



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

## State Tribal Education Partnership (STEP)

Assistance Listing Number: 84.415A

FY 2026 Grant Competition

Posted April 27, 2026

### Contents

Program Information .....	2
Eligibility.....	4
Eligible Applicants.....	4
Costs.....	4
Submission Requirements and Deadlines.....	5
Program Description .....	5
Priorities .....	5
Program Requirements .....	6
Selection Criteria.....	7
Performance Measures .....	8
Application Submission Information.....	9
Application Review Information.....	12
Definitions.....	13
Award Requirements.....	14
Application Checklist .....	17

## Program Information

The Bureau of Indian Education at the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) is soliciting applications in support of the administration of the State Tribal Education Partnerships (STEP) program on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education (ED).

The purpose of State Tribal Education Partnership (STEP) is to promote Tribal self-determination in education; improve the academic achievement of Indian children and youth; and promote the coordination and collaboration between Tribal Educational Agencies (TEAs), State Educational Agencies (SEAs), and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to meet the unique education and culturally related academic needs of Indian students.

STEP is authorized under section 6132 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended (ESEA). The intent of this competition is to return education to the Tribes and create opportunities where Tribes can exert sovereignty and self-determination. ED expects that TEA-SEA-LEA coordination will result in TEAs maintaining greater systemic connections with their Native children in public schools.

The requirement for a draft written agreement (DWA), as defined in this notice, helps to ensure that all relevant partners needed to achieve the project goals are included from the outset. For example, applicants could propose

projects that include developing a TEA aimed at creating a Tribal education system that provides policies, structures and oversight that improves such student outcomes as attendance, graduation rate, academic achievement, workforce development, and career readiness.

ED remains committed to engaging in regular and meaningful consultation with Indian Tribes and sourced the design of this competition using input recently received from Tribal leaders on August 26, 2025, and previous input as published in the *Federal Register* on December 28, 2022 ([87 FR 79824](#)). On August 26, 2025, Tribal leaders expressed strong support for the STEP program's role in fostering collaboration between LEAs and Tribes, particularly in areas like college readiness and student advising. Several leaders noted that maintaining Tribal control over education is essential for preserving culture and language opportunities for Native students, especially in off-reservation schools.

*Assistance Listing Number:* 84.415A.

*Program Authority:* Section 6132 of the ESEA ([20 U.S.C. 7452](#)).

*OMB Control Number:* 1894-0006.<sup>1</sup>

*For further information contact:*

Linda Brake. Telephone: (202) 987-0796.

Email: [linda.brake@ed.gov](mailto:linda.brake@ed.gov).

*Type of Award:* Discretionary grants.

*Estimated Available Funds:* \$2,000,000.

*Estimated Award Range:* \$300,000 - \$500,000.

*Estimated Number of Awards:* 4-7.

*Project Period:* For applications addressing Absolute Priority 1: Up to 36 months. For applications addressing Absolute Priority 2: Up to 60 months.

*Application Deadline:* June 11, 2026.

*Note:* This application notice and instructions are the official documents governing the grant competition. ED is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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 1894-0006. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 30 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 under [20 U.S.C. 7441](#). If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate, suggestions for improving this individual collection, or if you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual form, application or survey, please contact Linda Brake. Telephone: (202) 987-0796. Email: [linda.brake@ed.gov](mailto:linda.brake@ed.gov).

# Eligibility

## Eligible Applicants

- Indian Tribes,
  - An Indian Tribe that receives funds from BIE under section 1140 of the Education Amendments of 1978 ([25 U.S.C. 2020](#)) is not eligible to receive funds under this program.
- Tribal organization approved by an Indian Tribe,
- TEA, or
- a consortium of eligible applicants.

## Costs

### Cost Sharing

This program does not require cost sharing or matching.

### Supplement-Not-Supplant

This program involves supplement-not-supplant funding requirements. Under section 6132(f) of the ESEA ([20 U.S.C. 7452\(f\)](#)), funds under this section must be used to supplement, and not supplant, other Federal, State, and local programs that meet the needs of Tribal students.

### Indirect Cost Rate Information

This program uses a restricted indirect cost rate. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see this [webpage](#).

### 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

Under [34 CFR 75.708\(a\)](#), a grantee under this competition may not award subgrants to directly carry out project activities described in its application. Under [34 CFR 75.708\(e\)](#), a

grantee may contract for supplies, equipment, and other services in accordance with [2 CFR part 200](#).

### Other

Projects funded under this competition should budget for a two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC during each year of the project period.

## Submission Requirements and Deadlines

Applications Available	April 27, 2026
Application Deadline	June 11, 2026
Deadline for Intergovernmental Review	August 11, 2026

**Applicants should refer to the 2025 Common Instructions 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

This competition includes two absolute priorities. The absolute priorities are from the program's May 2, 2023, [Notice of Final Priorities, Requirements, and Definitions](#) (NFP).

*Note:* Each applicant must clearly identify the specific absolute priority that the proposed project addresses in the project abstract. ED only considers applications that meet Absolute Priority 1 or Absolute Priority 2.

<i>Absolute Priority Title</i>	Required	Priority Language
Absolute Priority 1 – Create a TEA	Yes	To meet this priority, an applicant must be an Indian Tribe or Tribal organization approved by an Indian Tribe that is applying to create a TEA.
Absolute Priority 2 – Expand Capacity of Early TEAs	Yes	To meet this priority, an applicant must be an early TEA.

## Program Requirements

Grantees must adhere to the following program requirements<sup>2</sup>:

(a) For grantees under either absolute priority:

(1) Hire Project Director within 60 Days.

Grantees must hire a project director as soon as practicable, but no later than 60 days after the beginning of the performance period.

(2) Draft Written Agreement with Partners

An applicant must provide a DWA, with the appropriate SEA and/or LEA partner(s). For applicants creating a new TEA, a DWA is only required with an LEA. For applicants expanding capacity for an early TEA or established TEA, a DWA with both an SEA and LEA is required.

(3) Final Written Agreement with Partners.

Grantees must submit a final written agreement signed by all parties entering into the agreement within 120 days after receiving the grant award notification.

(4) ISDEAA Statutory Hiring Preference.

Awards that are primarily for the benefit of Indians are subject to the provisions of section 7(b) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (ISDEAA) (Pub. L. 93–638). That section requires that, to the greatest extent feasible, a grantee—

- (i) Give to Indians preferences and opportunities for training and employment in connection with the administration of the grant; and
- (ii) Give to Indian organizations and to Indian-owned economic enterprises, as defined in section 3 of the Indian Financing Act of 1974 (25 U.S.C. 1452(e)), preference in the award of contracts in connection with the administration of the grant. For purposes of this preference, an Indian is a member of any federally recognized Indian Tribe.

(b) For grantees under Absolute Priority 1, plan and develop a TEA.

---

<sup>2</sup> These program requirements are defined in the NFP and are consistent with section 6132(c) of the ESEA ([20 U.S.C. 7452](#)) section 7(b) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (Pub. L. 93–638 or ISDEAA). Specifically, program requirements (a)(1) and (a)(2) are from the NFP, program requirement (a)(3) is from ISDEAA, and program requirements (b) and (c) are from the ESEA.

(c) For grantees under Absolute Priority 2:

- (1) Directly administer (as defined in this notice) education programs, including formula grant programs under ESEA, consistent with State law and under a written agreement between the parties. (ESEA Section 6132(c)(2)(A))
- (2) Build capacity to administer and coordinate such education programs, and to improve the relationship and coordination between the TEA and the SEA(s) and LEA(s) that educate students from the Tribe. (ESEA Section 6132(c)(2)(B))
- (3) Receive training and support from the SEA(s) and LEA(s), in areas such as data collection and analysis, grants management and monitoring, fiscal accountability, and other areas as needed. (ESEA Section 6132(c)(2)(C))
- (4) Train and support the SEA(s) and LEA(s) in areas related to Tribal history, language, and culture. (ESEA Section 6132(c)(2)(D))
- (5) Build existing activities or resources rather than replacing other funds. (ESEA Section 6132(c)(2)(E))
- (6) Carry out other activities consistent with the purposes of the program. (ESEA Section 6132(c)(2)(F))

## 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](#).

In responding to the selection criteria, applications should show how the proposed project meets the priorities outlined in this notice.

(a) *Quality of project design (up to 30 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:

- (1) 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)
- (2) The extent to which the proposed project includes explicit plans for authentic, meaningful, and ongoing community member and partner engagement, including their involvement in planning, implementing, and revising project activities for underserved populations. (up to 10 points)

(3) The extent to which the proposed project will integrate with or build on similar or related efforts to improve relevant outcomes (as defined in this notice), using existing funding streams from other programs or policies supported by community, State, and Federal resources. (up to 10 points)

(b) *Adequacy of resources (up to 20 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 one or more of the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project and the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (up to 10 points)

(2) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support. (up to 10 points)

(c) *Quality of the management plan (up to 50 points)*: The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers one or more of the following factors:

(1) The feasibility of the management plan to achieve project objectives and goals on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (up to 20 points)

(2) The adequacy of plans for ensuring the use of quantitative and qualitative data, including meaningful community member and partner input, to inform continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (up to 20 points)

(3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator. (up to 10 points)

## Performance Measures

*Program Performance Measures.* For the purposes of ED reporting under [34 CFR 75.110](#), ED has established a set of performance measures. ED uses the following program performance indicators to yield information on various aspects of the effectiveness and quality of the STEP program:

Program Performance Measure 1	The number of Tribes that create a TEA by the end of the grant period.
-------------------------------	--

Program Performance Measure 2	The number of capacity-building activities offered by the TEA for the SEA or LEA (e.g., trainings, technical assistance in areas related to Tribal history, language, or culture).
Program Performance Measure 3	The number of capacity-building activities offered by the SEA or LEA for the TEA (e.g., trainings, technical assistance in developing TEA capacity to administer and coordinate education programs).
Program Performance Measure 4	The number of education programs directly administered by the grantees.

*Note:* Program Performance Measure 1 applies to grantees that addressed Absolute Priority 1. Program Performance Measures 2 through 4 apply to grantees that addressed Absolute Priority 2.

In accordance with [34 CFR 75.110\(b\)](#), under which performance data are reported to ED, applications must describe:

1. The data collection and reporting methods the applicant would use and why those methods are likely to yield reliable, valid, and meaningful performance data.
2. The applicant's capacity to collect and report reliable, valid, and meaningful performance data, as evidenced by high-quality data collection, analysis, and reporting in other projects or research.

In addition to providing performance measure information in applications, all grantees must submit an annual performance report with information that is responsive to these performance measures.

## Application Submission Information

### Pre-Application Webinar

ED will hold a pre-application meeting via webinar for prospective applicants. For information about the pre-application webinar, visit the [program website](#).

### 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](#) which may take approximately one week to complete, but could take upwards of several weeks to complete, depending upon 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 apply until all registration steps are complete. Once your SAM registration is active, it will take 24-48 hours for the information to become available in 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 the 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 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. The Grants.gov website contains [further instructions on how to apply](#).

### **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 List and the official list of entities](#) can be found online.

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

### **Funding Restrictions**

The following funding restrictions in ESEA section 6132(e) ([20 U.S.C. 7452\(e\)](#)) apply: (1) No funds may be used to provide direct services. We reference additional regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of 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, log in 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 ED 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](#).

For more detailed information on troubleshooting Adobe errors, you can review the [Adobe Reader Software Tip Sheet](#). 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.

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

Please go to the [Grants.gov Support Center](#) for help with Grants.gov. For additional tips related to submitting grant applications, please refer to the Grants.gov [Applicant FAQs](#) as well as [additional information on Workspace](#).

### **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 via email at: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). You may also 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, ED may consider, under [34 CFR 75.217](#), information outside the rank order of applications, including: the information in each application; and any other information—

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

Before making awards, ED 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 “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 ED'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.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, ED 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](#)).

## Definitions

The definition of “Indian Tribe” is from section 6132 of the ESEA. The definition of “relevant outcome” is from [34 CFR 77.1](#). The definitions of “draft written agreement,” “directly administer,” “early TEA,” “established TEA,” “final written agreement,” “new TEA,” “TEA,” and “Tribal consultation” are from the NFP.

The following definitions apply to this competition:

*Directly administer* means conducting, as the fiscal agent, SEA functions or LEA functions for education programs, including ESEA formula grant programs, consistent with State law and the FWA.

*Draft written agreement (DWA)* means an unsigned written agreement with an attached letter of support from each SEA or LEA partner indicating each has reviewed the project plan and will finalize the DWA into an FWA within 120 days of grant award notification. The DWA must include the following:

- (1) The roles and responsibilities for each partner.
- (2) An agreed-upon list of deliverables (*Note: deliverables cannot be direct services to Indian students*).
- (3) Identification of at least one point of contact for each partner.
- (4) A description of the resources each partner will contribute to the project (*Note: resources do not need to be monetary or matching funds*).

*Early TEA* means a TEA that meets one or two of the criteria in the definition of an established TEA.

*Established TEA* means a TEA that meets three or more of the following criteria:

- (1) Has received a STEP grant in 2012 or subsequent years, or provides evidence of an existing prior relationship with an SEA or LEA.
- (2) Has an existing Tribal education code.
- (3) Has directly administered at least one education program within the past 5 years.

- (4) Has administered at least one Federal, State, local, or private grant within the past 5 years.
- (5) Has authorized teaching certifications.

*Final written agreement (FWA)* means a signed written agreement between the TEA and the SEA or LEA; the TEA and one or more LEAs; or the TEA and both an SEA and one or more LEAs, that documents the commitment and timeline of the agreeing partners to implement the terms and conditions specified in the DWA.

*Indian Tribe* means a federally recognized Tribe or a State-recognized Tribe.

*New TEA* means a Tribal entity that does not meet the definition of “early TEA” or “established TEA.”

*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.

*Tribal consultation* means that—

- (1) The SEA or LEA provides Tribes the opportunity for input;
- (2) The SEA or LEA considers and responds to the input from Tribal leaders or their officially designated proxies regarding an education program that affects the Tribal Nation or TEA; and
- (3) The Indian Tribe provides written confirmation that the consultation was meaningful and in good faith.

*Tribal educational agency (TEA)* means the agency, department, or instrumentality of an Indian Tribe that is primarily responsible for supporting Tribal students' elementary and secondary education. This term also includes an agency, department, or instrumentality of more than one Tribe if the Tribes are in close geographic proximity or have cultural connections to each other and agree through joint Tribal government resolution to have a combined TEA.

## 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 take appropriate enforcement action, ED may take appropriate enforcement action including the potential recovery of funds or may pursue termination or non-continuation.

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 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. 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.

### **Applicable Regulations**

(a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in [34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 97, 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 ED in [2 CFR part 3474](#). (d) The NFP.

*Note:* The regulations in [34 CFR part 79](#) apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian Tribes.

### **Continuation Awards**

In making a continuation award under [34 CFR 75.253](#), ED 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; if ED 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, ED also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the terms and conditions specified elsewhere in this notice and 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 ED ([34 CFR 100.4](#), [104.5](#), [106.4](#), [108.8](#), and [110.23](#)). In making any continuation award determination, ED may consider all relevant information.

# 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)
- ED Supplemental Information for SF-424
- ED Grant Application Form for Project Objectives and Performance Measures Information

## 2. Budget Information

- ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524)

## 3. ED Abstract Form

- Project Abstract

## 4. Project Narrative

- Application Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form)

## 5. Budget Narrative

- Budget Narrative Attachment Form

## 6. Other Attachment Forms

- Individual Resumes for Project Director & Key Personnel
- Documentation of Nonprofit Status
- Draft Written Agreement

## 7. Assurances and Certifications

- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Standard Form LLL)
- Grants.gov Lobbying Form

### Part 1: Standard Documents

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- ED Supplemental Information for SF-424

These forms require basic identifying information about the applicant and the application. Please provide all requested applicant information (including name, address, e-mail address and Unique Entity ID (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 (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-524). Although this form accepts attachments, ED will only review materials/files attached in accordance with the instructions provided within this application.

For more information, review the [Grants.gov Forms Repository](#).

- ED Grant Application Form for Project Objectives and Performance Measures Information

This form collects project objectives and quantitative and/or qualitative program and project-specific performance measures at the time of application submission.

## **Part 2: Budget Information**

- ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524)

This part of your application contains information about the Federal funding you are requesting. Remember that you must provide all requested budget information for each year of the project and the total column in order to be considered for Federal funding. Specific instructions for completing the budget forms are provided within this application package.

Applicants must provide a summary of requested Federal funds for each line-item category included on the worksheet. Applicants should provide dollar amounts for all requested years of the desired grant award.

Instructions for completing ED Form 524 Section A:

- *Name of Institution/Organization*: Enter the name of the applicant in the space provided.
- *Personnel (line 1)*: Enter project personnel salaries and wages only. Include fees and expenses for consultants on line 6.

- *Fringe Benefits (line 2)*: 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 (line 3)*: Indicate the travel costs of employees and participants only. Include travel of persons such as consultants on line 6.
- *Equipment (line 4)*: 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 5)*: 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 6)*: 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 7)*: Construction funds are not authorized.
- *Other (line 8)*: 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. Do not include costs that are included in the indirect cost rate.
- *Total Direct Costs (line 9)*: The sum of lines 1-8.
- *Indirect Costs (line 10)*: 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\(f\)](#).

- *Training Stipends (line 11)*: Not Applicable for this program.
- *Total Cost (line 12)*: This should equal to sum of lines 9-11 (total direct costs + indirect + stipends). The sum for column one, labeled Project Year 1 (a), should also be equal to item 15a on the application cover sheet (ED 524).

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

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

### **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](#).

#### **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 30 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 project abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, 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 (which serves to meet the requirements of ED Form 524, Section C) 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.

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.

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.

### **Suggested Guidelines for the Budget Narrative**

1. Provide an itemized budget breakdown and justification by project year. The budget narrative fulfills the requirement of Form ED 524 -Section C Budget Narrative. Find information below in Part 5 on completing the budget narrative. For this program, applicants do not need to fill in non-Federal funds or resources listed in Section B.
2. 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. Please indicate which costs are included and which costs are excluded from the base to which the indirect cost rate is applied.

### **Part 6: Other Attachment Forms**

Attach one or more documents to the Other Attachments Form. You may provide all of the required information in a single document, or in multiple documents.

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

- Individual Resumes for Project Directors and Key Personnel:** Provide brief resumes or job descriptions that describe personnel qualifications for the responsibilities they will carry out under the project.
- Draft Written Agreement**
- Documentation of Nonprofit Status:** Under [34 CFR 75.51](#), nonprofit organizations must demonstrate status by providing: (1) proof that the Internal Revenue Service currently recognizes the applicant as an organization to which contributions are tax deductible under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; (2) a statement from a State taxing body or the State attorney general certifying that the organization is a nonprofit organization operating within the State and that no part of its net earnings may lawfully benefit any private shareholder or individual; (3) a certified copy of the applicant's certificate of incorporation or similar document if it clearly establishes the nonprofit status of the applicant; or (4) any item described above if that item applies to a State or national parent organization, together with a statement by the State or parent organization that the applicant is a local nonprofit affiliate.

#### **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 (SF LLL Form)**
- Grants.Gov Lobbying Form – “Certification Regarding Lobbying”**

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

- 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 ED.
- 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.