



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

Strengthening Institutions Program

FY 2026 Grant Competition

Posted May 21, 2026

Contents

Program Information	2
Eligibility	3
Eligible Applicants	3
Costs	3
Submission Requirements and Deadlines	6
Program Description	6
Overview	6
Priorities	7
Selection Criteria.....	13
Performance Measures	15
Application Submission Information	16
Application Review Information	19
Definitions	20
Award Requirements	22
Application Checklist	25

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 Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The SIP Program provides grants to eligible institutions of higher education (IHEs) to help them become self-sufficient and expand their capacity to serve low-income students by providing funds to improve and strengthen the institution's academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability.

Assistance Listing Number: 84.031A.

OMB Control Number: 1840-0114.

Program authority: [20 U.S.C. 1057-1059g](#).

For further information contact: Nalini Lamba-Nieves, Telephone: (202) 453-7953. Email: Nalini.Lamba-Nieves@ed.gov.

Type of Award: Discretionary grants. Five-year Individual Development Grants and Cooperative Arrangement Development Grants will be awarded in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026.

Estimated Available Funds:
\$365,875,512.

Individual Development Grants:

Estimated Range of Awards: \$2,250,000--\$3,000,000 for the 5-year project period.

Estimated Average Size of Awards:
\$3,000,000 for the 5-year project period.

Maximum Award: \$3,000,000 for the 5-year project period. *We will not make an award exceeding \$3,000,000 for the 5-year project period.*

Cooperative Arrangement Development Grants:

Estimated Range of Awards: \$3,000,000--\$5,000,000 for the 5-year project period.

Estimated Average Size of Awards:
\$4,000,000 for the 5-year project period.

Maximum Award: \$5,000,000. *We will not make an award exceeding \$5,000,000 for the 5-year project period.*

Project Period: 60 months.

Estimated Total Number of SIP Awards:
600.

Due to the uncertainty regarding appropriations in the program in subsequent years, applicants are encouraged to structure projects to maximize expenditures in year one of the grant and to ensure that year one outcomes can stand alone.

Application Deadline: June 23, 2026

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

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

To qualify as an eligible institution under Section 312 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (“HEA”) (20 U.S.C. 1058), an institution must—

- (a) Be accredited or pre-accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association that the Secretary of Education (Secretary) has determined to be a reliable authority as to the quality of education or training offered;
- (b) Be legally authorized by the State in which it is located to be a junior or community college or to provide an educational program for which it awards a bachelor's degree; and
- (c) Be designated as an “eligible institution” by demonstrating that it: (1) has an enrollment of needy students as described in [34 CFR 607.3](#); and (2) has low average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate student as described in [34 CFR 607.4](#).

Note: The notice announcing the FY 2026 process for designation of eligible institutions, and inviting applications for waiver of eligibility requirements, was published in the **Federal Register** on March 24, 2026 ([91 FR 14003](#)). Only institutions that the Department of Education determines are eligible, or which are granted a waiver under the process described in the notice, may apply for a grant in this program.

An eligible IHE may only submit one Individual Development Grant (Individual) application and one Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant (Coop) application. Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) that have current SIP grants may only submit a Coop grant for this competition.

Please note that SIP has a two-year wait-out period requirement, per 34 CFR 607.9(b)(1). Former grantees whose five-year grants ended on or before 9/30/2024 (irrespective of extensions) may apply for an Individual grant. All others are only eligible to apply for Coop grants.

Costs

Cost Sharing

This program does not require cost sharing or matching unless the grantee uses a portion of its grant for establishing or improving an endowment fund. If a grantee uses a portion of

its grant for endowment fund purposes, it must match those grant funds with non-Federal funds ([20 U.S.C. 1057\(d\)\(1\)-\(2\)](#)).

Supplement-Not Supplant

This competition involves supplement-not-supplant funding requirements. Grant funds shall be used so that they supplement and, to the extent practical, increase the funds that would otherwise be available for the activities to be carried out under the grant and in no case supplant those funds (34 CFR 607.30).

Indirect Cost Rate Information

This program does not allow for indirect costs, per 34 CFR 607.30(c).

Administrative Cost Limitation

This program does not include any program-specific limitation on administrative expenses. All administrative expenses must be reasonable and necessary and conform to 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

The SIP program authority specifies a list of authorized activities.¹ The program regulations (34 CFR 607.10(c)) identify unallowable costs in the SIP Program. Costs that are unallowable under the SIP program include, but are not limited to, the following:

Development grants—unallowable activities. A grantee may not carry out the following activities or pay the following costs under a development grant:

- (1) Activities that are not included in the grantee's approved application.
- (2) Activities that are inconsistent with any State plan for higher education that is applicable to the institution, including, but not limited to, a State plan for desegregation of higher education.
- (3) Activities or services that constitute religious instruction, religious worship, or proselytization.

¹ See [section 311\(c\) of the HEA](#).

(4) Activities provided by a school or department of divinity. For the purpose of this provision, a “school or department of divinity” means an institution, or a department of an institution, whose program is solely to prepare students to become ministers of religion or to enter into some other religious vocation.

(5) Developing or improving non-degree or non-credit courses other than basic skills development courses.

(6) Developing or improving community-based or community services programs, unless the program provides academic-related experiences or academic credit toward a degree for degree students, or unless it is an outreach program that encourages Indian elementary school and secondary school students to develop the academic skills and the interest to pursue postsecondary education.

(7) Purchase of standard office equipment, such as furniture, file cabinets, bookcases, typewriters, or word processors.

(8) Payment of any portion of the salary of a president, vice president, or equivalent officer who has college-wide administrative authority and responsibility at an institution to fill a position under the grant such as project coordinator or activity director.

(9) Costs of organized fund-raising, including financial campaigns, endowment drives, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred solely to raise capital or obtain contributions.

(10) Costs of student recruitment such as advertisements, literature, and college fairs.

(11) Services to high school students, unless they are part of a program to encourage Indian students to develop the academic skills and the interest to pursue postsecondary education.

(12) Instruction in the institution's standard courses as indicated in the institution's catalog.

(13) Costs for health and fitness programs, transportation, and day care services.

(14) Student activities such as entertainment, cultural, or social enrichment programs, publications, social clubs, or associations.

(15) Activities that are operational in nature rather than developmental in nature.

Build America, Buy America Act

This program is subject to the Build America, Buy America Act ([Pub. L. 117-58](#)) domestic sourcing requirements. Accordingly, under this program, grantees and their subrecipients

(subgrantees) and contractors may not use their grant funds for infrastructure projects or activities (e.g., construction, remodeling, and broadband infrastructure) unless—

- a. All iron and steel used in the infrastructure project or activity are produced in the United States;
- b. All manufactured products used in the infrastructure project or activity are produced in the United States; and
- c. All construction materials are manufactured in the United States.

Grantees may request waivers to these requirements by submitting a Build America, Buy America Act Waiver Request Form. For more information, including a link to the Waiver Request Form, see ED’s [Build America, Buy America website](#).

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 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

Overview

Through [America’s Talent Strategy](#), and additional initiatives like the Department of Labor’s Artificial Intelligence (AI) Literacy Framework, [Registered Apprenticeship goal](#) to surpass million new active apprentices, and the prioritization of [Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future](#), this Administration has elevated workforce development and the reindustrialization of the United States as a critical education aim. We must find ways to strengthen leadership in AI and other advanced technologies, expand economic opportunity through sustained investment in American workers and industry, and reimagine how students access postsecondary education and earn a credential with real labor-market value.

Achieving these goals requires a modernized postsecondary ecosystem—an ecosystem that is more responsive to labor market demands and better aligned with high-growth, high-wage sectors. Central to this effort is a shift away from one-size-fits-all “college-for-all” models toward more flexible, employer-driven pathways. These pathways emphasize Registered Apprenticeships, short-term and stackable credentials, and other high-quality pathways that are not traditional four-year degrees. Higher education should enable individuals to gain relevant skills and enter or advance in the workforce more efficiently. Expanding access to these pathways—including through the development and scaling of Workforce Pell-eligible programs—is critical to ensuring that more Americans can benefit from affordable, outcomes-oriented training opportunities.

At the same time, rapid advancements in AI are reshaping the nature of work and the skills required across nearly every sector. Strengthening institutional capacity to integrate AI into education and training programs—both as a field of study and as a tool for teaching and learning—is essential. This includes expanding AI literacy, embedding AI-related competencies into curricula, and preparing educators and institutions to adapt to technological change while maintaining a focus on student success and workforce relevance.

Applicants are invited to propose projects that fulfill one of these topic areas, as described in competitive preference priorities 1, 2 and 3. Proposals should clearly align with the chosen focus, whether strengthening career readiness, expanding access to high-quality short-term training opportunities, or advancing the integration of AI in education. Collectively, these efforts will help build a more agile, skilled workforce and support the nation’s long-term economic competitiveness and technological leadership.

Priorities

This notice includes one absolute priority and four competitive preference priorities. The Absolute Priority is from Section 311(c) of the HEA. Competitive Preference Priorities 1 and 2 are from the Final Priority and Definitions—Secretary’s Supplemental Priority and Definitions on Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness published April 13, 2026 (91 FR 18780). Competitive Preference Priority 3 is from the Final Priority and Definitions—Secretary’s Supplemental Priority and Definitions on Advancing Artificial Intelligence in Education, published April 13, 2026 (91 FR 18774). Competitive preference priority 4 is from [34 CFR 75.227](#).

All applicants must address the Absolute Priority. Additionally, applicants may address only one of the first three competitive preference priorities. Eligible Rural applicants may also address and earn points under competitive preference priority 4. All priorities that are

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

Absolute 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 an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

Competitive Preference Priority (CPP): For FY 2026, and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are competitive preference priorities. Applicants can only address, and earn up to 5 points under, one of the first three competitive preference priorities. Under competitive preference priority 4, applicants may earn 0 or 10 additional points. Applicants must clearly indicate that they are addressing the competitive preference priority.

Priority Title	Required	Points	Priority Language
Absolute Priority 1-- Strengthening Institutional Capacity	Yes	N/A	Projects that are designed to implement one or more of the following activities: (1) Purchase, rental, or lease of scientific or laboratory equipment for educational purposes, including instructional and research purposes. (2) Construction, maintenance, renovation, and improvement in classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other instructional facilities, including the integration of computer technology into institutional facilities to create smart buildings. (3) Development and improvement of academic programs. (4) Purchase of library books, periodicals, and other educational materials, including telecommunications program material. (5) Tutoring, counseling, and student service programs designed to improve academic success, including innovative, customized, instruction courses designed to help retain students and move the students rapidly into core courses and through program completion, which

			<p>may include remedial education and English language instruction.</p> <p>(6) Education or counseling services designed to improve the financial literacy and economic literacy of students or the students’ families.</p> <p>(7) Joint use of facilities, such as laboratories and libraries.</p> <p>(8) Establishing or improving a development office to strengthen or improve contributions from alumni and the private sector.</p> <p>(9) Establishing or increasing an endowment fund.</p> <p>(10) Creating or improving facilities for Internet or other distance education technologies, including purchase or rental of telecommunications technology equipment or services.</p>
Competitive Preference Priority 1—Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness	Not required. Additionally, note that applicants may address only one of competitive preference priorities 1-3.	Up to 5 points	<p>Projects or proposals that are designed to Support workforce development programs that are aligned with State priorities through one or more of the following:</p> <p>(i) Promoting the attainment by individuals of an in-demand and high-value industry-recognized postsecondary credential.</p> <p>(ii) Providing work-based learning opportunities (e.g., internships, externships, pre-apprenticeships, Registered Apprenticeships, and mentorships) for which a student may receive wages and/or academic credit.</p>
Competitive Preference Priority 2—Developing high-quality, short-term programs that meet	Not required. Additionally, note that applicants	Up to 5 points	Projects or proposals that are designed to support workforce development programs that are aligned with State priorities by:

<p>Workforce Pell Grant requirements –</p>	<p>may address only one of competitive preference priorities 1-3.</p>	<p>(a) Supporting the development of new high-quality, short-term programs that meet the eligibility requirements of the Workforce Pell Grants program in Section 83002(b) of the Working Families Tax Cut Act (Pub. L. 119-21), including program length requirements and alignment with high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations, as determined by the Governor in the state where the project is located or</p> <p>(b) Supporting the expansion of high-quality, short-term programs that meet the eligibility requirements of the Workforce Pell Grants program in Section 83002(b) of the Working Families Tax Cut Act (Pub. L. 119-21), including program length requirements and alignment with high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors or occupations, as determined by the Governor in the state where the project is located.</p> <p>Note: Under 34 CFR 607.10(c)(5), SIP funding can only be used for the development or improvement of credit-bearing courses that can count towards a degree. Applicants proposing to use SIP funding to develop or improve courses in high-quality short-term programs that meet WFP requirements should ensure that such courses are credit-bearing and can be counted towards a degree program. However, applicants can also address this priority by undertaking other activities to support the development of new high-quality, short-term programs that meet the eligibility requirements of the Workforce Pell Grants program, so long</p>
--	---	---

			as those activities are not focused on the development or improvement of non-degree or non-credit courses.
Competitive Preference Priority 3—Advancing Artificial Intelligence in Education	Not required. Additionally, note that applicants may address only one of competitive preference priorities.	Up to 5 points	<p>Projects or proposals to do one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Expand the understanding of artificial intelligence through one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Support the integration of AI literacy skills and concepts into teaching and learning practices to improve educational outcomes for students, including how to detect AI-generated disinformation or misinformation online; (ii) Expand offerings of AI and computer science courses as part of an institution of higher education’s general education and/or core curriculum; (iii) Embed AI and computer science into an institution of higher education’s general preservice or in-service teacher professional development or teacher preparation programs; (iv) Provide professional development for educators on the integration of the fundamentals of AI into their respective subject areas; (v) Provide professional development in foundational computer science and AI, preparing educators to effectively teach AI in stand-alone computer science and

			<p>other relevant courses, including instruction about how to use AI responsibly;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (vi) Partner with State educational agencies or local educational agencies to encourage the offering of dual-enrollment course opportunities to earn postsecondary credit or industry-recognized credentials in AI coursework concurrent with high school education; (vii) Support dissemination of appropriate methods of integrating AI into education; (viii) Build evidence of appropriate methods of integrating AI into education. <p>(b) Expand the appropriate and ethical use of AI technology in education through one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Use AI to support K-12 or postsecondary instruction, supplemental learning, or other assistance or resources to students who are gifted and talented (as defined in 20 USC § 7801(27)), or those who are otherwise in need of accelerated or other advanced learning opportunities; (ii) Use AI to support K-12 or postsecondary instruction, supplemental learning, or other assistance or resources to students who are below grade level, in need of remedial or
--	--	--	---

			<p>developmental education, struggling to graduate with a regular credential from their education program, or otherwise in need of additional assistance to complete their program of study;</p> <p>(iii) Provide resources and support for the use of AI in teacher preparation programs;</p> <p>(iv) Use AI technology to provide high-quality instructional resources, high-impact tutoring, college and career pathway exploration, advising, and navigation to improve educational outcomes.</p> <p>Note: Applicants are encouraged to review the Department of Labor’s Artificial Intelligence Literacy framework.</p>
Competitive Preference Priority 4—Applications from Rural IHEs	No	0 or 10 points	Applications from an institution of higher education with a rural campus setting, or the applicant proposes to serve a campus with a rural setting. Rural settings include one or more of the following: Town-Fringe, Town-Distant, Town-Remote, Rural Fringe, Rural-Distant, and Rural-Remote, as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics College Navigator search tool.

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 607.22(a) through (g)

and 34 CFR 75.210. Applicants should address each of the following selection criteria separately for each proposed activity.

(a) Quality of the Applicant's Comprehensive Development Plan. (Maximum 20 Points)

The extent to which--

- (1) The strengths, weaknesses, and significant problems of the institution's academic programs, institutional management, and fiscal stability are clearly and comprehensively analyzed and result from a process that involved major constituencies of the institution;
- (2) The goals for the institution's academic programs, institutional management, and fiscal stability are realistic and based on comprehensive analysis;
- (3) The objectives stated in the plan are measurable, related to institutional goals, and, if achieved, will contribute to the growth and self-sufficiency of the institution; and
- (4) The plan clearly and comprehensively describes the methods and resources the institution will use to institutionalize practice and improvements developed under the proposed project, including, in particular, how operational costs for personnel, maintenance, and upgrades of equipment will be paid with institutional resources.

(b) Quality of the Project Design. (Maximum 15 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 extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in this notice).

(c) Quality of Activity Objectives. (Maximum 16 Points) The extent to which the objectives for each activity are--

- (1) Realistic and defined in terms of measurable results; and
- (2) Directly related to the problems to be solved and to the goals of the comprehensive development plan.

(d) Quality of Implementation Strategy. (Maximum 15 Points) The extent to which--

- (1) The implementation strategy for each activity is comprehensive;
- (2) The rationale for the implementation strategy for each activity is clearly described and is supported by the results of relevant studies or projects; and
- (3) The timetable for each activity is realistic and likely to be attained.

(e) Quality of Key Personnel. (Maximum 8 Points) The extent to which--

- (1) The past experience and training of key professional personnel are directly related to the stated activity objectives; and
- (2) The time commitment of key personnel is realistic.

- (f) Quality of Project Management Plan. (Maximum 10 Points) The extent to which--
- (1) Procedures for managing the project are likely to ensure efficient and effective project implementation; and
 - (2) The project coordinator and activity directors have sufficient authority to conduct the project effectively, including access to the president or chief executive officer.

- (g) Quality of Evaluation Plan. (Maximum 10 Points)
The extent to which--
- (1) The data elements and the data collection procedures are clearly described and appropriate to measure the attainment of activity objectives and to measure the success of the project in achieving the goals of the comprehensive development plan; and
 - (2) The data analysis procedures are clearly described and are likely to produce formative and summative results on attaining activity objectives and measuring the success of the project on achieving the goals of the comprehensive development plan.

- (h) Budget. (Maximum 6 Points) The extent to which the proposed costs are necessary and reasonable in relation to the project’s objectives and scope.

Performance Measures

ED has developed the following performance measures 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 percentage change, over the 5-year period, of the number of full-time degree-seeking undergraduates enrolled at SIP institutions. Note that this is a long-term measure that will be used to periodically gauge performance.
Program Performance Measure 2	The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students at 4-year SIP institutions who were in their first year of

	postsecondary enrollment in the previous year and are enrolled in the current year at the same SIP institution.
Program Performance Measure 3	The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students at 2-year SIP institutions who were in their first year of postsecondary enrollment in the previous year and are enrolled in the current year at the same SIP institution.
Program Performance Measure 4	The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled at 4-year SIP institutions graduating within 6 years of enrollment.
Program Performance Measure 5	The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled at 2-year SIP institutions graduating within 3 years of enrollment.
Program Performance Measure 6	The median yearly incomes of former students who graduated from SIP institutions.
Note: These measures include students enrolled in Registered Apprenticeship programs.	

Application Submission Information

Application Submission Instructions: Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on August 29, 2025 (90 FR 42234), and available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/29/2025-16571/common-instructions-and-information-for-applicants-to-department-of-education-discretionary-grant>, 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](https://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](https://www.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 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. 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:

<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 or access the Grants.gov.

Self-Service Knowledge Base web portal at <https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants>

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 two or three non-Federal reviewers will review each application in accordance with the selection criteria, pursuant to 34 CFR 607.22. 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](#)).

Tie-breaker: If a tie-breaker is necessary, under 34 CFR 607.23(b) we award additional points to applications that contain any of the following three elements. Specifically, we add 1 additional point for each of the following (up to 3 points total) to an application that:

(1) Has an endowment fund of which the current market value, per FTE enrolled student, is less than the average current market value of the endowment funds, per FTE enrolled student, at similar type institutions;

(2) Has expenditures for library materials per FTE enrolled student that are less than the average expenditure for library materials per FTE enrolled student at similar type institutions; or

(3) Proposes to carry out one or more of the following activities--

(i) Faculty development;

(ii) Funds and administrative management;

(iii) Development and improvement of academic programs;

(iv) Acquisition of equipment for use in strengthening management and academic programs;

(v) Joint use of facilities;

(vi) Student services;

For these funding considerations, we use 2023-2024 data.

If a tie remains after applying the tie-breaker mechanism above, priority will be given to applicants that propose to provide support for Registered Apprenticeship programs.

If a tie remains after applying the second tie-breaker mechanism above, priority will be given to applicants that have the lowest endowment values per FTE enrolled student.

Definitions

Unless noted otherwise below, the following definitions are from [34 CFR 77.1](#), [20 U.S.C. 7801\(49\)](#), [20 U.S.C. 2302\(55\)](#), and the Final Priority and Definitions—Secretary's Supplemental Priority and Definitions on Advancing Artificial Intelligence in Education, published April 13, 2026 (91 FR 18774).

*Artificial intelligence (AI)*² has the meaning set forth in 15 U.S.C. 9401(3).

² 15 U.S.C. § 9401(3) defines "artificial intelligence" (AI) as: "a machine-based system that can, for a given set of human-defined objectives, make predictions, recommendations, or decisions influencing real or virtual environments."

AI literacy means the technical knowledge, durable skills, civic awareness and future ready attitudes, including AI related ethical reasoning, critical social inquiry, interdisciplinary problem-solving, and creativity, required to thrive in a world influenced by AI. It enables learners to engage, create with, manage, and design AI, while critically evaluating its benefits, risks, and implications.

AI literacy means the technical knowledge, durable skills, civic awareness and future ready attitudes, including AI related ethical reasoning, critical social inquiry, interdisciplinary problem-solving, and creativity, required to thrive in a world influenced by AI. It enables learners to engage, create with, manage, and design AI, while critically evaluating its benefits, risks, and implications.

Computer science means the study of computers and algorithmic processes, including their principles, their hardware and software designs, theories, computational thinking, coding, analytics, applications, machine learning, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Computer science often includes computer programming or coding as a tool to create software, including applications, games, websites, and tools to manage or manipulate data; or development and management of computer hardware and the other electronics related to sharing, securing, and using digital information. In addition to coding, the expanding field of computer science emphasizes computational thinking and interdisciplinary problem-solving to equip students with the skills and abilities necessary to apply computation to the digital world.

Computer science does not involve using computers for everyday tasks, such as browsing the internet or using tools like word processors, spreadsheets, or presentation software. Instead, it focuses on creating and developing technology, not just utilizing it.

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](#)).

In-demand Industry Sector or Occupation, as defined in section 3(23) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), means (i) an industry sector that has a substantial current or potential impact (including through jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) on the State, regional, or local economy, as appropriate, and that contributes to the growth or stability of other supporting businesses,

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

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

Recognized Postsecondary Credential means a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree, as defined in section 3(53) of WIOA.

State educational agency means the agency primarily responsible for the State supervision of public elementary schools and secondary schools ([20 U.S.C. 7801\(49\)](#)).

Work-based learning is used in accordance with [20 U.S.C. 2302\(55\)](#), to mean sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.

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 including under section 451 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), including the potential recovery of funds under section 452 of GEPA, or 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.

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 (except for §§ 75.215 through 75.221), 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) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 644. (e) Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness Supplemental Priority and Advancing Artificial Intelligence in Education Supplemental Priority.

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

- Strengthening Institutions Program Profile Form
- Absolute Priority Narrative
- Competitive Preference Priority Narrative

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 ([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)*: Include the amount requested 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 1st 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 1st 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 2-5, for five-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.
- *Line 16 Column (d) Third:* Include the total amount requested for the third outyear. **Year 4 of the project.** Ensure this amount matches what is in your Budget Narrative.
- *Line 16 Column (e) Fourth:* Include the total amount requested for the fourth outyear. **Year 5 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 authorized. Provide the amount requested for construction costs.
- *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). **The Strengthening Institutions Program does not allow for indirect costs, per 34 CFR 607.30(c).**
- *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 2 CFR part 200 subpart E of the Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance.

6. Other Attachment Forms

- Strengthening Institutions Program Profile Form
- Absolute Priority Narrative (no more than 2 pages)
- Competitive Preference Priority Narrative (no more than 3 pages)

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 of the 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.
- 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.