget request for each project year for which funding is requested.

Line 12, column (f): Show the total amount requested for all project years. If funding is requested for only one year, leave this space blank.

Indirect Cost Information: If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line 10 the indirect cost rate to be charged to the grant must be entered in the applicable field on line 10, and the following information is to be completed by your Business Office.

(1): Indicate whether or not your organization has an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement that was approved by the Federal government. If you checked "no," ED generally will authorize grantees to use a temporary rate of 10 percent of budgeted salaries and wages (**complete (4) of this section when using the temporary rate**) subject to the following limitations:

(a) The grantee must submit an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant agency within 90 days after ED issues a grant award notification; and

(b) If after the 90-day period, the grantee has not submitted an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant agency, the grantee may not charge its grant for indirect costs until it has negotiated an indirect cost rate agreement with its cognizant agency.

(2): If you checked "yes" in (1), indicate in (2) the beginning and ending dates covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. In addition, indicate whether ED, another Federal agency (Other) or State agency issued the approved agreement. If you check "Other," specify the name of the Federal or other agency that issued the approved agreement.

(3): If you check "no" in (1), indicate in (3) if you want to use the de minimis rate of 10 percent of MTDC (see 2CFR § 200.68). If you use the de minimis rate, you are subject to the provisions in 2 CFR § 200.414(f). Note, you may only use the 10 percent de minimis rate if you are a first-time Federal grant recipient, and you do not have an Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. You may not use the de minimis rate if you are a State, Local government, or Indian Tribe, or if your grant is funded under a training rate or restricted rate program.

(5): If you are applying for a grant under a Restricted Rate Program (34 CFR 75.563 or 76.563), indicate whether you are using a restricted indirect cost rate that is included on your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, or whether you are using a restricted indirect cost rate that complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2). Note: State or Local government agencies may not use the provision for a restricted indirect cost rate specified in 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2). Check only one response. Leave blank, if this item is not applicable.

(6): For Training Rate Programs, ED regulations limit **non-governmental entities** to the recovery of indirect costs on training grants to the grantee's actual indirect costs, as determined by its negotiated rate agreement, or 8 percent of a MTDC, whichever is lower (see EDGAR § 75.562(c)(4)). The 8 percent limit also applies to cost-type contracts under grants, if these contracts are for training as defined in EDGAR § 75.562(a). If a n**on-governmental entity** that receives a grant under a training grant program does not have an approved indirect cost rate and wants to recover indirect costs, it may use a temporary rate of 10 percent of budgeted direct salaries and wages, but it must submit an indirect cost rate proposal to its cognizant agency for indirect costs within 90 days after ED issues the GAN. After the 90-day period, the government entity may not charge its grant for indirect costs until it has negotiated an indirect cost rate agreement.

Section B - Budget Summary

Non-Federal Funds

If you are required to provide or volunteer to provide cost-sharing or matching funds or other non-Federal resources to the project, these should be shown for each applicable budget category on lines 1-11 of Section B.

Lines 1-11, columns (a)-(e): For each project year, for which matching funds or other contributions are provided, show the total contribution for each applicable budget category.

Lines 1-11, column (f): Show the multi-year total for each budget category. If non-Federal contributions are provided for only one year, leave this column blank.

Line 12, columns (a)-(e): Show the total matching or other contribution for each project year.

Line 12, column (f): Show the total amount to be contributed for all years of the multi-year project. If non-Federal contributions are provided for only one year, leave this space blank.

Section C - Budget Narrative [Attach separate sheet(s)]

Pay attention to applicable program specific instructions, if attached.

1. Provide an itemized budget breakdown, and justification by project year, for each budget category listed in Sections A and B. For grant projects that will be divided into two or more separately budgeted major activities or sub-projects, show for each budget category of a project year the breakdown of the specific expenses attributable to each sub-project or activity.

2. For non-Federal funds or resources listed in Section B that are used to meet a cost-sharing or matching requirement or provided as a voluntary cost-sharing or matching commitment, you must include:

   a. The specific costs or contributions by budget category;

   b. The source of the costs or contributions; and

   c. In the case of third-party in-kind contributions, a description of how the value was determined for the donated or contributed goods or services.

   [Please review cost sharing and matching regulations found in 2 CFR 200.306.]

3. If applicable to this program, provide the rate and base on which fringe benefits are calculated.

4. If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line 10, this information is to be completed by your Business Office. Specify the estimated amount of the base to which the indirect cost rate is applied and the total indirect expense. Depending on the grant program to which you are applying and/or your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, some direct cost budget categories in your grant application budget may not be included in the base and multiplied by your indirect cost rate. For example, you must multiply the indirect cost rates of "Training grants" (34 CFR 75.562) and grants under programs with "Supplement not Supplant" requirements ("Restricted Rate" programs) by a "modified total direct cost" (MTDC) base (34 CFR 75.563 or 76.563). Please indicate which costs are included and which costs are excluded from the base to which the indirect cost rate is applied.

   When calculating indirect costs (line 10) for "Training grants" or grants under "Restricted Rate" programs, you must refer to the information and examples on ED's website at: http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

   You may also contact (202) 377-3838 for additional information regarding calculating indirect cost rates or general indirect cost rate information.

5. Provide other explanations or comments you deem necessary.

If Applicable Section D - Budget Summary

Limitation on Administrative Expenses

If your program is subject to an administrative cost cap (as indicated Section III.2.C of the program's Notice Inviting Applications (NIA), fill out this form as follows:

1. On the top of the page, list the percentage cap on administrative costs, and indicate whether your administrative cost cap applies to both indirect and direct costs, or only direct costs (from Section III.2.C of the program's NIA).

2. IF the cost cap applies to both indirect and direct costs:

   a. Fill out the entire table noting your administrative costs, including line 8. Line 8 is taken from Section A, line 10. For lines 1-6, these are only direct administrative costs; do not include in lines 1-6 any costs included in your indirect cost rate. If your program has a matching requirement (see NIA), include in lines 1-6 the administrative portions of the applicable rows from both Section A and Section B. If there is no program matching requirement, only use Section A.

   b. Ensure that the line 10 percentage DOES NOT EXCEED the percentage cap on administrative costs. If your program does not have a matching requirement, divide line 9

by Section A line 12. If your program does have a matching requirement, to calculate line 10, divide line 9 by the sum of Section A line 12 and Section B line 12.

3. IF the cost cap applies ONLY to direct costs:

    a. Fill out the entire table noting your administrative costs, EXCLUDING line 8. Ensure that the line 10 percentage DOES NOT EXCEED the percentage cap on administrative costs. If your program does not have a matching requirement, divide line 7 by Section A line 9. If your program does have a matching requirement, to calculate line 10, divide line 7 by the sum of Section A line 9 and Section B line 9).

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1894-0008. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to vary from 13 to 22 hours per response, with an average of 17.5 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data sources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to the Office of Finance and Operations, Office of Acquisitions and Grants Administration, Grants Policy and Training Division, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202.

PART III
INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE ED ABSTRACT FORM

The ED Abstract Form is required for submission. Applicants must provide a one-page abstract that briefly describes how the proposed project meets the absolute priorities all of the IHEs that comprise the consortium, the projected direct cost savings for students, and, if applicable whether they addressed the competitive preference priority and the invitational priorities. The Abstract narrative should identify the target population (e.g., faculty, staff, students), the services that will be provided and the proposed activities to be conducted during the 3-year performance period. It should also include anticipated results and citations, if applying for competitive priority points.

The abstract should serve as a quick reference guide to your application. Include the items below in the order listed and use the same number format.

1. Applicant institution, or nonprofit organization or agency and partner institutions
2. Project title
3. Proposed partners for the purpose of meeting the priorities
4. Target Population (e.g., faculty, staff, students)
5. Services and Proposed Activities
6. Anticipated Results (e.g., learning outcomes) and citations
7. Absolute Priorities Addressed: Yes or No; Briefly describe how they are addressed
8. Competitive Preference Priority Addressed: Yes or No; Briefly describe how it is addressed and indicate the institution/s that the applicant is proposing to partner with for the purpose of meeting this priority.
9. Invitational Priority or Priorities Addressed: Yes or No; Briefly describe how it is addressed

The one-page abstract may be single or double spaced. The following format recommendations apply to the abstract:

- A "page" is "8.5x11," on one side only, with 1" margins.
- Double-space all text in the application project narrative, and single-space titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references and captions.
- Use an easily readable font such as Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.
- Use a 12-point font.

Grants.gov Uploading Requirements:

You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a PDF (Portable Document) read-only, non-modifiable format. Do not upload an interactive or fillable PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable PDF or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material.

PART III
INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE PROJECT NARRATIVE ATTACHMENT FORM

The **Project Narrative Attachment Form** includes the narrative sections addressing the program selection criteria that will be used to evaluate applications submitted for this competition. Before preparing the project narrative, applicants should review the Dear Applicant Letter and the NIA for specific guidance and requirements. The project narrative has page limit recommendations.

Recommended Page Limit: We recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative to no more than 50 pages and (2) use the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double space all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions.
- Use a readable 12-point font such as Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended 50-page limit applies only to the application narrative and does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet and table of contents; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, or the letters of support.

Selection Criteria:

The selection criteria for this program are from 34 CFR Part 75 Section 75.210. Applicants should address each of the selection criteria. The points assigned to each criterion are indicated in the parentheses next to the criterion. An applicant may earn up to a total of 100 points based on the selection criteria and up to 10 additional points under the competitive preference priority, for a total score of up to 110 points. All applications will be evaluated based on the selection criteria as follows:

1) **Quality of Project Design (up to 35 points)**
   The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
   a. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (Up to 10 points)
   b. The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs. (Up to 10 points)
   c. The extent to which the design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives. (Up to 5 points)

d. The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in this notice). (Up to 5 points)
e. The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance. (Up to 3 points)
f. 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. (Up to 2 points)

2) Quality of the Management Plan (up to 35 points).

The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

a. 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. (Up to 10 points)
b. The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. (Up to 5 points)
c. The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project. (Up to 5 points)
d. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (Up to 5 points)
e. 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. (Up to 10 points)

3) Adequacy of Resources (up to 10 points).

The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources of the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

a. The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (Up to 5 points)
b. The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (Up to 5 points)

4) Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 20 points).

The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

a. The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project (up to 10 points).
b. The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies (up to 10 points).

Grants.gov Uploading Requirements:

You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a PDF (Portable Document) read-only, non-modifiable format. Do not upload an interactive or fillable PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable PDF or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material.

PART III
INSTRUCTIONS FOR OTHER ATTACHMENTS FORM

The **Other Attachments Form** is where you attach the Curriculum Vitae (CV) of project personnel/participants, letters of commitment and support from all members of the consortium, business information that you consider proprietary, and the bibliography, if applicable.

Note:

- It is recommended that the CV be no more than three (3) pages.
- Attach all CV of project personnel/participants as a single document.
- Attach all letters of commitment and support as a single document.
- Attach the bibliography as a single document.

Grants.gov Uploading Requirements:

You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a PDF (Portable Document) read-only, non-modifiable format. Do not upload an interactive or fillable PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable PDF or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material.

PART III
GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA) SECTION 427

OMB Control No. 1894-0005 (Exp 02/28/2026)

NOTICE FOR ALL APPLICANTS: EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES (OMB Control Number 1894-0005)

Form Overview:

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) has updated its standard form, NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS: EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES, used by applicants seeking
Federal assistance under the Department's grant programs to address the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Section 427 (20 U.S.C. 1228a) requirements effective April 3, 2023.

GEPA Section 427 requires that applicants, based on the design of their proposed grant project, the participants, and community the project proposes to serve, and local circumstances, determine the extent to which identified barriers prevent equitable access to or participation in their federal grant projects.

The updated GEPA Section 427 form is electronically integrated into the Grants.gov system, and applicants are generally no longer required to upload a separate PDF document but will electronically complete and submit the form with the application package in Grants.gov.

Form Instructions:

- Applicants may identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.

- Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity in order to submit an application.

- Applicants may have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) and page number(s) in their applications or State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form

- Applicants must respond to each question using the associated text box. Each text box allows approximately 4000 characters; therefore, if copying and pasting into the text box from another document be sure to check that everything copied.

- Applicants should use the "check for errors" button before they save the form. Applicants will receive an error message if any response is missing and will not be able to submit the application due to the missing information.

- Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

- Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Form Training:

Applicants may learn more about GEPA Section 427 and the form updates by participating in a 30-minute computer- based training titled, *Ensuring Equitable Opportunities Under the GEPA Section 427,* at Grants Training and Management Resources Online Grants Training Courses.

PART IV
ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Please read the instructions carefully in the following pages before preparing and submitting your application. Complete the Assurances and Certifications below:

Assurances and Certifications

- Instructions for Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)
- Grants.gov Lobbying Form (ED form 80-0013)
-

All attachments must be in a .PDF format only. Other types of files will not be accepted.

Grants.gov Uploading Requirements:

You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a PDF (Portable Document) read-only, non-modifiable format. Do not upload an interactive or fillable PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable PDF or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material.

PART IV
INSTRUCTIONS FOR DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES (SF-LLL)

This disclosure form shall be completed by the reporting entity, whether subawardee or prime Federal recipient, at the initiation or receipt of a covered Federal action, or a material change to a previous filing, pursuant to title 31 U.S.C. section 1352. The filing of a form is required for each payment or agreement to make payment to any lobbying entity for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with a covered Federal action. Complete all items that apply for both the initial filing and material change report. Refer to the implementing guidance published by the Office of Management and Budget for additional information.

1. Identify the type of covered Federal action for which lobbying activity is and/or has been secured to influence the outcome of a covered Federal action.

2. Identify the status of the covered Federal action.

3. Identify the appropriate classification of this report. If this is a followup report caused by a material change to the information previously reported, enter the year and quarter in which the change occurred. Enter the date of the last previously submitted report by this reporting entity for this covered Federal action.

4. Enter the full name, address, city, State and zip code of the reporting entity. Include Congressional District, if known. Check the appropriate classification of the reporting entity that designates if it is, or expects to be, a prime or subaward recipient. Identify the tier of the subawardee, e.g., the first subawardee of the prime is the 1st tier. Subawards include but are not limited to subcontracts, subgrants and contract awards under grants.

5. If the organization filing the report in item 4 checks “Subawardee,” then enter the full name, address, city, State and zip code of the prime Federal recipient. Include Congressional District, if known.

6. Enter the name of the federal agency making the award or loan commitment. Include at least one organizational level below agency name, if known. For example, Department of Transportation, United States Coast Guard.

7. Enter the Federal program name or description for the covered Federal action (item 1). If known, enter the full Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for grants, cooperative agreements, loans, and loan commitments.

8. Enter the most appropriate Federal identifying number available for the Federal action identified in item 1 (e.g., Request for Proposal (RFP) number; Invitations for Bid (IFB) number; grant announcement number; the contract, grant, or loan award number; the

application/proposal control number assigned by the Federal agency). Included prefixes, e.g., "RFP-DE-90-001."

9. For a covered Federal action where there has been an award or loan commitment by the Federal agency, enter the Federal amount of the award/loan commitment for the prime entity identified in item 4 or 5.

10. (a) Enter the full name, address, city, State and zip code of the lobbying registrant under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 engaged by the reporting entity identified in item 4 to influence the covered Federal action.

11. (b) Enter the full names of the individual(s) performing services, and include full address if different from 10(a). Enter Last Name, First Name, and Middle Initial (MI).

12. The certifying official shall sign and date the form, print his/her name, title, and telephone number.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act, as amended, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control Number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is OMB No. 0348-0046. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0348-0046), Washington, DC 20503.

X. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Use This Checklist While Preparing Your Application Package:
All items listed on this checklist are required.

Part I:

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)
- Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424

Part II

- Department of Education Budget Information Non-Construction Programs Form (ED 524)
- Budget Narrative – Attached to the "Budget Narrative Attachment Form" in Grants.gov

Part III:

- One-Page Project Abstract – Attached to the "ED Abstract Form" in Grants.gov
- Project Narrative – Attached to the "Project Narrative Attachment Form" in Grants.gov
- Additional Appendices, if applicable – Attached to the "Other Attachments Form" in Grants.gov
- GEPA Section 427 – Attached to the "GEPA Section 427 Form" in Grants.gov

Part IV:

- Assurances and Certifications – found in Grants.gov
    - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)
    - Grants.gov Lobbying Form (ED 80-0013)

NOTE: Please do not attach any miscellaneous narratives, supporting files, or application components to the standard forms (SF Forms) within Grants.gov. Although the forms accept optional attachments, please do not upload attachments there. If you deem it necessary, you may upload miscellaneous attachments to "Other Attachments Form," but be mindful that uploaded information that is not required in the Notice may not be reviewed.

PAPERWORK BURDEN STATEMENT

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 40 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Section 873 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to regulations.gov during the public comment period for this collection of information.