



U.S. Department of Labor on behalf of the  
U.S. Department of Education

# **Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education - Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success Program**

Fiscal Year 2026 Grant Competition

Posted May 21, 2026

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## Program Information

The Employment and Training Administration at the U.S. Department of Labor (Labor) is soliciting applications in support of the administration of the Centers of Excellence for Veteran Student Success Program (CEVSS) on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the Secretary of Education (Secretary). The purpose of the CEVSS Program is to encourage institutions of higher education (IHEs) to develop model programs to support veteran student success in postsecondary education by coordinating services to address the academic, financial, physical, and social needs of veteran students.

*Assistance Listing Number:* 84.116G.

*OMB Control Number:* 1894-0006.

Program authority: [20 U.S.C. 1161t](#); [20 U.S.C. 1138-1138d](#); the Explanatory

Statement accompanying Division B of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026 (Pub. L. 119-75).

*For further information contact:* Ashley Hillary, Telephone: (202) 205-4551. Email: Ashley.Hillary@ed.gov.

*Type of Award:* Discretionary grants.

*Estimated Available Funds:* \$9,000,000.

*Estimated Range of Awards:* \$1,500,000-\$3,000,000 for the 36-month project period.

*Average Award:* \$2,250,000 for a 36-month project period.

*Maximum Annual Award:* \$3,000,000 for a 36-month project period.

*Estimated number of awards:* 4.

*Project Period:* 36 months.

*Application Deadline:* June 23, 2026.

*Note:* ED is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

# Eligibility

## Eligible Applicants

IHEs (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA) ([20 U.S.C. 1001](#))).

## Costs

### Cost Sharing

This program does not require cost sharing or matching.

### 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 <https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-offices/ofc#Indirect-Cost-Division>.

### 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.

### Subgrantees

A grantee under this competition may not award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application.

### Use of Funds

In addition to the required activities under section 873(c)(1) of the HEA, which are included in the absolute priority, an IHE receiving a grant may also carry out one or more of the following activities with respect to veteran students, under section 873(c)(2) of the HEA:

- (A) Outreach and recruitment of such students;
- (B) Supportive instructional services for such students, which may include (i) personal, academic, and career counseling, as an ongoing part of the program; (ii) tutoring and academic skill-building instruction assistance, as needed; and (iii) assistance with special admissions and transfer of credit from previous postsecondary education or experience;
- (C) Assistance in obtaining student financial aid;

(D) Housing support for veteran students living in institutional facilities and commuting veteran students;

(E) Cultural events, academic programs, orientation programs, and other activities designed to ease the transition to campus life for veteran students;

(F) Support for veteran student organizations and veteran student support groups on campus;

(G) Coordination of academic advising and admissions counseling with military bases and national guard units in the area; or

(H) Other support services the institution determines to be necessary to ensure the success of veterans in achieving educational and career goals.

## Submission Requirements and Deadlines

Applications Available	May 21, 2026
Application Deadline	June 23, 2026
Deadline for Intergovernmental Review	August 24, 2026

**Applicants are required to follow the 2025 Common Instructions and Information for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs**, published in the Federal Register on August 29, 2025 (90 FR 42234) and available at [ED 2025 Common Instructions](#).

## Program Description

### Priorities

The purpose of this program is to encourage institutions of higher education (IHEs) to develop model programs to support veteran student success in postsecondary education by coordinating services to address the academic, financial, physical, and social needs of veteran students. This notice includes one absolute priority and one competitive preference priority. The absolute priority is from the activities specified in section 873 of the HEA, and competitive preference priority is from the Secretary's Supplemental Priority and Definitions on Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness ([91 FR 18780](#)), published in the *Federal Register* on April 13, 2026.

All priorities that are being addressed must be identified in the abstract form and the project narrative section of the application.

*Absolute Priority:* For Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, the priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet the absolute priority.

*Competitive Preference Priority:* For FY 2026, 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. An application may receive either 0 or 10 additional points under the competitive preference priority. ED will not review or award points where an applicant fails to clearly identify the competitive preference priority that it wishes ED to consider for purposes of awarding competitive preference priority points.

## Priorities

Title	Required	Points	Priority Language
Absolute Priority— Establishing a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success (section 873 of the HEA)	Yes	N/A	Model Programs that include all of the following required activities: (a) Establishing a Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success on the campus of the institution to provide a single point of contact to coordinate comprehensive support services for veteran students; (b) Establishing a veteran student support team, including representatives from the offices of the institution responsible for admissions, registration, financial aid, veterans benefits, academic advising, student health, personal or mental health counseling, career advising, disabilities services, and any other office of the institution that provides support to veteran students on campus; (c) Providing a coordinator whose primary responsibility is to coordinate the model program; (d) Monitoring the rates of veteran student enrollment, persistence, and completion; and (e) Developing a plan to sustain the Center of Excellence for Veteran Student Success after the grant period.
Competitive Preference Priority—Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness	No	0 to 10 points	Projects or proposals that are designed to do one or more of the following:

(Secretary's Supplemental Priority and Definitions on Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness)		<p>(a) Provide career and/or college exploration and advising opportunities to promote greater awareness of the range of postsecondary educational and career options.</p> <p>(b) Provide opportunities for students to use financial tools to compare the cost and benefits of the career options and educational pathways they are considering, including the long-term impact of taking out student loans on their financial security, including likely entry and mid-career earnings in fields selected by students as compared to entry and mid-career earnings in high wage, high growth, and high demand occupations in each of the career clusters.</p> <p>(c) Support workforce development programs that are aligned with State priorities by promoting the attainment by individuals of an in-demand and high-value industry-recognized postsecondary credential.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Postsecondary educational and career options include Registered Apprenticeships.</p>
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## Selection Criteria

Selection criteria outline how the application will be scored. The maximum possible total score an application can receive for addressing the criteria is 100 points. The maximum possible score for addressing each criterion is indicated in parentheses following the criterion. The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210.

(a) Need for project. (up to 10 points) The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates the magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project. (up to 5 points)
- (2) The extent to which the specific nature and magnitude of gaps or challenges are identified and the extent to which these gaps or challenges will be addressed by the

services, supports, infrastructure, or opportunities described in the proposed project. (up to 5 points)

(b) Significance. (up to 10 points) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the likelihood that the proposed project will result in systemic change that supports continuous, sustainable, and measurable improvement. (up to 10 points)

(c) Quality of the project design. (up to 40 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:

- (1) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale that is aligned with the purposes of the grant program. (up to 10 points)
- (2) The extent to which the design of the proposed project demonstrates meaningful community engagement and input to ensure that the project is appropriate to successfully address the needs of the target population or other identified needs and will be used to inform continuous improvement strategies. (up to 10 points)
- (3) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates that it is designed to build capacity and yield sustainable results that will extend beyond the project period. (up to 5 points)
- (4) The extent to which the project director or principal investigator, when hired, has the qualifications required for the project, including formal training or work experience in fields related to the objectives of the project and experience in designing, managing, or implementing similar projects for the target population to be served by the project. (up to 10 points)
- (5) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to meaningful improvements in the skills and competencies necessary to gain employment in high-quality jobs, careers, and industries or build capacity for independent living. (Up to 5 points)

(d) Adequacy of resources. (up to 25 points) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The adequacy of support for the project, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization. (up to 9 points)

- (2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served, the depth and intensity of services, and the anticipated results and benefits and to the anticipated results and benefits. (up to 7 points)
- (3) The potential for the purposes, activities, or benefits of the proposed project to be institutionalized into the ongoing practices and programs of the applicant, agency, or organization and continue after Federal funding ends. (up to 9 points)

(e) Quality of the project evaluation or evidence-building. (up to 15 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:

- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation or other evidence-building are thorough, feasible, relevant, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. (up to 5 points)
- (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation or other evidence-building are designed to measure the fidelity of implementation of the project. (up to 5 points)
- (3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation or other evidence-building will provide guidance for quality assurance and continuous improvement. (up to 5 points)

## Performance Measures

ED has developed the following performance measures, in accordance with 20 USC § 1161t(e), for the purposes of the reporting to ED under [34 CFR 75.110](#).

*Program Performance Measures.* The Department developed the following program performance indicators to evaluate the overall effectiveness of this program:

Program Performance Measure 1	The extent to which the project is institutionalized at the end of the project period.
Program Performance Measure 2	The number and percentage of veteran participants who enroll in postsecondary education.
Program Performance Measure 3	The number and percentage of veteran participants who persist in postsecondary education from one year to the next.
Program Performance Measure 4	The number and percentage of veteran participants who complete postsecondary education.
Program Efficiency Measure	The Federal cost per successful outcome.
Note: Grantees should include students enrolled in Registered Apprenticeship programs in their reporting on these enrollment, persistence, and completion measures.	

These measures constitute the Department's indicators of success for this program. Consequently, we advise an applicant for a grant under this program to give careful consideration to these measures in conceptualizing the approach and evaluation for its proposed project. If funded, you will be required to collect and report data in your project's annual performance report (34 CFR 75.590).

## Application Submission Information

Application Submission Instructions: Applicants are required to follow the [Common Instructions and Information for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs](#), published in the *Federal Register* on August 29, 2025 ([90 FR 42234](#)), which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application.

### Registration

To apply, you must first be registered in two systems: SAM.gov and Grants.gov. If you are already registered, make sure your registration is active and up to date.

Grants.gov registration involves several steps including registration on [SAM.gov](#). You may begin working on your application while completing the registration process, but you cannot apply until all registration steps are complete. 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 apply through Grants.gov. For detailed information on the registration steps, please go to: [Grants.gov Applicant Registration](#). Please note that your organization will need to update its SAM registration annually.

#### **SAM.gov**

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier. SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. **Begin that process early.**

To register, go to SAM.gov and click on "Get Started."

Click on the Entity Registration Checklist for the information you will need to register in SAM.gov.

If you need help, you can call 866-606-8220 or live chat with the Federal Service Desk.

#### **Grants.gov**

You must also have an active account with Grants.gov.

To register, go to Grants.gov and click "Register." When ready click on "Get Registered Now" and complete required fields.

For more information or assistance, click on "Applicant Registration Page."

ED strongly recommends 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. If Grants.gov rejects your application, 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 Unique Entity Identifier (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.

A *Grants.gov* applicant must apply online using Workspace, a shared environment in *Grants.gov* where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different web forms within an application. You begin by creating an individual Workspace for each application and establish, for that application, a collaborative application package that allows more than one person in your organization to work concurrently on an application. You will then complete the application forms in Workspace and submit the application when completed. For further instructions on how to apply using *Grants.gov*, refer to: <https://grants.gov/applicants/grant-applications/how-to-apply-for-grants>.

### **Intergovernmental Review**

This is subject to Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs) and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. One of the objectives of Executive Order 12372 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 developed to coordinate and review proposed Federal financial grant applications. Grant applicants need to contact State Single Points of Contact (SPOC) for information on their state’s procedures. Multi-state applicants should follow procedures specific to each state. Further information about the SPOC and the official list of entities can be found at: <https://www.ojp.gov/IntergovernmentalReviewSPOCList.pdf>.

Absent specific State review programs, applicants may submit comments directly to the point of contact listed in this notice.

### **Verify Submission**

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.

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 at <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/encountering-error-messages>. For more detailed information on troubleshooting Adobe errors, you can review the Adobe Reader Software Tip Sheet at: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility>. 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: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) or access the [Grants.gov Self- Service Knowledge Base web portal](#).

## **Application Review Information**

*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](#), information outside the rank order of applications, including: the information in each application; and any other information—

- (1) Relevant to a criterion, priority, or other requirement that applies to the selection of applications for new grants;
- (2) Concerning the applicant's performance and use of funds under a previous award under any Department program; and
- (3) Concerning the applicant's failure under any Department program to submit a performance report or its submission of a performance report of unacceptable quality.

Before making awards, Department staff will screen applications submitted in accordance with the requirements in this notice to determine whether applications have met eligibility and other requirements, including whether an application may fail to meet the “General Terms and Conditions” applicable to awarded funds referenced elsewhere within this notice. This screening process may occur at various stages of the review and selection process. Applicants that are determined to be ineligible will not receive a grant, regardless of whether the application was included in the peer review process. Applications not selected for funding will be informed of the Secretary's decision in accordance with 34 CFR 75.218.

Peer reviewers will read, prepare a written evaluation of, and score the assigned applications, using the selection criteria provided in this notice.

For this competition, a panel of non-Federal reviewers will review each application in accordance with the selection criteria. The individual scores assigned by the reviewers will be added and the sum divided by the number of reviewers to determine the peer reviewer score received in the review process.

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

### Tiebreaker

If there are insufficient funds to award multiple applications with the same score, consistent with section 873(d)(2)(A) and (B) of the HEA, in making a selection, the Secretary will consider the number of veteran students enrolled at each IHE and award funding to the applicant(s) with the highest number of enrolled veteran students. Only applications that clearly provide their veteran student enrollment will be considered for funding based on this tiebreaker. If a tie still exists after applying the first tiebreaker, the Secretary will consider the need for model programs to address the needs of veteran students at a wide range of IHEs, including the need to provide (i) an equitable distribution of such grants to IHEs of various types and sizes; (ii) an equitable geographic distribution of such grants; and (iii) an equitable distribution of such grants among rural and urban areas. If there is still a tie after implementing the second tiebreaker, the Secretary will select the application(s) with the smallest amount of funding allocated to indirect costs.

## Definitions

The following definitions are from [34 CFR 77.1](#).

*Demonstrates a rationale* means that there is a key project component included in the project's logic model that is supported by citations of high-quality research or evaluation findings that suggest that the project component is likely to significantly improve relevant outcomes. ([34 CFR 77.1](#))

*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. ([34 CFR 77.1](#))

*Performance measure* means any quantitative indicator, statistic, or metric used to gauge program or project performance. ([34 CFR 77.1](#))

*Performance target* means a level of performance that an applicant would seek to meet during the course of a project or as a result of a project. ([34 CFR 77.1](#))

*Public*, as applied to an agency, organization, or institution, means that the agency, organization, or institution is under the administrative supervision or control of a government other than the Federal Government. ([34 CFR 77.1](#))

## Award Requirements

### Terms and Conditions

If you are awarded a grant under this competition, you must ensure and may be required to demonstrate that federal funds will not be used under this project in any manner that violates the United States Constitution, Title VI or Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.](#) or [42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.](#)), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ([20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.](#)), section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act ([29 U.S.C. 794](#)), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 ([42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.](#)), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ([42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.](#)), the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001 ([20 U.S.C. 7905](#)), section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended ([20 U.S.C. 1011f](#)), or other applicable federal law. To the extent that a grantee uses grant funds for such unallowable activities, ED may pursue termination under [2 CFR 200.340](#). The Grant Award Notification document accompanying your award may contain further terms and conditions, as necessary to ensure grantee compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and administrative priorities.

Please note the provisions of Executive Orders 14151, 14168, 14173, and 14190 as well as the U.S. Department of Justice’s July 29, 2025, non-regulatory “Guidance for Recipients of

Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination,” which clarifies the application of federal antidiscrimination laws to programs or initiatives that may involve discriminatory practices, including those labeled as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”) programs.

Such activities may risk violating federal civil rights laws and may jeopardize federal funding. This includes any discriminatory equity ideology in violation of a Federal anti-discrimination law. A definition of “discriminatory equity ideology” is contained in Section 2(b) of Executive Order 14190. To the extent that an ED grantee uses grant funds for unallowable activities, ED reserves the right to take appropriate enforcement action, including recovery of grant funds.

Additionally, grantees must comply with all “Financial Assistance General Certifications and Representations” annual registration requirements made in SAM.gov, including any provisions in the annual registration that address civil rights, DEI programs or activities, and support of illegal aliens. To the extent that any entity receiving grant funds under this grant uses those grant funds for such unallowable activities, ED reserves the right to take appropriate enforcement actions, including the recovery of grant funds or may pursue termination or non-continuation.

### **Applicable Regulations**

(a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) 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 in 2 CFR part 3474. (d) Secretary’s Supplemental Priority and Definitions on Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness ([91 FR 18780](#)).

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

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

### **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, or whether the continuation of the project is in the best interest of the Federal Government.

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](#)).

# Application Checklist

The application will require you to fill out several forms, which are listed and linked in grants.gov. See below for a description of forms and sections:

## 1. Standard Documents

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

## 2. Budget Information

- Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424A)

## 3. Abstract Form

- Abstract — Attach this document to the Abstract Form in the Grants.gov application.

## 4. Project Narrative

- Application Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form)

## 5. Budget Narrative

- Budget Narrative Attachment Form

## 6. Other Attachment Forms

- Absolute Priority Narrative
- Competitive Preference Priority Narrative

## 7. Assurances and Certifications

- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Standard Form LLL)
- Grants.gov Lobbying Form
- Assurances – Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)

### Part 1: Standard Documents

Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)

ED Supplemental Information for SF 424 ([Instructions](#))

This form requires basic identifying information about the applicant and the application. Please provide all requested applicant information (including name, address, e-mail address and UEI). **When applying electronically via Grants.gov, you will need to ensure that the UEI on your application is the same as the UEI your organization used when it registered with the System for Award Management.**

Applicants are advised to complete the Application for Federal Assistance (Form SF 424) first. Grants.gov will automatically insert the correct Assistance Listing Number and program name automatically wherever needed on other forms.

Please do not attach any narratives, supporting files, or application components to the Standard Form (SF 424). Although this form accepts attachments, ED will only review materials/files attached in accordance with the instructions provided within this application.

## **Part 2: Budget Information**

### **Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (Standard Form 424A)**

The SF-424A Budget Information Form is required. This part of your application contains information about the Federal funding you are requesting. The form requires total funding requests for each year of the project, but only requires detailed information for Year 1 of the project. You will provide information on all years of the project, including an itemized budget breakdown for each year of the proposed project, in your Budget Narrative. Specific instructions for completing the Budget Narrative are provided within this application notice and instructions under Budget Narrative. Budget Narrative attachments are not included in the page count.

### ***Instructions for completing SF-424A:***

The SF-424A has six sections (A-F). While the form includes several sections and boxes, please use the information below to complete only the necessary sections.

### **Section A – Budget Summary**

- *Section A-Budget Summary:* Enter the name of the grant program for which you are requesting funds in 1(a).
- *Section A-Budget Summary:* 1(b): Enter the Assistance Listing Number (Example 84.044A).
- *Section A-Budget Summary:* 1(e) “Federal”: Include the total amount requested for the entire performance period. The amount you enter here will auto populate in 5 (e).
- *Section A-Budget Summary:* 1(f) “Non-Federal”: Only include an amount in this section if you propose to include non-Federal financial resources as part of this project, including any non-Federal funds to meet any program cost sharing requirements. If not including non-Federal financial resources, leave this blank or include 0.

- *Section A-Budget Summary: 1(g):* If using Grants.gov form, the total amount included here will be auto-calculated based on what is included in 1(e) and 1(f).

## **Section B – Budget Categories**

- Section B-Budget Categories:
  - Line 6. Object Class Categories: The categories listed here (a-k) are the categories you will need to further describe in the Budget Narrative. For this section, only include the total amount by category for Year 1 of the project. You will provide a breakdown by category for each year of the project in the Budget Narrative. If using Grants.gov, line 6 column (1) will be auto-populated with the name of the program for which you are requesting funding.
- *Personnel (line 6a.):* Enter project personnel salaries and wages only. Include fees and expenses for consultants on line 6f or 6h.
- *Fringe Benefits (line 6b):* The organization's normal fringe benefits contribution may be charged to the program. Leave this line blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of the indirect cost.
- *Travel (line 6c):* Indicate the travel costs of employees and participants only. Include travel of persons such as consultants on line 6f or 6h.
- *Equipment (line 6d):* Indicate the cost of tangible, non-expendable personal property that has a usefulness greater than one year and acquisition costs that are the lesser of the capitalization level established by the applicant entity for financial statement purposes or \$10,000 per article. Lower limits may be established to maintain consistency with the applicant's policy.
- *Supplies (line 6e):* Show all tangible, expendable personal property. Direct supplies and materials differ from equipment in that they are consumable, expendable, and of a relatively low unit cost. Supplies purchased with grant funds should directly benefit the grant project and be necessary for achieving the goals of the project.
- *Contractual (line 6f):* The contractual category should include all costs specifically incurred with actions that the applicant takes in conjunction with an established internal procurement system. Include consultant fees, expenses, and travel costs in this category if the consultant's services are obtained through a written binding agreement or contract.
- *Construction (line 6g):* Construction funds are not authorized, unless specified by the program. If construction is allowable, include the amount request for construction costs.

- *Other (line 6h):* Indicate all direct costs not covered on lines 1-6. For example, include costs such as space rental, required fees, honoraria and travel (where a contract is not in place for services), training, and communication and printing costs. If applicable, include stipends under other. If stipends are included under other, do not include stipends when calculating the indirect cost. Do not include costs that are included in the indirect cost rate.
- *Total Direct Costs (line 6i):* The sum of lines 6a-6h. If using Grants.gov, this number is auto-calculated.
- *Indirect Costs (line 6j):* Indicate the applicant's approved indirect cost rate, per [34 CFR 75.560 - 75.564](#). If an applicant does not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement with a cognizant Federal agency, the applicant must apply to ED for a temporary indirect cost rate if it wishes to charge indirect costs to the grant. For more information, go to [ED's website](#). In addition, a grantee, if it is eligible, may also use de minimis rate as provided for under [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#).
- *Total Cost (line 6i and 6j):* This number should be equal to sum of lines 6i-6j (total of direct costs + indirect costs). If using Grants.gov, this number is auto-calculated. The sum for column one, labeled Project Year 6 (1), should also be equal to item 15a on the application cover sheet (SF Form 424).
- *Line 7. Program Income:* You may leave this field blank.

### Section C – Non-Federal Resources

This section should only be completed if you are proposing a cost share or if the program for which you are applying requires a Non-Federal cost share. If you include a cost share, provide a breakdown by including the dollars that will come from the applicant, State, and other sources, as applicable.

### Section D – Forecasted Cash Needs

- *Line 13. Federal:* The total for 1<sup>st</sup> Year column will automatically calculate based on the funding amounts included in Quarters 1-4. These quarters apply to **Year One ONLY**. Enter the forecasted cash needs from Federal sources for each quarter of the first program year. The amount entered for each quarter will be used to auto-calculate the amount in line 15 and is your forecasted needs. You will have an opportunity to provide updates to these quarterly amounts in post-award.
- *Line 14. Non-Federal:* The total for 1<sup>st</sup> year column will automatically calculate based on the funding amounts included in Quarters 1-4. These quarters apply to **Year One ONLY. Leave this blank for each quarter if you are not including any Non-Federal Funds.** If including non-Federal funds, enter the forecasted cash

needs from non-Federal sources for the first quarter of the first program year. If not applicable, leave blank.

- **Line 15. (sum of lines 13 and 14):** If using Grants.gov, the total is auto-calculated.

### **Section E – Budget Estimates of Federal Funds Needed for Balance of the Project**

This section collects information for future funding periods. While the columns are labeled First (b) through Fourth (e), this is the section where you will include the **total** amount of Federal funds requested for Years 2-3, for three-year projects. You are only including the **total** amount of Federal funds requested for the outyears beyond Year 1. The total amount in Section D. line 13 plus the total amount in the outyears should match the project total requested in Section A line 5 (e).

- *Line 16 Column (a) Grant Program:* If using Grants.gov, this box will be auto-populated with the name of the program you included in Section A Line 1.
- *Line 16 Column (b) First:* Include the total amount requested for the first outyear. **Year 2 of the project.** Ensure this amount matches what is in your Budget Narrative.
- *Line 16 Column (c) Second:* Include the total amount requested for the second outyear. **Year 3 of the project.** Ensure this amount matches what is in your Budget Narrative.

### **Section F – Other Budget Information**

- *Line 21. Direct Charges:* You may leave this field blank.
- *Line 22. Indirect Charges:* Enter the type of indirect rate (provisional, predetermined, final or fixed) or 15% de minimis rate that will be in effect during the funding period, the estimated amount of the base to which the rate is applied, and the total indirect expense.
- *Line 23. Remarks:* You may leave this field blank.

### **Part 3: Abstract Form**

The project abstract should not exceed one double spaced page and should include a concise description of the following information:

- Project objectives and activities
- Absolute Priority
- Applicable competitive preference priorities
- Proposed project outcomes
- Proposed project partners, if applicable

## Part 4: Project Narrative

This section should be attached as a single document to the Project Narrative Attachment Form in accordance with the instructions found on Grants.gov and should be organized in the following manner and include the following parts in order to expedite the review process.

Ensure that you only attach the ED approved file types detailed in the [2025 Common Instructions](#). When attaching files, applicants should limit the size of their file names.

### **Table of Contents**

The Table of Contents shows where and how the important sections of your proposal are organized and should not exceed one double-spaced page.

### **Application Narrative**

ED encourages applicants to limit this section of the application to the equivalent of no more than 65 pages. The recommended page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; or the one- abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, logic model, or the letters of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to the **Project Narrative**.

## Part 5: Budget Narrative

This section should be attached as a single document to the Budget Narrative Attachment Form in accordance with the instructions found on Grants.gov. It should be organized in the following manner and include the following parts in order to expedite the review process.

Ensure that you attach the ED approved file types detailed in the [2025 Common Instructions](#).

Each application must also provide a Budget Narrative for requested Federal funds. The Budget Narrative for requested Federal funds should provide a justification of how the money requested for each budget item will be spent, and the total amounts for each project year should match the total amounts in Section E – Budget Estimates of Federal Funds Needed for Balance of the Project in SF-424A.

This section requires an itemized budget breakdown for each project year and the basis for estimating the costs of personnel salaries, benefits, project staff travel, materials and supplies, consultants and subcontracts, indirect costs and any other projected expenditures. Be sure to complete an itemized budget breakdown and narrative for each year of the proposed project. Below is a breakdown of the categories to be included in the Budget Narrative for each project year:

- *Personnel*: List all staff positions by title including roles and responsibilities. For each position give the annual salary, the percentage of time devoted to the project, and the amount of each position's salary funded by the grant.

- *Fringe Benefits:* The institution’s normal fringe benefits contribution may be charged to the program. Leave this line blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of the indirect cost.
- *Travel:* For grantee staff only, specify the purpose, number of staff traveling, mileage, per diem, estimated number of in-state and out-of-state trips, and other estimated costs for each type of travel.
- *Equipment:* Identify each item of equipment you expect to purchase that has an estimated acquisition cost of \$10,000 or more per unit (or if your capitalization level is less than \$10,000, use your capitalization level) and a useful lifetime of more than one year (see [2 CFR Part 200.1](#) for the definition of Equipment). List the item, quantity, and the unit cost per item.
- *Supplies:* Identify the cost of supplies (e.g., general office supplies, desk/chairs, laptops/printers, other specialty items) in the detailed budget per category. Except for general office supplies, list the item, quantity, and the unit cost per item. Supplies include all tangible personal property other than “equipment” (see [2 CFR Part 200.1](#) for the definition of Supplies). Items with a unit cost of less than \$10,000 are supplies, not “equipment.”
- *Contractual:* The contractual category should include all costs specifically incurred with actions that the applicant takes in conjunction with an established internal procurement system. Include consultant fees, expenses, and travel costs in this category if the consultant’s services are obtained through a written binding agreement or contract.
- *Construction:* Construction funds are not authorized.
- *Other:* Indicate all direct costs not covered elsewhere. For example, include such costs as space rental, required fees, honoraria and travel (where a contract is not in place for services), training, and communication and printing costs. List items, such as stipends or incentives, not covered elsewhere. Do not include costs that are included in the indirect cost rate.
- *Indirect Costs:* Indicate the applicant’s approved indirect cost rate, per sections [34 CFR 75.560 - 75.564](#). If an applicant does not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement with a cognizant Federal agency, the applicant must apply to ED for a temporary indirect cost rate if it wishes to charge indirect costs to the grant. For more information, go to [ED’s website](#). In addition, a grantee, if it is eligible, may also use de minimis rate as provided for under 2 CFR 200.414(f).
- *Total Cost:* This number should be total direct costs + indirect costs.

The Budget Narrative provides an opportunity for the applicant to identify the nature and amount of the proposed expenditures. The applicant should provide sufficient detail to

enable reviewers and project staff to understand how requested funds will be used, how much will be expended, and the relationship between the requested funds and project activities and outcomes.

In accordance with [34 CFR 75.232](#), ED staff perform a cost analysis of each recommended project to ensure that costs relate to the activities and objectives of the project, are reasonable, allowable and allocable. ED may delete or reduce costs from the budget during this review.

**Note:** Applicants are encouraged to review the Cost Principles described in 2 CFR part 200 subpart E of the Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance.

## 6. Other Attachment Forms

- Absolute Priority Narrative (no more than 3 pages)
- Competitive Preference Priority Narrative (no more than 1 page)

## Part 7: Assurances and Certifications

Be certain to complete all required assurances and certifications and include all required information in the appropriate place on each form. The assurances and certifications required for this application are:

- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**
- Grants.Gov Lobbying Form – “Certification Regarding Lobbying”**

**Note:** While it is required to submit the lobbying form that best meets an applicants’ situation, the two forms are classified as “optional” in Grants.gov to avoid submission errors when only one lobbying form is submitted.

## 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 Portable Document Format (PDF). ED recommends 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 for review.

- 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.

### **Helpful Hints When Working with Grants.gov**

Please go to <https://www.grants.gov/support> 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: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-faqs> as well as additional information on Workspace at <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/workspace-overview>.

### **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.

### **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 Portable Document Format (PDF). ED recommends 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.

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