



International and Foreign Language Education (IFLE)
FY 2026 Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange (MECE) Program
Competition

Application Guidance

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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/362799>. The application notice and instructions ([ANI](#)) on Grants.gov is the official document governing the grant competition.

Grants.gov Funding Opportunity Number: [ED-GRANTS-061526-001](#)

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW & ELIGIBILITY

1. What is the purpose of the MECE program?

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 Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange (MECE) 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.

2. Who is eligible to apply?

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 more detailed information and definitions.

3. 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).

4. 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.

5. How should we demonstrate the type of entity of a lead applicant and/or partner institution/organization as it applies to the eligibility criteria?

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., [Office of Postsecondary Education Identification number \(OPEID\)](#), National Center for Education Statistics Schools Identification (NCES School ID(s)); National Center for Education Statistics Local Education Agency/School District Identification (NCES LEA/School District ID(s)), [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: 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: 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.

6. Where in the application should entity information (e.g., proof of nonprofit status) be included?

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

7. 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.

8. 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; 18 (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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

SECTION 2: ABSOLUTE & COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITIES

1. What are the funding priorities of the FY 2026 competition?

This notice includes two (2) Absolute Priorities and one (1) Competitive Preference Priority. Please refer to the [ANI](#) for more detailed information about the priorities.

- **Application Instructions:**

- Each application must clearly identify the specific subset of the Absolute Priority for which a grant is submitted.
- Do not merely restate the priority language. Show how the project design, partners, courses, materials, dissemination plan, evaluation, and budget advance the project's ability to successfully promote modern foreign language training and the use of Patriotic Education.
- To adequately respond to the APs, in addition to incorporating the response to the APs in the project narrative, applicants must provide a separate response (no more than 3 pages) for each AP in the "Other Attachments Form" of the application package.
- To adequately respond to CPP 1, applicants must include a letter of designation or endorsement by the Governor or Chief State education official in the "Other Attachments Form". The letter should be on the entity's official letterhead.

2. What is the difference between Absolute 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).

3. 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.

4. Can you please clarify the intended audience for Absolute Priority 2: Patriotic Education in the MECE solicitation? Is this aspect of the program intended to inform incoming international guests about American government, history, art, etc....?

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.

5. Has the Department compiled an official formal list of priority modern foreign languages and area studies for this MECE competition?

No. 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.

6. What defines modern foreign languages?

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.

7. For Competitive Preference Priority 1 “Returning Education to the States”, how should applicants address the priority?

An applicant may address CPP1 “Returning Education to the States” by including a letter from the Governor or chief state education official that clearly identifies, designates or endorses the eligible applicant i.e. the lead fiscal agent and IHE that will carry out the projects or proposals.

The letter may be submitted on the state entity’s official letterhead and signed by the appropriate official. The chief state education official may vary by state, based on each state's education governance structure. Each applicant should refer to their state-level reporting structure to determine who would be considered the chief state education official.

For additional guidance, please refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions: The Returning Education to the States Priority](#).

SECTION 3: SELECTION CRITERIA AND APPLICATION REVIEW

1. How should applicants format their application in response to the Selection Criteria?

Applicants should clearly address each Selection Criterion with corresponding responses to the factors (sub criteria) for each criterion. For example, under the “Quality of the Project Design” Selection Criterion, applicants must provide a separate, detailed response for each of the six (6) sub-criterion (worth up to 50 points) that comprise this criterion.

Note: For additional guidance, please review the [ANI](#) and Pre-Application Webinar. Regarding activities, each proposed activity should be clearly described, noting its alignment with the pertinent factor of the Selection Criterion.

2. Will the scoring rubric or other criteria used by peer reviewers be made available before the application deadline?

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.

SECTION 4: FUNDING & BUDGET

1. May an applicant request less than the average award size?

Yes.

2. 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 draw

down 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.”

3. What is the indirect cost rate for this program?

This program does not allow indirect costs.

4. 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.

SECTION 5: SUBAWARDS & PARTNERS

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

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

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.

7. Where should an applicant include CVs and letters of support?

Applicants should include these attachments in the “Other Attachments” form. All attachments must be uploaded as a PDF.

8. 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](#).

9. 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.

SECTION 6: APPLICATION LOGISTICS

1. What should be included in the abstract?

The abstract should not exceed one (1) single-spaced page and 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.

Ensure that you only attach the ED approved file types detailed in [the 2025 Common Instructions](#) and please ensure all relevant information is included for a comprehensive application.

2. 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. Additional guidance can be found in the ANI and the pre-application technical assistance webinar.

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 responses to the Competitive Preference Priority and Invitational 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

- 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.

3. Are letters of support required? If so, who should provide the letter—for example, could it come from a university board of trustees or another state or institutional entity?

Letters of support are not required but they are encouraged, and who they come from is at the discretion of the applicant. A letter of support can 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.; and/or the soundness of investment of federal funds.

4. Is there a required or recommended list of topics/headings that applicants should include in the 65-page project narrative?

Organize your application package according to the guidance provided in the [ANI](#). The Project Narrative should include a Table of Contents and follow the order of the priorities and Selection Criteria in the ANI. The ANI also includes an Application Checklist starting on Page 21 that should be helpful to you.

5. Can tables and chart be single spaced? Can we use a font size smaller than 12-point?

Yes, as long as tables and charts are in a readable format.

6. Is it acceptable to use the landscape orientation for the tables that address the design, management plan, and evaluation plan?

Yes.

7. Are references included in the 65-page limit?

The recommended 65-page limit applies only to the application narrative (responses to the priorities and the Selection Criteria). 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. When will applicants be notified of whether they will be awarded a grant?

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.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing following the notice to successful applicants.

Since grant awards must be made by September 30, successful applicants should expect to be notified in late September.

14. When are grantees projected to begin grant activities?

Grants should be ready to immediately begin grant activities following the grant start date, October 1, 2026. This information may be found on the Grant Award Notification (GAN) in Box 6.

SECTION 7: EVALUATION & PERFORMANCE REPORTING

1. What are the performance measures that the applicant must propose and report on?

For the purposes of evaluating the success of the MECE program under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 and ED reporting under [34 CFR 75.110](#), ED has established a set of performance measures.

Applications must describe:

The data collection and reporting methods the applicant would use and why those methods are likely to yield reliable, valid, and meaningful performance data.

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.

Applicants are advised that the evaluation plan should include baselines, targets, data sources, collection schedule, and who is responsible for each measure.

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 12 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.

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

In addition to the four (4) required program performance measures, applicants should 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.

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

Yes, 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.

4. Are the Program Performance Measures mentioned in the information document examples, suggestions, or the actual, required text?

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.

5. Is there additional guidance on how many performance measures should be proposed, what they should focus on, etc.?

The performance measures should accurately measure the project performance and account for continuous improvement. In addition, the project should identify or develop baselines and create performance targets. These components should be included in the project's evaluation

plan. Applicants have discretion in developing these components based on the design of their projects.

Note: 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](#)

6. What reporting requirements are there for this program?

All grantees must submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) with information that is responsive to these 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. See the standards in [2 CFR 170.105](#) to determine whether you are covered by [2 CFR part 170](#).

At the end of your project period, you must submit a Final Performance Report (FPR), including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multiyear award, you must submit an APR 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.

7. Is an external evaluator a requirement?

No, you may work with either an internal or external evaluator. You should select an evaluator that works best based on your project's needs and evaluation design.

8. 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.

SECTION 8: ALLOWABLE COSTS & ACTIVITIES

- 1. Under the funding guidelines, can we provide student aid, such as scholarships, stipends, assistantships, fellowships, payment for books and exam fees, and related costs, to assist with students' area, international, or foreign language studies?**

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;
 - a. **Note:** Where using MECE funds for “tuition or other necessary incidental expenses”, grantees must also comply with the requirements of 34 CFR 75.60 and 34 CFR 75.62.
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.

Please refer to the [ANI](#) for a complete breakdown of allowable uses of funds.

- 2. 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.

Please refer to Question 1 in this section and the [ANI](#) for a further discussion of allowable uses of funds.

3. 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](#).

Please refer to Question 1 in this section and the [ANI](#) for a complete breakdown of allowable uses of funds.

4. May grant funds be used for the development of online courses or other digital instructional resources?

Yes, these costs are allowable and should be clearly justified in the Budget Narrative and aligned with the goals and objectives of the project.

5. Can the evaluator be paid using grant funds? Is there a suggested budget amount for evaluation in the grant?

Yes, evaluators can be paid using grant funds. No, there is no requirement regarding the minimum or maximum amount of grants funds that can be budgeted for evaluation purposes. As with all project costs, these costs should be reasonable, allowable, and allocable according to the Uniform Guidance's Cost Principles and be fully justified in the Budget Narrative.

6. In the Budget and Budget Narrative, who can be included in the training costs? Can we include a Department Chair who is not on the project team?

You should only include costs for key personnel who will be part of the grant and support the goals and objectives of the grant and its implementation. If the faculty are part of the project team, and have responsibilities to the project, you can include them. If they will not be working on the project, you cannot include them.

7. Additional allowable costs and activities

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.

a. Student stipends for internships and apprenticeships

- i. These may be allowable as a “Participant Support Cost”. Please refer to Question 1 in this section and the [ANI](#) for a complete breakdown of allowable uses of funds.

b. Graduate Assistantships or Fellowships

- i. Yes. Please refer to Question 1 in this section and the [ANI](#) for a complete breakdown of allowable uses of funds.

c. Salary and benefits for program staff.

- i. Please refer to the personnel compensation and benefits regulations in [2 CFR 200.430-431](#) for additional guidance.

d. Supplemental salary or stipends for existing employees of an institution to increase their paid hours (e.g. When employees may be otherwise 9- or 10-month employees).

- i. Please ensure it is aligned with your institution’s policies and procedures for extra pay. Refer to [2 CFR 200.430](#) for additional guidance on compensation of personnel services, including standards for documentation of personnel expenses and extra pay.

e. Staff and student travel

- i. Yes. Please refer to Question 1 in this section and the [ANI](#) for a complete breakdown of allowable uses of funds. Please ensure it is aligned with your institution’s travel policies/procedures, as well as the requirements in [2 CFR 200.475](#) - Travel Costs.

f. Equipment (i.e., language laboratory equipment, start up for new employees)

- i. Please refer to the equipment regulations in [2 CFR 200.313](#) and [2 CFR 200.439](#).

g. Supplies for grant activities

- i. Please refer to the equipment regulations in [2 CFR 200.314](#) and [2 CFR 200.453](#).

h. Food for conferences and events

- i. Allowable uses of food can be found at <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/faqs-food-and-conferences-107432.pdf>.

8. 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.

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.

SECTION 9: ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

1. Can the Department provide guidance or advice on specific concepts within our project/proposal?

At this time, we are unable to discuss proposal concepts prior to the closing of the grant opportunity. It is the applicant's responsibility to determine best fit in response to the priorities. Feedback on a proposed project can be obtained through the peer review after grant application submission.

2. Who should we provide CVs for?

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.

3. In addition to the main project members, should we also include CV/Biosketches from faculty collaborators at partner institutions who are contributing to the project?

You can upload CVs/resumes for any personnel you deem necessary to the project, as long as it is uploaded in a readable, PDF format. We recommend combining all CVs and additional documentation and uploading it to the "Other Attachments" form as a PDF.

4. Is there a specific format or template for CVs/resumes?

The CVs should include the education and academic experience, language and level of proficiency (if applicable), as well as additional qualifications of each individual. You should include an index for all CVs. Refer to Page 30 of the [ANI](#) for complete guidance.

5. Would it be appropriate to include the detailed timeline/milestones as part of the attachments?

Applicants should fully respond to the Management Plan Selection Criterion, which requires a description of the proposed project's timeline and milestones, among other things. Applicants may also include additional information on the timeline and milestones as an attachment, if they wish; however, the most critical information should be included in the Project Narrative in its response to the Management Plan Selection Criterion.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. Are Co-PDs/PIs are permissible?

Yes, 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 with the assigned Program Specialist. This individual will be noted as the Project Director in Box 3 on the Grant Award Notification (GAN).

10. If we have not hired a Project Director, or other key personnel roles, whose CV do we upload?

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.

SECTION 10: OPEN LICENSING

This guidance is not intended to create new requirements but to clarify issues that arise from the implementation of the rule published on January 17, 2017. The text can be found at [2 C.F.R. §3474.20](#) and online, [click here](#).

1. What is the open licensing requirement for competitive grant programs?

Beginning with FY 2018 grant competitions, in accordance with the “open rule” published in early 2017, the Department is generally requiring that for competitive grants, grantees and subgrantees must openly license grant deliverables created wholly or in part with Department grant funds. This requirement will apply to new copyrightable works and any new modifications to pre-existing works that are separately identifiable and developed during the grant implementation.

All [ANIs](#) for discretionary grant programs will clearly indicate whether that program is subject to the requirements of the open rule or whether it has been granted an exception. The unusual circumstances needed to justify exceptions for individual grantees and grant deliverables are also described in the open rule.

2. Does the open licensing requirement apply to all copyrightable works?

Unless an exception applies to the grant program, the open rule applies to all final grant deliverables created wholly or in part with Department funds, including any program support materials.

Final grant deliverables are final versions of a work developed to carry out the purposes of the grant. Each year, the Department funds a variety of grant programs that support a wide variety of grant-funded works. These have included instructional materials, personalized learning delivery systems, assessment systems, language tools, and teacher professional development training modules, just to name a few.

Program support materials are materials that are necessary to understand, learn from, use, and replicate the final grant deliverables. For example, some support materials may document best practices in implementation of certain tools for specific target populations. Since the best

practices would be considered a key element to the appropriate use of final grant deliverables, they would be covered by the requirement that they be openly licensed and made available to the public.

Materials, such as staff training guides, production guides, or planning documents that are created as a result of implementing the grant project, may or may not provide useful information for understanding the administration of grant activities. In these cases, the Department is committed to working with grantees to determine whether these should be openly licensed. Other copyrightable works, such as email correspondence, administrative documentation, or deliberative work products that are produced through a grant project, will generally not be considered program support materials necessary to the use of the deliverables and therefore would not need to be openly licensed. The open rule only applies to copyrightable works and does not apply to the creation of "trade secrets" or "patentable inventions" with Department funds.