

FY 2026 Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange (MECE) Program Competition (84.021C)

Pre-Application Technical Assistance Webinar

Application period: 6/15/2026 to 7/15/2026

Application Notice & Instructions (ANI)

Contact: MECE@ed.gov

Please visit the [MECE website](#) to access the recording for this webinar, as well as additional competition resources.





Disclaimer

The complete funding opportunity announcement and all information needed to apply, including the priorities and program requirements, are available on ED's website at <https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/grants-higher-education/international-and-foreign-language-education>, and on Grants.gov at <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/362705>. The [Application Notice and Instructions \(ANI\)](#) on Grants.gov is the official document governing the grant competition.

AGENDA

Program Information

FY 2026 Competition Overview

Applicant Eligibility

Priorities

Selection Criteria and Evaluation Plan Guidance

Application Checklist

Application Submission Information

Application Review Information

FAQs

Applicant Resources

COMMON ACRONYMS

- **2 CFR 200/Uniform Guidance** (The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200)
- **AP** (Absolute Priority)
- **ALN** (Assistance Listing Number)
- **ANI** (Application Notice & Instructions)
- **CFR** (Code of Federal Regulations)
- **CO/AR** (Certifying Official/Authorized Representative)
- **CPP** (Competitive Preference Priority)
- **ED** (U.S. Department of Education)
- **EDGAR** (Education Department General Administrative Regulations)
- **IFLE** (International and Foreign Language Education)
- **FR** (Federal Register) or **FRN** (Federal Register Notice)
- **FY** (Fiscal Year)
- **HEP** (Higher Education Programs)
- **IHE** (Institution of Higher Education)
- **IS** (Institutional Services Division)
- **LEA** (Local Education Agency)
- **MECE** (Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange)
- **OMB** (Office of Management and Budget)
- **OPE** (Office of Postsecondary Education)
- **PD** (Project Director) or **PI** (Principal Investigator)
- **Pub. L.** (Public Law)
- **State** (U.S. Department of State)
- **SEA** (State Education Agency)
- **SHEA** (State Higher Education Agency)
- **UEI** (Unique Entity Identifier)
- **U.S.C.** (US Code)

ED/State Partnership

- In coordination with the [Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs](#) at the U.S. Department of State (State), the U.S. Department of Education (ED) is soliciting applications in support of the administration of the [Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange \(MECE\) program](#).
- The partnership, formalized through an interagency agreement, leverages the State Department's global reach and international education and public diplomacy expertise to advance U.S. national security and America First foreign policy priorities.
- To learn more, please view the interagency agreement and partnership fact sheet below.

[Interagency Agreement](#)

[Partnership Fact Sheet](#)



Program Information

Program Purpose

- The **purpose of the program** is to promote, improve, and develop the study of modern foreign language training and area studies in U.S. schools, colleges, and universities by supporting visits and study in foreign countries by teachers and prospective teachers. The program provides opportunities for teachers and prospective teachers to improve their skill in languages, their knowledge of the culture of the people of other countries, and finances visits by teachers from those other countries to the United States for the purpose of participating in foreign language training and area studies in U.S. schools, colleges, and universities.

APPLICABLE LAWS & REGULATIONS

Program Authority

- Section 102(b)(6) of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 [[22 U.S.C. 2451](#) et seq.] (“Fulbright-Hays Act”).
- Explanatory Statement accompanying Division B of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026 (Pub. L. 119-75)
- **Note:** Projects will be awarded and must be operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in the Federal civil rights laws.

Applicable Regulations

- 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99 (EDGAR)
- OMB 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.
- Uniform Guidance in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended in 2 CFR part 3474.
- [The Secretary’s Supplemental Priorities](#)

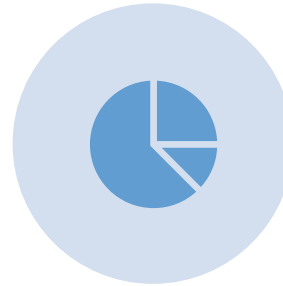


FY 2026 Competition Overview

FY 2026 Competition: General Information



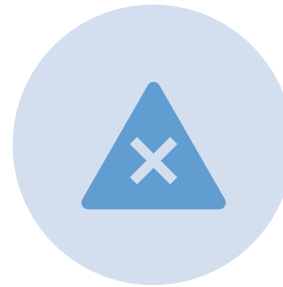
The ANI was published in [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) June 15, 2026, with a deadline of July 15, 2026.



Download application package in Grants.gov by searching for the ALN 84.021C or Funding Opportunity Number [ED-GRANTS-061526-001](#).



More information and [Application Guidance](#) will be posted to the [MECE program webpage](#).



Applicants are reminded that the [Application Notice and Instructions \(ANI\)](#) is the official document. You should not rely upon any information that is inconsistent with the guidance contained within the official document.

FY 2026 COMPETITION OVERVIEW

- [Application Notice & Instructions \(ANI\)](#)
 - **Deadline/Closing Date:** July 15, 2026
 - [Grants.gov](#) Funding Opportunity Number: [ED-GRANTS-061526-001](#)
- **FY 2026 Appropriations**
 - **Estimated Available Funds:** \$10,193,170.
 - **Estimated Range of Awards:** \$2,550,000-\$5,100,000 for the 36-month project period.
 - **Estimated number of awards:** 2-4.
 - **Project Period:** Up to 36 months

FY 2026 COMPETITION OVERVIEW

- **Cost Sharing:** There are no cost sharing or matching requirements.
- **Indirect Costs:** This program does not allow indirect costs.
- **Subgrantees:** Under [34 CFR 75.708\(b\)](#) and [\(c\)](#) a grantee under this competition may award subgrants—to directly carry out project activities described in its application—to entities listed in the grant application.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Armed Forces Participant Preference

- In the selection of American citizens for participation in MECE grants, grantees must give preference to those who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Open Licensing Requirements

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



Applicant Eligibility

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- Consistent with Sec. 104(e)(1) of the Fulbright-Hays Act, eligible applicants are public or private nonprofit foundations, educational or other institutions.
- **Note:** “Public or private nonprofit foundations, educational or other institutions” include the following:
 - Public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education (IHEs);
 - State departments of education (including State Education Agencies and State Higher Education Agencies);
 - Public or private nonprofit educational organizations; and
 - Consortia of such public or private nonprofit IHEs, State departments of education, and public or private nonprofit educational organizations.
- Please refer to the [ANI](#) for all eligible applicant definitions. If applying as a consortium, a group agreement (consortium agreement) that addresses the required elements of [34 CFR 75.128](#) and describes a rationale for the formation of the consortium.

DEMONSTRATING APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- Applicants should provide ample documentation regarding their entity type.
- Public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education (IHEs) should provide the applicable entity identification numbers for the institution(s), LEA(s), and/or school(s) that will be served by the proposed project e.g., (1) [Office of Postsecondary Education Identification number \(OPEID\)](#), (2) [National Center for Education Statistics Schools Identification \(NCES School ID\(s\)\)](#); (3) [National Center for Education Statistics Local Education Agency/School District Identification \(NCES LEA/School District ID\(s\)\)](#), (4) [College Navigator](#).
- An entity may also provide copies of their articles of incorporation, license to operate from their State higher education agency, Federal program participation agreement, and/or accreditation certificates from regional or national accrediting commissions.
- **Note:** Applications submitted will be screened in accordance with the requirements in this notice to determine whether applications have met eligibility and other requirements. If it is not clear that an applicant meets the eligibility criteria, the application may be flagged as ineligible.

DEMONSTRATING APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

An applicant that is a nonprofit organization may, under [34 CFR 75.51](#), demonstrate its nonprofit 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.

Note: Documents related to entity type should be included in the “Other Attachments” section. In addition, applicants should reference their entity type in the abstract.

APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

- Multiple submissions from a single entity are permitted provided each application proposes a substantially different project and project directors (such as serving distinct populations, campuses, or project activities).
- An applicant may participate in more than one proposal. However, if both were to be awarded, the expectation is that the applicant has the capacity to meet the obligations for all relevant projects, as noted in the [ANI](#) and specified in the letters of support.



Competition Priorities

Competition Priorities



This competition includes 2 Absolute Priorities (AP) and 1 Competitive Preference Priority (CPP).



The APs are required. Each application must clearly promote modern foreign language training and area studies and the principles of a Patriotic Education.



The CPP is optional. An applicant may receive 0 or 10 points for the CPP.



All priorities that are being addressed must be identified in the Abstract Form, the Project Narrative, and the Other Attachments Forms sections of the application.

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 1 – FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING AND STUDIES FOR PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS (REQUIRED)

From Section 102(b)(6) of the [Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961](#) (Fulbright Hays Act)

- Projects that promote modern foreign language training and area studies in U.S. schools, colleges, and universities by supporting visits and study in foreign countries by teachers and prospective teachers in such schools, colleges, and universities for the purpose of improving their skill in languages and their knowledge of the culture of the people of those countries, and by financing visits by teachers from those countries to the United States for the purpose of participating in foreign language training and area studies in U.S. schools, colleges, and universities.

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 1 – FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING AND STUDIES FOR PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS (REQUIRED)

- A project may include one or more modern foreign languages.
- The Department has not compiled an official formal list of priority modern foreign languages and area studies for this MECE competition. It is the responsibility of the applicant to clarify in the application how the proposed project promotes modern foreign language training and area studies in U.S. schools, colleges, and universities by supporting visits and study in foreign countries by teachers and prospective teachers in such schools, colleges, and universities for the purpose of improving their skill in languages and their knowledge of the culture of the people of those countries, and by financing visits by teachers from those countries to the United States for the purpose of participating in foreign language training and area studies in U.S. schools, colleges, and universities.
- Congress did not define “foreign language” within the Fulbright-Hays Act, and this [ANI](#) does not establish a definition for this term. However, consistent with the analysis in *Lujan v. United States Dep't of Educ.*, 664 F. Supp. 3d 701 (W.D. Tex. 2023), legislative history confirms that Congress unambiguously intended “foreign language” training “in United States schools, colleges, and universities” to mean any language other than English. Conversely, projects seeking to finance “visits by teachers from [foreign] countries to the United States” could appropriately include English language training for those foreign participants.

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 2 – PATRIOTIC EDUCATION (REQUIRED)

From the Secretary's Supplemental Priority and Definitions on Promoting Patriotic Education published in the Federal Register on May 22, 2026 ([91 FR 30291](#))

Projects that are designed to provide an introduction to and understanding of the founding documents and primary sources of the American political tradition, in a manner consistent with the principles of a patriotic education.

- Projects may address one or more of the following topics:
 - (a) United States Constitution, government, and civics.
 - (b) United States history and geography.
 - (c) United States military and diplomatic history.
 - (d) United States literature and rhetoric.
 - (e) United States art (architecture, painting, music, photography, theater, cinema, and sculpture, etc.).
 - (f) The founding documents and primary sources of Western Civilization and the American founding and their influence on the American political tradition.
 - (g) The influence of Western Europe upon the American political tradition.

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 2 – PATRIOTIC EDUCATION (REQUIRED)

- *American political tradition* includes the founding documents, essential principles of republican government, and historical development of America's government; key works of history, literature, humanities, and art; the influence of Western Civilization, such as ancient Greece, Rome, and Judeo-Christianity, on the founders' values; the history of Western Europe linked to the history and development of the United States; the influence of the founders' religious beliefs on their conceptions of liberty and government; and the founding documents and primary sources of the American founding (ideas, traditions, institutions, and texts essential to American constitutional government) with a focus on the first principles of the founding (natural law and natural rights), their inclusion in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and their development over time that has shaped America's culture.
- ***Patriotic education*** means an accurate and honest presentation of the history of America grounded in an analysis of the primary sources of America's founding, the principles that shaped America's founding, and how those ideals continue to influence the nation's aspirations today.
- ***Note:*** Nothing in these definitions should be construed as implicating a particular curriculum, program of instruction, or specific academic content.

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY 2 – PATRIOTIC EDUCATION (REQUIRED)

- Patriotic Education is not limited to any single audience, nor is it intended solely for incoming international visitors. Instead, the priority focuses on supporting projects that strengthen understanding of American civics, history, government, and cultural foundations for the populations applicants propose to serve. Applicants have flexibility in defining their target audience, provided their project clearly aligns with the purpose and requirements outlined in the MECE solicitation.

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 1 – RETURNING EDUCATION TO THE STATES (OPTIONAL)

Projects or proposals that will be carried out by entities identified, designated, or endorsed by a Governor or Chief State education official for purposes of implementing the project or proposal.

- **Application Instructions:** To adequately respond to this CPP, applicants should include a letter of designation or endorsement by the Governor or Chief State education official in response to Competitive Preference Priority 1.
 - The letter may be submitted on the state entity's official letterhead and signed by the appropriate official.
 - **Note:** The Chief state education official varies by state, based on each State's education governance structure. Each applicant should refer to the state-level reporting structures in their state to determine who would be considered the chief state education official.
 - Applicants should upload this document to the "Other Attachments" form.
- **Note:** Applications that successfully address the CPP may receive an additional ten (10) points.
- For additional guidance, please refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions: The Returning Education to the States Priority](#).



Selection Criteria

SELECTION CRITERIA

- The selection criteria for this competition are from [34 CFR 75.210](#). **The maximum score for all of the selection criteria is 100 points.**
 - The maximum score for each criterion is included in parenthesis following the title of the specific selection criterion. Each criterion also includes the factors that reviewers will consider in determining the extent to which an applicant meets the criterion.
- Points awarded under the competitive preference priority are in addition to any points an applicant earns for all of the selection criteria in this notice. **The maximum score that an application may receive under the competitive preference priorities and the selection criteria is 110.**
 - Under [34 CFR 75.105\(c\)\(2\)\(i\)](#), an application may be awarded 0 or 10 points under competitive preference priority 1. ED will not review or award points where an applicant fails to clearly identify the competitive preference priority that it wishes ED to consider for purposes of awarding competitive preference priority points.
- **The Project Narrative is where the applicant provides detailed responses to each selection criterion**, as the project pertains to each Absolute Priority, and if applicable, the response to the Competitive Preference Priority.
 - **Applicants should respond to the selection criteria in the same order as presented in the ANI.** Applicants should clearly label each selection criterion and separately address each of the criterion for each proposed activity.

SELECTION CRITERIA

SELECTION CRITERIA	POINT VALUES
(a) Need	Maximum 10 points
(b) Significance	Maximum 15 points
(c) Quality of Project Design	Maximum 40 points
(d) Adequacy of Resources	Maximum 10 points
(e) Quality of the Management Plan	Maximum 10 points
(f) Quality of the Evaluation Plan	Maximum 15 points
Total Maximum Score	Maximum 100 Points
Competitive Preference Priority #1	0 or 10 points
TOTAL POSSIBLE SCORE PER APPLICATION	Maximum 110 Points

SELECTION CRITERIA – NEED FOR PROJECT

(UP TO 10 POINTS)

(a) The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project. In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers one or more of the following factors:

1. The data presented (including a comparison to local, State, regional, national, or international data) that demonstrates the issue, challenge, or opportunity to be addressed by the proposed project. **(Up to 5 points)**
2. The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates the magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project. **(Up to 5 points)**

Project Narrative Tips

Need for Project

1. **Present specific, quantitative data—not general statements.**
2. **Use current, credible, and clearly cited data sources.**
3. **Show comparisons that highlight the gap.**
 - Applicants should not simply provide numbers—they should explain how their target population differs from, lags behind, or faces challenges beyond appropriate benchmarks.
4. **Choose data that directly ties to the core problem the project will address.**
 - Every data point should clearly answer the question: “What problem or opportunity is this project responding to, and why does the data prove as such?”
5. **Use visuals strategically.**
 - Charts or tables can illustrate disparities more effectively than paragraphs of text.
6. **Connect the data to the story.**
 - What is driving the trend?
 - Who is most affected?
 - Why does it matter now?
7. **Demonstrate severity, scale, and urgency. Applicants should clearly explain:**
 - How many people are affected?
 - How significantly they are affected?
 - What the consequences are if the need is not addressed?

Project Narrative Tips

Need for Project

- 1. Connect the need directly to the proposed services.** The reviewer must easily see:
 - Why these particular services?
 - Why now?
 - Why in this location or population?
- 2. Show demand or unmet need. Examples include:**
 - Long waitlists
 - Insufficient staffing
 - Lack of existing services
 - Prior programs that were oversubscribed
 - Community or institutional data showing unmet need
- 3. Use stakeholder feedback to reinforce need.**
 - Applicants can reference surveys, consultations, or community engagement activities showing that intended beneficiaries see the project as needed.
- 4. Be explicit and concise.** Reviewers score dozens of applications—clarity helps.
- 5. Make the narrative “reviewer-friendly.”**
 - Use headings like “Local Need,” “State Comparison,” “Magnitude of Need,” etc.

SELECTION CRITERIA – SIGNIFICANCE

(UP TO 15 POINTS)

(b) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers one or more of the following factors:

- i. The extent to which findings from the project's implementation will contribute new knowledge to the field by increasing knowledge or understanding of educational challenges, including the underlying or related challenges, and effective strategies for addressing educational challenges and their effective implementation. **(up to 5 points)**
- ii. The extent to which the resources, tools, and implementation lessons of the proposed project will be disseminated in ways to the target population and local community that will enable them and others (including practitioners, researchers, education leaders, and partners) to implement similar strategies. **(up to 5 points)**
- iii. The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially contributions toward improving teaching practice and student learning and achievement. **(up to 5 points)**

Project Narrative Tips

Significance

- 1. Clearly identify what new knowledge your project will generate.**
 - Applicants should explain how their project will uncover new insights about educational challenges, underlying causes, or effective strategies, as well as advance theory, knowledge, and practice in the field.
- 2. Describe the learning agenda or research questions.**
 - What do you expect to learn?
 - How does it build on or fill gaps in existing literature or practice?
- 3. Show how implementation experiences will produce generalizable lessons.**
 - Applicants should connect evaluation activities to actionable findings that can inform practice in a variety of contexts, consistent with expectations around replicability and theoretical contribution.
- 4. Provide a clear, intentional dissemination plan. In what ways will this enable others to implement similar strategies? Applicants should describe:**
 - Who the target audiences are (practitioners, researchers, education leaders, community partners)
 - How information will be shared (webinars, toolkits, guides, workshops, publications, open-access materials)
- 5. Describe how materials will be user-friendly, replicable, and adaptable across settings.**

Project Narrative Tips

Significance

- 1. Consider showing evidence of existing dissemination capacity.**
 - Applicants can reference past dissemination efforts or communication infrastructure if applicable.
- 2. Include feedback loops, such as plans for engaging communities and incorporating input from stakeholders.**
- 3. Highlight outcomes that are meaningful, measurable, and aligned to real educational impact.**
 - Discuss contributions to improved teaching practice and student learning and achievement.
- 4. Use strong baseline and projected performance indicators. Applicants should describe:**
 - What will change?
 - How much change is expected?
 - How outcomes will be measured (e.g., instructional quality, student performance indicators)?
- 5. Explain the magnitude or importance of expected results.**
 - Connect outcomes to broader needs. How does the project advance broader program goals or fills a critical gap?
 - Discuss why these results matter for the target population.
- 6. Show a clear causal chain.**
 - Applicants should create a clear logic between activities → outputs → outcomes, showing why the proposed activities will produce meaningful improvements.

SELECTION CRITERIA – QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN

(UP TO 40 POINTS)

(c) 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 one or more of the following factors:

- i. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and ambitious yet achievable within the project period, and aligned with the purposes of the grant program. **(up to 12 points)**
- ii. The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects the most recent and relevant knowledge and practices from research and effective practice. **(up to 5 points)**
- iii. The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to build recipient and project capacity in ways that lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services. **(up to 5 points)**

SELECTION CRITERIA – QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN

(UP TO 40 POINTS)

(c) 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 one or more of the following factors:

- iv. The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to meaningful improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous and relevant standards. **(up to 5 points)**
- v. The applicant's capacity (such as qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity), together with any project partners, to further develop and bring the proposed project effectively to scale on a national level during the grant period, based on the findings of the proposed project. **(up to 8 points)**
- vi. The extent to which fellowship recipients or other project participants are to be selected on the basis of academic excellence **(up to 5 points)**

Project Narrative Tips

Quality of Project Design

- 1. State goals, objectives, and outcomes in a clear, structured format.**
 - Use headings such as *Goal 1 → Objective → Outcome → Performance Measure*.
 - Ensure objectives are measurable. Use quantifiable indicators (e.g., number of participants, proficiency gains, number of lessons produced). Use the evaluation plan to reinforce measurement. Refer to performance indicators and baseline/target values.
 - Demonstrate ambition grounded in feasibility.
 - Show how the objectives stretch the organization, but also show capacity to achieve them within the project period.
- 2. Cite high-quality, current research that supports the proposed approach** (e.g., studies on language instruction, experiential learning, teacher professional development).
 - Briefly summarize what the research reveals about the problem and how the project responds.
 - If the program builds on past work, describe lessons learned and how they inform the current design.
- 3. Describe PD/training structure in detail**—frequency, length, delivery format, content, and follow-up coaching.
 - Provide a rationale for why the proposed dosage leads to meaningful change (supported by research where applicable).
 - Explain how training builds long-term recipient capacity. (e.g., teachers return with new competencies, curricula, and classroom implementation plans.)
 - Connect PD activities to project outcomes (e.g., improved teaching practices or increased integration of foreign language and area studies).
 - Show that training content is aligned with the needs identified in the Need for Project section.

Project Narrative Tips

Quality of Project Design

- 1. Create a clear logic chain** (e.g., how project activities → strengthen teacher practice → improve student learning).
 - Describe rigorous, relevant standards guiding learning outcomes and how the project aligns with them.
 - Explain explicitly why your services are likely to improve student results. Use relevant research or prior evaluation data if available.
 - Show how progress will be measured using valid, reliable tools or assessments.
 - Include specific expected student outcomes (e.g., increased proficiency levels, improved cultural understanding, enhanced course engagement).

- 2. Demonstrate strong organizational infrastructure**—financial systems, prior grant management experience, and data capacity.
 - Highlight the qualifications of key personnel (degrees, experience, accomplishments). Provide CVs or bios as the competition allows.
 - Show ability to scale. Describe partnerships, networks, or dissemination systems that enable national reach.
 - Reference past successful projects and what the organization learned about scaling or replication.
 - Explain management structures clearly—roles, responsibilities, timelines, and monitoring systems.
 - If partners are involved, describe their capacity as well and how they contribute to national scalability.

Project Narrative Tips

Quality of Project Design

1. Define the project participants selection criteria clearly.

- Use academic excellence measures such as GPA thresholds, academic achievements, recommendations, or relevant coursework.
- Explain the selection process. Include who reviews applications, how decisions are made, and what evidence of excellence is required.
- Demonstrate fairness and rigor. Describe how criteria will be applied consistently.
- Connect academic excellence to program goals. Explain why selecting strong candidates increases the project's impact.
- Include sample indicators (e.g., academic record, demonstrated commitment to teaching, language proficiency, prior scholarly work).

SELECTION CRITERIA – ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

(UP TO 10 POINTS)

(d) 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:

- i. The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. **(Up to 4 points)**
- ii. The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served, the depth and intensity of services, and the anticipated results and benefits. **(up to 3 points)**
- iii. The potential for the purposes, activities, or benefits of the proposed project to be institutionalized into the ongoing practices and programs of the applicant, agency, or organization and continue after Federal funding ends. **(Up to 3 points)**

Project Narrative Tips

Adequacy of Resources

1. **Clearly identify** all partners, contractors, and sub awardees in the Project Narrative and the Budget Narrative.
2. **Be specific about the lead applicant and each partners contribution to the project** (e.g., services, facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources).
3. We encourage you to provide **formal, signed support or commitment letters** from each partner institution/organization.
 - Commitment letters should briefly describe what services and resources partners will be contributing to the project.
 - **Tie partner expertise directly to project success.** Explain why these partners are uniquely suited to support implementation—for example, specialized knowledge, access to participants, or relevant experience.
 - **Note:** Applicants should list each partner entity in the abstracts and include the letters of support in the “Other Attachments” form. All attachments must be uploaded as a PDF.
4. **Work towards sustainability of the project beyond the federal funding period.**

Project Narrative Tips

Adequacy of Resources

1. Provide a clear cost rationale.

- Narratives should explain *why* each cost is necessary and proportional to the number of individuals served and the depth/quality of services offered.

2. Connect costs to impact.

- Applicants should articulate how investments translate into meaningful, measurable results (e.g., direct training hours, materials created, travel necessary for language immersion).

3. Emphasize efficiency.

- Applicants can highlight cost-saving strategies such as leveraging partner resources, shared staffing, or pre-existing institutional infrastructure.

4. Ensure consistency with the Budget Narrative.

- Costs mentioned in the narrative should align with allowable, allocable, and reasonable expenditures, as required in federal guidance.

Project Narrative Tips

Adequacy of Resources

- 1. Explain how project activities will become embedded in ongoing institutional practices.**
 - Sustainability plans could include curriculum integration, ongoing training cycles, resource repositories, or policy changes that persist after funding ends.
- 2. Identify which components the institution can maintain without federal funds.**
 - Applicants should outline specific activities (e.g., continued use of instructional materials, permanent adoption of new teaching methods, staff roles that become institutionalized).
- 3. Demonstrate institutional readiness** (e.g., existing structures (centers, committees, offices, accreditation processes) that can sustain the work long-term).
- 4. Show partner contributions to sustainability.**
 - Partners may commit to maintaining programming, co-funding activities, or embedding practices in their own organizations. (This links back to the partner commitment criterion.)
- 5. Identify any long-term benefits that reduce future costs.**
 - For example, once curricula, materials, or training modules are developed, they have ongoing use without requiring significant future investment.

SELECTION CRITERIA – QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN (UP TO 10 POINTS)

(e) 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 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 10 points)**

Project Narrative Tips

Quality of the Management Plan

1. **Forecast and create an implementation and management plan that is realistic.**
2. **Dedicate adequate resources and time to the project components**, including clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of the project's key personnel, as well as pertinent project personnel at subaward/partners.
3. **Carefully estimate the budget and ensure that all costs are allowable, allocable, and reasonable.**
4. **We do not determine the time and effort of key personnel.** You should set the percentage based on what you deem appropriate and explain why. This should be well explained in your management plan and budget.
5. **Provide CVs for all project personnel at the lead applicant institution/organization, as well as any pertinent project personnel at subaward/partner entities.**
 - If an individual has not yet been hired, it may be helpful to upload a job description.

SELECTION CRITERIA – QUALITY OF THE EVALUATION PLAN

(UP TO 15 POINTS)

(f) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation or other evidence-building of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation or other evidence-building, the Secretary considers one or more of the following factors:

- i. The extent to which the methods of evaluation or other evidence-building are appropriate to the context within which the project operates and the target population of the proposed project. **(up to 10 points)**
- ii. The extent to which the methods of evaluation or other evidence-building include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quality data that are quantitative and qualitative. **(up to 3 points)**
- iii. The extent to which the evaluation will access and link high-quality administrative data from authoritative sources to improve evaluation quality and comprehensiveness. **(up to 2 points)**

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Program Performance Measure 1	The number and percentage of MECE participants in foreign language and area studies who increased their reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking foreign language scores by one level.
Program Performance Measure 2	The number and percentage of MECE participants who integrate foreign language and area studies content into their teaching or curriculum within six months of program completion.
Program Performance Measure 3	The number and percentage of MECE participants who develop or implement new instructional materials or lessons on patriotic education topics in their home institutions.
Program Performance Measure 4	The frequency and quality of outreach activities (e.g., workshops, presentations, publications) related to patriotic education conducted by MECE participants within six months of program completion.

Project Narrative Tips

Quality of the Evaluation Plan

1. **A strong evaluation plan should be included in the application narrative and should be used, as appropriate, to shape the development and implementation of the project from the beginning of the grant period to the end.** The plan should include benchmarks to monitor progress toward specific project objectives and outcome measures to assess the impact of the grant-funded activities. More specifically, the plan should respond to the factors listed in the evaluation plan section of the selection criteria.
2. **Identify project-specific measures to build the project evaluation assessments.**
3. **Choose metrics and evaluation methods that align to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project, and that will produce evidence about the project's effectiveness.**
4. **Discuss the potential for replication of the project and implementation in other settings.**
5. **You may work with an internal or external evaluator.** You should select an evaluator that works best based on your project's needs and evaluation design.

Evaluation Plan Tips

Working with an Independent Project Evaluator

- The independent project evaluator should be involved in the project throughout the entire grant cycle from the proposal development phase through the project's funding and implementation to ensure that a well-designed evaluation plan is developed and implemented.
- The independent project evaluator works with key project personnel to draft measurable objectives, identify appropriate progress indicators and benchmarks, and to formalize the data collection, calculation, and analytical methodologies.
- The primary role of the independent project evaluator is to provide technical support and expertise to the project in order to best demonstrate its progress toward achieving stated goals and objectives. The independent project evaluator may also provide support and guidance for the development of a dissemination plan to publicize the project results to internal and external entities.
- To ensure both the quality and the credibility of the evaluation, it should be conducted by a qualified evaluator with appropriate expertise and training.
- The applicant should provide a plan to ensure that the evaluator maintains sufficient independence from the project team, thus avoiding any potential or perceived conflict of interest.

Evaluation Plan Tips

Developing Clear Goals and Objectives

The evaluation plan should be limited to a few clear and specific objectives that are linked directly to the proposed goals of the project and that can be measured. The applicant/grantee should consider the following when developing measurable objectives and planning for data collection:

1. What will indicate or demonstrate that the project is meeting its goals? Describe the expected measurable outcomes.
2. What types and sources of data will best demonstrate that the project is achieving, or will achieve, its objectives? Identify the data and its sources that can serve as indicators or benchmarks that the project is meeting, or will meet, the intended outcomes.
3. How will the data be collected? Describe access and frequency.
4. How will the data be analyzed and reported? Describe the methodology and key personnel responsible.
5. Will the results demonstrate the project's proposed outcome and impact (e.g., an increase in qualified language instructors, higher graduation rate in international studies, better employment rate of program graduates, etc.)? Describe how the results may demonstrate short-term and long-term outcomes and impact.

Evaluation Plan Tips

Developing Evaluation Questions

An applicant should formulate evaluation questions that interest all stakeholders and audiences related to the proposed project and align the questions with appropriate information gathering techniques.

1. Who/what will change?
2. When will the change(s) take place?
3. How much change is expected?
4. How will change be measured, recorded, or documented?

Evaluation Plan Tips

Data Collection and Analysis

- In order to show change, baseline data should be included in the final evaluation plan. Applicants should determine if baseline data already exist and where to find them.
- Data collection instruments that are not readily available need to be developed. Data collection instruments may include surveys, standardized tests, exams, focus groups, and topic guides. Institutions may have additional instruments that are specific to the proposed project.
- The final evaluation plan must specify the types and sources of data that will be collected and describe how the data will be collected, including access and frequency.
- The plan must also describe how the data will be compiled, analyzed, and reported, as well as the methodology that will be used and key personnel responsible for these tasks.
- The institutions should work with evaluation specialists to develop a detailed analysis plan to analyze the data and interpret results.
- In addition, the evaluation plan should include a timeline to delineate tasks and specify when and how progress benchmarks or indicators will be met. The timeline will help projects to stay on track toward achieving their goals.

Evaluation Plan Tips

Dissemination and Continuous Improvement

- ED seeks information from the applicant on whether and how it has used project evaluation results and findings to inform its strategic and operational decision-making.
- The applicant should provide examples of the types of evaluations and studies that it has carried out in similar grant projects, and of the results of those evaluations and studies.
- The applicant should also describe how these findings inform and improve the project proposed in the current application.
- ED looks favorably upon applicants that provide evidence-based results from past grant projects or similar efforts that indicate long-term outcomes that advance the program's goals, and that propose to scale up and institutionalize these results.

Evaluation Plan Tips

Link the Evaluation Plan to the Project Goals and Objectives

- The applicant should design the evaluation plan in light of a clear and well-defined set of goals and objectives.
- For instance, if the project's success will be determined based on increases in participants' knowledge of language and culture, the evaluation plan should include a pre-/post-test of participants' language proficiency and perhaps a qualitative report on gains in their cultural awareness.
- If the project's desired outcome is the development of a new and improved curriculum, the evaluation plan should assess how participants turned experiences in the host country into classroom learning experiences, and whether the development of the new curriculum followed established best practice guidelines.
 - The success of a new curriculum also may be assessed from the students' perspective, evaluating their sense of engagement in a classroom setting and improvements in their language abilities and cultural understanding.

Evaluation Plan Tips

Evaluation Tools and Timetable

- The applicant's evaluation tools should correspond to the needs of the evaluation plan. For instance, in the case of an objective to increase language proficiency of instructors, the evaluation tools may consist of standard language proficiency assessments.
- The evaluation timing also will depend upon which goals and objectives are to be assessed. In the case of a new curriculum, the assessment cannot take place until the new curriculum is implemented in a classroom setting. The applicant may choose to seek feedback from a third-party professional advisor on the evaluation tools and timetable.
- **In the "Other Narrative Attachment" section, the applicant may upload:**
 - Examples of evaluation materials
 - Project Timeline Chart, tools that may be used to collect data during all program phases: pre-departure phase, overseas phase, and post-travel phase.
 - Project-Specific Measures developed by the applicant.

Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Resources

Additional evaluation and evidence resources are included below as a resource to support the applicant.

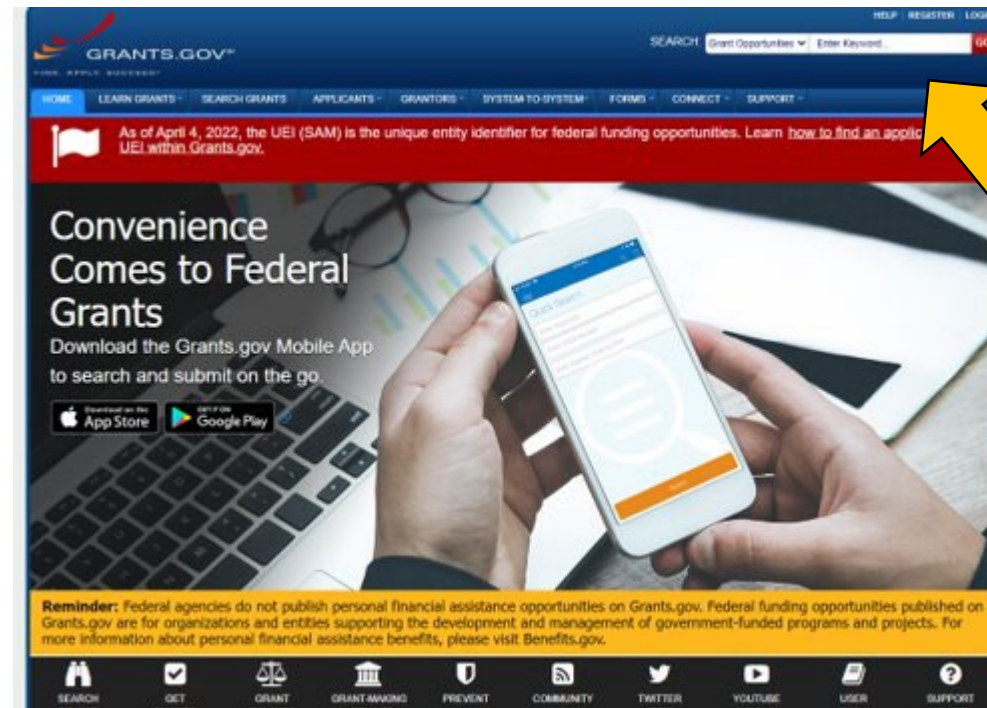
- [Institute of Education Science \(IES\)](#)
- [National Center for Education Statistics \(NCES\)](#)
- [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System \(IPEDS\)](#)
- [What Works Clearinghouse \(WWC\)](#)
- [National Library of Education](#)



Navigating Grants.gov and Application Checklist

To obtain instructions for standard forms included in this application package, please visit <https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/apply-grant/grant-application-and-other-forms>.

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☒ Must include all words (ex. transportation AND safety)
☐ May include any words (ex. transportation OR safety)

Forecasted ✕ Open ✕

1,890 Opportunities

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Close date	Status	Title	Agency	Award min	Award max
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Search funding opportunities

Tip: Use a minus sign to exclude words or phrases, like "-research"

ED-GRANTS-061526-001

Search

Filters

Copy this search query

☒ Must include all words (ex. transportation AND safety)

☐ May include any words (ex. transportation OR safety)

Forecasted

Open

1 Opportunity

1

Export results as .csv

Sort by Most relevant (Default)

Close date	Status	Title	Agency	Award min	Award max
Jul 15, 2026	Open	Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE): Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange (MECE) Program, Assistance Listing Number 84.021C Number: ED-GRANTS-061526-001	Department of Education Posted date: Jun 15, 2026 Expected	\$--	\$--

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Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE):Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange (MECE) Program, Assistance Listing Number 84.021C



Agency: Department of Education

[Assistance Listings](#): 84.021--Overseas Programs - Group Projects Abroad

Last Updated: June 15, 2026

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Description

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Program Description: In coordination with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State (State), the U.S. Department of Education (ED) is soliciting applications in support of the administration of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange (MECE) program.

The purpose of the program is to promote, improve, and develop the study of modern foreign language training and area studies in U.S. schools, colleges, and universities by supporting visits and study in foreign countries by teachers and prospective teachers. The program provides opportunities for teachers and prospective teachers to improve their skill in languages, their knowledge of the culture of the people of other countries, and finances visits by teachers from those other countries to the United States for the purpose of participating in foreign language

Closing: July 15, 2026

Applications Available: June 15, 2026.
Application Deadline: July 15, 2026.
Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: September...

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Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE):Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange (MECE) Program, Assistance Listing Number 84.021C

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General Information

Document Type: Grants Notice

Funding Opportunity Number: ED-GRANTS-061526-001

Funding Opportunity Title: Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE):Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange (MECE) Program, Assistance Listing Number 84.021C

Opportunity Category: Discretionary

Opportunity Category Explanation:

Funding Instrument Type: Grant

Category of Funding

Version: Synopsis 1

Posted Date: Jun 15, 2026

Last Updated Date: Jun 15, 2026

Original Closing Date for Applications: Jul 15, 2026 Applications Available: June 15, 2026. Application Deadline: July 15, 2026. Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: September 14, 2026ED will be able to review grant applications more efficiently if we know the approximate number of applicants that intend to apply. Therefore, we strongly encourage each potential applicant to notify us of their intent to submit an application. To do so, please email the program contact person listed above with the subject line "Intent to Apply," and include the applicant's name and a contact person's name and email address. Applicants that do not submit a notice of intent to apply may still apply for funding; however, they should be aware that the number of funding opportunities may be limited by the number of applications received.



APPLICATION CHECKLIST

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 (ED 524)

3. **Abstract Form** – Attach to “Abstract Form” in Grants.gov application

4. **Project Narrative** – Attach to “Project Narrative Attachment Form” in Grants.gov application

5. **Budget Narrative** – Attach to “Budget Narrative Attachment Form” in Grants.gov application

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

6. Other Attachments Forms

- ☐ Absolute Priority Narrative (no more than 3 pages)
- ☐ CPP 1 - Letter of designation or endorsement by the Governor or Chief State education official
- ☐ Letters of Support (ten attachments; two-page limit per attachment)
- ☐ Curriculum Vitae (CV) of Key Personnel (five attachments; three-page limit per attachment)
- ☐ Examples of Evaluation Materials, Project Timeline Chart, Project Specific Performance Measure Forms with Proposed Measures and Activities (two attachment limit; no page limit)
- ☐ Proof of nonprofit status, or other entity type, to meet the eligibility requirements
- ☐ If applying as a consortium, a group agreement (consortium agreement) that addresses the required elements of [34 CFR 75.128](#) and describes a rationale for the formation of the consortium.

7. Assurances and Certifications

- ☐ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Standard Form LLL)
- ☐ Grants.gov Lobbying Form
- ☐ Assurances – Non-Construction Programs (ED 524B)

ABSTRACT

The abstract should serve as a quick reference guide to your application. Include the items below in the order listed and use the same number format. To complete the information accurately, you will need to provide the following details:

1. **Lead Applicant:** Name the institution/organization that is the lead applicant.
2. **Consortium and/or Subrecipient Entities:** List consortium and/or subrecipient entities involved in the project, mentioning their type (e.g., institution of higher education (IHE), nonprofit organization, state education agency (SEA), etc.).
3. **Project Title:** Provide the title of the project.
4. **Absolute Priorities Addressed:** Identify the Absolute Priority addressed by number (e.g., Absolute Priority 1) and briefly describe how it is addressed.
5. **Competitive Preference Priority Addressed:** If applicable, identify if you are responding to the Competitive Preference Priority and if you included the required letter of designation or endorsement by the Governor or Chief State education official.
6. **Target Population:** Define the target population, including the educational level and number of project participants.
7. **Proposed Activities and Objectives:** Outline the activities proposed in the project.
8. **Proposed Project Outcomes:** Describe the anticipated results, such as learning outcomes.

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 (Recommended)

- ❑ 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 Application for Federal Assistance face sheet (SF 424); the supplemental SF 424 form; Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524); the detailed line-item budget; the assurances and certifications; the project abstract, the table of contents, CPP letter of designation, letters of support, CVs, Examples of Evaluation Materials, Project Timeline Chart, Project Specific Project Measure Forms with Proposed Measures and Activities (two attachment limit; no page limit), consortium agreement, and proof of nonprofit status or entity type.

Budget and 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 Line 12 of the ED 524 Budget Form.



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, and any other projected expenditures. Be sure to complete an itemized budget breakdown and narrative for each year of the proposed project.

Budget and Budget Narrative

Allowable Uses of Funds: Consistent with Sec. 104(e) of the Fulbright-Hays Act, grant funds under this program may be used for the following activities:

1. Tuition and other necessary incidental expenses, for travel expenses from their places of residence and return for themselves, and for the dependent members of their immediate families, for health and accident insurance premiums, emergency medical expenses, costs of preparing and transporting to their former homes the remains of any of such persons who may die while away from their homes as participants or dependents of participants in this program, and for per diem in lieu of subsistence at rates prescribed by the Director of the United States Information Agency, for all such persons, and for such other expenses as are necessary for the successful accomplishment of the purposes of the Fulbright-Hays Act;
2. To provide for orientation courses, language training, or other appropriate services and materials for persons traveling out of the countries of their residence for educational and cultural purposes; and
3. To provide or continue services to increase the effectiveness of such programs following the return of such persons to the countries of their residence.

Budget and Budget Narrative

Additionally, where using MECE funds for “tuition or other necessary incidental expenses”, grantees must comply with the requirements of [34 CFR 75.60](#) and [34 CFR 75.62](#).

- Under [34 CFR 75.60](#), individuals are ineligible to receive fellowship or scholarship funds through discretionary grants funded by the Department where the individual—
 - (a) Is not current in repaying a debt or is in default, as that term is used in [34 CFR part 668](#), on a debt—
 - (1) Under a program administered by the Department under which an individual received a fellowship, scholarship, or loan that they are obligated to repay; or
 - (2) To the Federal Government under a nonprocurement transaction; and
 - (b) Has not made satisfactory arrangements to repay the debt.

Budget and Budget Narrative

- Additionally, [34 CFR 75.62](#) notes the following requirements applicable to grantees, in making awards involving potential fellowship costs:
 - (a) An entity that provides a fellowship, scholarship, or discretionary grant to an individual under a grant from, or an agreement with, the Secretary shall require the individual who applies for such an award to provide with his or her application a certification under the penalty of perjury—
 - (1) That the individual is eligible under [§ 75.60](#); and
 - (2) That the individual has not been debarred or suspended by a judge under section 421 of the Controlled Substances Act ([21 U.S.C. 862](#)).
 - (b) An entity subject to this section may not award a fellowship, scholarship, or discretionary grant to an individual if—
 - (1) The individual fails to provide the certification required under [paragraph \(a\)](#) of this section; or
 - (2) The Secretary informs the entity that the individual is ineligible under [§ 75.60](#).
 - (c) If a fellowship, scholarship, or discretionary grant is made to an individual who provided a false certification under [paragraph \(a\)](#) of this section, the individual is liable for recovery of the funds made available under the certification, for civil damages or penalties imposed for false representation, and for criminal prosecution under [18 U.S.C. 1001](#).
 - (d) The Secretary may require an entity subject to this section to provide a list of the individuals to whom fellowship, scholarship, or discretionary grant awards have been made or are proposed to be made by the entity.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

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.
- ❑ **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.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Below is a breakdown of the categories to be included in the Budget Narrative for each project year:

- ❑ **Supplies:** Identify the cost of supplies (e.g., general office supplies, desk/chairs, laptops/printers, other specialty items) in the detailed budget per category. Except for general office supplies, list the item, quantity, and the unit cost per item. Supplies include all tangible personal property other than “equipment” (see [2 CFR Part 200.1](#) for the definition of Supplies). Items with a unit cost of less than \$10,000 are supplies, not “equipment.”
- ❑ **Contractual:** The contractual category should include all costs specifically incurred with actions that the applicant takes in conjunction with an established internal procurement system. Include consultant fees, expenses, and travel costs in this category if the consultant’s services are obtained through a written binding agreement or contract.
- ❑ **Construction:** Construction funds are not authorized.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Below is a breakdown of the categories to be included in the Budget Narrative for each project year:

- ❑ **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.
- ❑ **Indirect Costs:** This program does not allow indirect costs.
- ❑ **Total Costs:** This number should be total direct costs.

OTHER ATTACHMENTS FORMS

- ❑ Absolute Priority Narrative (no more than 3 pages)
- ❑ CPP 1 - Letter of designation or endorsement by the Governor or Chief State education official
- ❑ Curriculum Vitae (CV) of Key Personnel (five attachments; three-page limit per attachment)
- ❑ Examples of Evaluation Materials, Project Timeline Chart, Project Specific Performance Measure Forms with Proposed Measures and Activities (two attachment limit; no page limit)
- ❑ If applying as a consortium, a group agreement (consortium agreement) that addresses the required elements of [34 CFR 75.128](#) and describes a rationale for the formation of the consortium.

OTHER ATTACHMENTS FORMS

- ❑ Letters of support from members of the consortium and other partners, **particularly subgrantees.**
- Applicants must **clearly identify** all contractors and sub awardees in the Project Narrative and the Budget Narrative.
 - The justification should include services to be performed and products to be provided, along with the corresponding costs.
 - **Note:** Please review Appendix 2 – Contract Provisions for Non-Federal Entity Contracts Under Federal Awards under the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200), §200.308, §200.318-322, §200.327 (Contract Provisions), and EDGAR 74.42.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide **formal, signed support or commitment letters** from each partner institution/organization, particularly subgrantees.
 - **Support letters should attest to:**
 - The quality and significance of the proposed project.
 - The leadership skills and expertise of the project director.
 - The potential impact of the project on stakeholders, participants, service area, etc.
 - Soundness of investment of federal funds.
 - Additional attributes as appropriate.

OTHER ATTACHMENTS FORMS

- ❑ Letters of support from members of the consortium and other partners, particularly subgrantees.

Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (ED 524)

- Contractual line item of the lead applicant's ED 524.

Budget Narrative

- The specific details of each subaward must be provided in a separate, detailed budget narrative for each year of the project period.

OTHER ATTACHMENTS FORMS

- ❑ Proof of nonprofit status or other entity type to meet the eligibility requirements – as a reminder, nonprofit lead applicants, subawardees, and partners must provide proof of nonprofit status (outlined below).
- An applicant that is a nonprofit organization may, under [34 CFR 75.51](#), demonstrate its nonprofit status by providing:
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - A certified copy of the applicant's certificate of incorporation or similar document if it clearly establishes the nonprofit status of the applicant; or
 - 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.



Application Submission Information

APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Application Submission Instructions

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

Registration

- To apply, you must first be registered in two systems: [SAM.gov](#) and [Grants.gov](#). If you are already registered, make sure your registration is active and up to date.
- [Grants.gov](#) registration involves several steps including registration on [SAM.gov](#). You may begin working on your application while completing the registration process, but you cannot apply until all registration steps are complete. **Once your SAM registration is active, it will take 24-48 hours for the information to be available in Grants.gov, and before you can apply through Grants.gov.** For detailed information on the registration steps, please go to: [Grants.gov Applicant Registration](#). Please note that your organization will need to update its SAM registration annually.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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."

APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION

- **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 of July 15, 2026.**
- **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>.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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 of July 15, 2026, AND the application status should be: Validated, Received by Agency, or Agency Tracking Number Assigned.**
- If the date/time received is later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on the deadline date of July 15, 2026, your application is late and will not be reviewed.
- If your application has a status of “Received” it is still awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will either change to “Validated” or “Rejected with Errors.”
- If the status is “Rejected with Errors,” your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found at <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/encountering-error-messages>.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Submission Problems – What should you do?

- 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.
- 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](#).



Application Review Information

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](#).
 - 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](#)).

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Peer Review

- Peer reviewers have expertise in areas pertinent to the grant program.
- All reviewers are screened for conflicts of interest to ensure a fair and competitive review process.
- Peer reviewers will read, prepare a written evaluation of, and score the assigned applications, using the selection criteria provided in this notice.
- The Selection criteria outline how the application will be scored. The maximum score for each criterion is included in parenthesis following the title of the specific selection criterion. Each criterion also includes the factors that reviewers will consider in determining the extent to which an applicant meets the criterion.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Tiebreaker

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

- **First Tiebreaker:** Under the first tiebreaker, the Secretary will select the application(s) with the highest score under selection criterion (b)(i). If the scores remain tied, then the scores under selection criterion (b)(ii) will be used to break the tie. If after implementing this tiebreaker, there are still tied applications and insufficient funding to support each application, the Secretary will implement the second tiebreaker.
- **Second Tiebreaker:** Under the second tiebreaker, the Secretary will select the application(s) that focus on areas in foreign language training and area studies that align with the administration's priorities.

Applicant Notifications

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



FAQs

What is the deadline to submit an application for the FY 2026 competition?

- The deadline for application submission for the FY 2026 competition is 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Tuesday, July 15, 2026.
- Be mindful of periods of unavailability for Grants.gov due to scheduled maintenance.

Are there limitations on eligible applicant submissions?

- Multiple submissions from a single entity are permitted provided each application proposes a substantially different project and project directors (such as serving distinct populations, campuses, or project activities).

Are awards limited to a single applicant per state?

- No. There can be multiple applications selected for grant awards in a state. Refer to the Review and Selection Process in the [ANI](#) for more detailed information.

Where in the application should proof of entity type be included?

- Documents related to evidence of entity type should be included in the “Other Attachments Form” section. In addition, applicants should reference their entity type in the abstract.

Can an applicant be part of a proposal where they serve as the “lead” for one application while supporting/advising as a part of another?

- Yes, an applicant may participate in more than one proposal. However, if both were to be awarded, the expectation is that the applicant has the capacity to meet the obligations for all relevant projects, as noted in the [ANI](#) and specified in the letters of support.

Does this program accept applications from IHEs outside of the United States?

- No, unless certain requirements are met. As stated in the [ANI](#), under 20 U.S.C. 1001, IHEs are defined to include educational institution in any State that—
 - (1) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
 - (2) Is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
 - (3) Provides an educational program for which it awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a two-year program which is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;
 - (4) Is a public or other nonprofit institution; and
 - (5) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association.
- Therefore, an IHE which meets the section 101 definition but is not located in the United States could apply as the lead applicant of a consortia, with domestic IHEs that meet the section 101 definition.

Can a university or college system (and all the affiliated colleges in the system) be considered a single IHE?

- No. We do not provide the definition for a system within this [ANI](#). An IHE is defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA) (20 U.S.C. 1001). However, a university or college system may apply as a consortium of such public or private nonprofit IHEs.

Is there a minimum number of entities required in a consortium? Do we need a formal agreement before applying? Can we add partners after the grant deadline?

- No, as long as the applicant meets the eligibility criteria in the [ANI](#), there is not a minimum number of entities required in a consortium.
- Formal consortium agreements are not required, but letters of support are recommended for consortium applications. Support letters can help clarify the member's role, responsibilities, and willingness to participate in the grant, as well as their qualifications/experience.
- You cannot add partners to the application after the deadline, but if awarded, you may be able to add partners to your grant. Changes to the grant require consultation with the cognizant agency specialist.

What is the target population this grant is geared towards? Is there a minimum number of individuals that a project component must impact?

- As noted in the [ANI](#), the target population is teachers and prospective teachers to improve their skill in languages, their knowledge of the culture of the people of other countries, and finances visits by teachers from those other countries to the United States for the purpose of participating in foreign language training and area studies in U.S. schools, colleges, and universities.
- The scope of the project component is at the applicant's discretion. There is no minimum or maximum number of individuals a project component must impact.
- **Note:** In the selection of American citizens for participation in MECE grants, grantees must give preference to those who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States. See Sec. 106(a)(2) of the Fulbright-Hays Act.

What is the difference between Absolute Priorities and Competitive Preference Priorities?

- In order to be considered for funding, each application must address APs 1 and 2. **The Absolute Priorities are mandatory.**
 - An applicant can choose whether or not to address the Competitive Preference Priority (CPP).
 - Applications that successfully address the CPP may receive an additional ten (10) points.
- 

May an applicant focus on multiple modern foreign languages in response to AP 1?

- Yes. A project may include one or more modern foreign languages. It is the responsibility of the applicant to clarify in the application how the proposed project design aligns with the requirements of Absolute Priority 1.



Who is the Chief State education official?

- The Chief state education official varies by state, based on each State's education governance structure. Each applicant should refer to the state-level reporting structures in their state to determine who would be considered the chief state education official.

For Competitive Preference Priority 1, we will include a letter of designation or endorsement by the Governor or Chief State education official. Since this requirement is to document that the entity is appropriately designated/endorsed, I interpret that the letter should endorse our entity, is that correct?

- Yes, that is correct. The letter should indicate partnership with the entity as the eligible applicant. The letter of designation or endorsement should be submitted on the state entity's official letterhead and signed by the appropriate official.

Are subgrants allowable?

- Yes, under [34 CFR 75.708\(b\)](#) and [\(c\)](#) a grantee may award subgrants--to directly carry out project activities--to the following types of entities: IHEs, nonprofit organizations, professional organizations, or businesses. The grantee may award subgrants to entities it has identified in the approved application or that it selects through a competition under procedures established by the grantee.
- Sub awardees, must comply with the administrative requirements of the award, including the indirect cost rate limitations outlined in [2 CFR 200.332 Requirements for pass-through entities](#), particularly the requirements for pass-through entities.
- **Note:** You should also demonstrate the subrecipients entity type in a similar fashion to the lead applicant and upload this documentation to the "Other Attachments" form.

Do the subgrantees need to be the same entity type as the lead applicant?

- No, subgrantees do not need to be the same entity type as the lead applicant. Under [34 CFR 75.708\(b\)](#) and [\(c\)](#) a grantee may award subgrants--to directly carry out project activities--to the following types of entities: IHEs, nonprofit organizations, professional organizations, or businesses. The grantee may award subgrants to entities it has identified in the approved application or that it selects through a competition under procedures established by the grantee.
- **Note:** You should also demonstrate the subrecipients entity type in a similar fashion to the lead applicant and upload this documentation to the "Other Attachments" form.

**Are private, for-profit organizations allowed to be a subgrantee?
Alternatively, can a private, for-profit organization receive funding as a
contractor/consultant as a direct cost line item under our award?**

- No. A grantee or lead applicant can only provide subgrants--to directly carry out project activities--to the following types of entities: IHEs, nonprofit organizations, professional organizations, or businesses. The grantee may award subgrants to entities it has identified in the approved application or that it selects through a competition under procedures established by the grantee.
- Private, for-profit organizations can receive federal funding as a contractor or consultant. Per [Uniform Guidance \(2 CFR 200\)](#), this is typically classified as a procurement relationship rather than a subaward and these costs are generally budgeted under the award's "Contractual" or "Consultant" direct cost line item.

Can we make a subaward to a foreign non-profit?

- Yes, however, the foreign entity would need to be able to demonstrate to the grantee that it has a non-profit status under the laws of the nation in which it is domiciled. This is necessary to establish eligibility for the subgrant.



If an applicant proposes subawards, where in the application should they include the subaward budget?

- The budgeted amount for a subaward will go in the **"Contractual"** line item of the lead applicant's Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs Form (ED 524). The specific details of each subaward must be provided in a separate, detailed budget narrative for each sub awardee and each year of the project period.

When describing project partnerships in the narrative, is this meant to include only sub awardee partners?

- You should include any and all key players on the grant – lead IHE, partner IHEs, Federal or State entities, and other partners. The partners are those that may have key responsibilities and/or oversight within the grant. However, grantees are encouraged to ensure that they design and budget for sustainable project activities that will allow them to continue to accomplish the project's goals after its period of grant funding has ended.

Are letters of support for partners required? What about for subawards?

- Letters of support are not required but they are encouraged, and who they come from is at the discretion of the applicant. It is recommended that applicants provide letters of support for each partner/subrecipient entity to facilitate the evaluation of a partner/subrecipient entity's contribution to the project, the relationship between entities, and to confirm the need for the project. Subrecipient activities that are known or specified at the time of application submission should be listed in the abstract, as well as the project narrative.
- Support letters should attest to:
 - The quality and significance of the proposed project.
 - The leadership skills and expertise of the project director.
 - The potential impact of the project on stakeholders, participants, service area, etc.
 - Soundness of investment of federal funds.
 - Additional attributes as appropriate.
- A maximum of 5 support letters is recommended.

May we include contractors on our project?

- Yes. There are no restrictions on who applicants can use as contractors as long as they have the capacity to provide services.
- Please refer to the Procurements Standards in [2 CFR 200.317-327](#), as well as the Subrecipient and Contractor Determinations in [2 CFR 200.331](#).

Will the full three-year award be obligated or provided to recipients at the beginning of the grant cycle such that spending may take place according to their approved annual budgets, or will funding be distributed in annual or other installments?

- Grant funding for the three (3) years will be frontloaded in Year 1 (grantees will receive three [3] years of funding at the time of award). The term “frontloaded” means that a funded project will receive all years of funding at the time of award and will only be able to use funds for the first budget period.
- As noted in the [ANI](#), each applicant must develop a budget of up to 36 months to carry out its proposed project. Include the ED 524 Budget Form completed for the three (3) years of the project and a corresponding Budget Narrative (justification) that provides a detailed budget breakdown of all requested costs. Per [2 CFR § 200.305](#) (Federal payment), grantees must drawdown funds to cover project expenses for “actual, immediate cash requirements of the recipient or subrecipient in carrying out the purpose of the approved program or project.”

If we write the proposal for the maximum award amount of \$5,100,000, is there a possibility that ED will approve the grant proposal for a smaller amount and ask us to adjust the budget?

- The scope and budget of the project is at the applicant's discretion. However, the proposed costs should be [reasonable](#), [allocable](#), and [allowable](#) according to the regulations in the [Uniform Guidance in 2 CFR 200](#), and particularly the Cost Principles in [2 CFR 200 Subpart E](#). Applicants must provide an itemized budget breakdown and narrative for each year of the proposed project. Please refer to the ANI for additional guidance on preparing the budget.
- Applicants must also ensure that all costs included in the proposed budget are necessary and reasonable to meet the goals and objectives of the proposed project, as demonstrated in the required Budget Narrative (justification). Any costs determined by the Secretary to be unreasonable or unnecessary will be removed from the final approved budget.

If student support is allowable, can Pell Grant recipients receive support under MECE?

- Sec. 104(e)(2) of the Fulbright-Hays Act specifically notes that grant funds may be used “for orientation courses, language training, or other appropriate services and materials for persons traveling out of the countries of their residence for educational and cultural purposes which further the purposes of this chapter, **whether or not they are receiving other financial support from the Government[.]**” (emphasis added). Therefore, where furthering the purposes of the MECE program, student support may be provided to Pell Grant recipients or other recipients of federal financial support, consistent with the terms of those other programs.

May grant funds support student participation in summer language programs?

- Student aid for summer language programs must meet the same requirements as non-summer language programs. The summer program must be part of the student's approved program of study and must align with the requirements noted in [2 CFR § 200.466](#).

What are some examples of allowable costs?

- Development of online courses and digital instructional resources.
- Project evaluator
- Professional development and conferences
- Participant support costs (e.g., student stipends for internships and apprenticeships, exam fees, books, etc.).
- Graduate assistantships and fellowships
- Salary and benefits for program staff
- Staff and student travel
- Equipment and supplies

Note: This is not a comprehensive list of allowable costs or activities. For additional guidance on allowable costs, please review [2 CFR Subpart E](#) (Cost Principles) and contact MECE@ed.gov with additional questions.



Can you clarify what participant support costs mean?

- Participant support costs are allowable. In [2 CFR 200.456](#), the classification of items as participant support costs must be documented in the recipient's or subrecipient's written policies and procedures and treated consistently across all Federal awards.
- **Participant support costs** means direct costs that support participants (see definition for Participant in [§ 200.1](#)) and their involvement in a Federal award, such as stipends, subsistence allowances, travel allowances, registration fees, temporary dependent care, and per diem paid directly to or on behalf of participants.
 - Examples of other participant support costs may include exam fees and books without providing direct aid to students.
- **Participant** generally means an individual participating in or attending program activities under a Federal award, such as trainings or conferences, but who is not responsible for implementation of the Federal award.
 - **Individuals committing effort to the development or delivery of program activities under a Federal award (such as consultants, project personnel, or staff members of a recipient or subrecipient) are not participants.**
 - Examples of participants may include community members participating in a community outreach program, members of the public whose perspectives or input are sought as part of a program, students, or conference attendees.
- If you believe that your PhD student meets the definition of a “Participant” under [2 CFR 200.1](#), then Participant Support Costs (including stipends) are allowable under [2 CFR § 200.456](#). However, the classification of items as participant support costs must be documented in your written policies and procedures and treated consistently across all Federal awards.

Does everything have to be double-spaced and 12-point font? Can tables and chart be single spaced?

- For all formatting requirements, please read the **Common Instructions** 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>.
- Tables and charts **may be single-spaced** and in landscape format as long as they are in a readable format.

How should we format our project narrative?

- Before preparing the Project Narrative, applicants should review the program statute, program regulations, [Common Instructions](#), and the [Application Notice & Instructions \(ANI\)](#) for specific guidance and requirements.
- The Secretary evaluates an application according to the program specific criteria in [34 CFR 75.210](#). The Project Narrative is where the applicant provides detailed responses to each selection criterion, as the project pertains to the Absolute Priorities, and if applicable, the response to the Competitive Preference Priority.
- Applicants are encouraged to respond to the selection criteria in the same order as presented in the ANI when developing the Project Narrative and should be written in a concise and clear manner. Clearly label each selection criteria and separately address each of the criteria.
- 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 (recommended)**
 - 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 Application for Federal Assistance face sheet (SF 424); the supplemental SF 424 form; Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524); the detailed line-item budget; the assurances and certifications; the project abstract, the table of contents, CPP letter of designation, letters of support, CVs, examples of evaluation materials and project measures form, and proof of nonprofit status or entity type.

Are references included in the 65-page limit?

- The recommended 65-page limit applies only to the Project (application) Narrative (responses to the priorities and the Selection Criteria) and does not apply to Application for Federal Assistance face sheet (SF 424); the supplemental SF 424 form; Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524); the detailed line-item budget; the assurances and certifications; the project abstract, the table of contents, CPP letter of designation, letters of support, CVs, examples of evaluation materials and project measures form, and proof of nonprofit status or entity type.

Does the 65-page narrative limit also apply to consortium applications, or will consortia be permitted additional pages?

- The 65-page limit for the application narrative is a recommendation that applies to all eligible entities.



Is there a specific format or template for CVs/résumés?

- We do not have a prescribed template for CVs/résumés; however, it must be uploaded in a readable, PDF format.
- It is recommended that you provide CVs for all project personnel at the lead applicant institution/organization, as well as any project personnel from subaward and/or partner entities. It is recommended that CVs be no more than 3 pages.



Is there an expectation for the percentage of time expended by the Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI)? Does the PD/PI need to be a full-time position?

- The time and effort for personnel, including key personnel, i.e., Project Director, is at the discretion of the applicant. There should be adequate time dedicated to the management and implementation of the project, and sufficient key personnel dedicated to accomplishing the goals and objectives of the grant. The time and effort for personnel should be explained well and noted in the management plan and budget.
- Co-PDs/PIs are permissible but there should be a PD/PI that is clearly identified in the application that will serve as the primary contact point for correspondence.
- If you haven't hired a Project Director yet, in order for the Peer Reviewers to assess the qualifications of the Project Director's role, you should include a job announcement or position description for this role.

Is an external evaluator a requirement?

- No, you may work with either an internal or external evaluator. In your application you should speak to the qualifications of the chosen evaluator, including the evaluator's experience in conducting evaluations of similar methodology as proposed and in the context of the proposed population and setting of the proposed project. Therefore, select an evaluator that works best based on your project's needs and evaluation design.

Are grantees expected to create additional performance measures for this grant project?

- In addition to the four (4) required program performance measures, applicants may develop project-specific performance measures that align with the goals and objectives of their specific project as noted in Factor ii of the Quality of the project evaluation or other evidence-building selection criterion.

Are the performance measures the required measures that all recipients will be expected to use throughout the grant period?

- Yes, the Program Performance Measures in the [ANI](#) document are the final measures for the MECE program. As noted in the ANI, 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; and (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. As such, the applicant should describe in its evaluation plan how it will collect and report on the MECE program's required performance measures.
- if you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in [2 CFR part 170](#), should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b). If you receive a multiyear award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under [34 CFR 75.118](#). The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under [34 CFR 75.720\(c\)](#). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

Is research evidence from WWC required?

- No. However, applicants are welcome to include research evidence from What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) to support their project narrative and/or evaluation plan.
- **Note:** If applicants choose to include research evidence from WWC, they should cite the supporting study or studies and provide a working URL link to the study or studies cited.

What is the anticipated start date?

- New awards will have a project start date of October 1, 2026.



Could you explain the estimated funding information needed in question 18 for the SF 424 form?

- In the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424 Form), the estimated funding for “Federal” is the amount an applicant is requesting – not to exceed the maximum amount(s) listed in the ANI. The estimated funding for 18b-f are the non-federal amounts applicants may be contributing to the project. To obtain instructions for standard forms included in this application package, please visit <https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/apply-grant/grant-application-and-other-forms>.
- **Note:** This competition does not have any cost sharing/matching requirements, however, that does not preclude an applicant from contributing non-federal funds if they wish.

The SF-424 form instructions we found online say "enter the amount requested during the first funding/budget period". Do we just include the amount of money we are requesting in year 1 of the grant (not the full amount we are requesting over three years)?

- Since these grants are frontloaded, meaning you receive funding for all 3 years up front, you would enter the requested amount for all 3 years.



On the SF 424 form, where should we include non-federal funds under question 18?

- If the non-federal funds are coming from the lead applicant institution, then you may include them in the “applicant” section. If not, then those funds should be included in one of the other categories that best fit the type of entity.

Can you confirm if any other documents are allowed in the appendix besides the biography, letters of support, and CVs? For example, can supporting materials, additional figures and a timeline be placed in the appendix?

- Only items listed in the ANI should be attached to the application. Please do not attach any miscellaneous narratives, supporting files or other components. Supporting documents should be uploaded as a single PDF document to the “Other Attachments” form. Please refer to the ANI for additional information. Supporting documents may include:
 - Absolute Priority Narrative (no more than 3 pages)
 - Competitive Preference Priority letter of designation or endorsement
 - Letters of support
 - CVs of key personnel
 - Examples of evaluation materials and Project Measure Forms (PMF)
 - Proof of nonprofit status
 - If applying as a consortium, a group agreement (consortium agreement) that addresses the required elements of 34 CFR 75.128 and describes a rationale for the formation of the consortium.

Can you please advise if the first year of the project can be a planning year?

- With the time frame for the project (3 years), and the type of activities you are expected to accomplish, the entire first year should not be used as a planning year. Planning should begin as you are developing your application. However, we understand it may take some time to get your project off the ground and up and running, including conducting outreach, hiring project staff, developing activities, establishing partnerships, developing your evaluation plan and internal controls processes, etc. Please factor this in to your proposal and budget appropriately.

I am having trouble uploading my documents. What should I do?

- If you have problems submitting to Grants.gov, 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> .



Applicant Resources

Final Tips

Follow all instructions in the ANI, which includes:

- ❑ Complete all required forms
 - ❑ Respond to Selection Criteria and Priorities **in the order of the ANI**
 - ❑ Clearly label all sections, especially for Selection Criteria and priorities
 - ❑ Include a Table of Contents
 - ❑ Include a Budget Justification that aligns with the ED 524 Budget Form
 - ❑ Upload all required documentation (eligibility documents, letter of designation for CPP)
 - ❑ Ensure all documents are uploaded in proper sections and in proper format
 - ❑ Review Application Checklist
- 

APPLICANT RESOURCES

- [MECE ANI](#)
- [MECE Application Guidance](#)
- <https://grants.gov/>
 - Application Opportunity Number: [ED-GRANTS-061526-001](#)
- www.sam.gov
- [MECE Website](#)
- Open Licensing Requirement for Competitive Grant Programs
 - 2 C.F.R. §3474.20
 - [Final Regulations](#)
- [Technical Assistance for ED Grantees](#)
- [Grants Training and Management Resources Online Grants Training Courses](#)



Thank you!

Program Contacts:

- Kurrinn Abrams, FY 2026 MECE Competition Manager, MECE@ed.gov
- Dr. Stacey Slijepcevic, Division Director, Stacey.Slijepcevic@ed.gov