



U.S. Department of Education

# Comprehensive Centers Program: National Center Assistance Listing Number: 84.283B

FY 2026 Grant Competition

May 8, 2026

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## Program Information

The purpose of the Comprehensive Centers (CC) program is to provide capacity-building services to state educational agencies (SEAs), regional educational agencies (REAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), and schools that improve educational opportunities and student outcomes, close achievement gaps, and improve the quality of instruction for all students, particularly for groups of students with the greatest need.

On May 8, 2026, the Department published a Notice of Final Priorities, Requirements, and Definitions (NFP) (91 FR 25452) establishing a redesigned Comprehensive Centers program that aims to better support SEAs, LEAs, REAs, TEAs, and schools and advance the Administration's priorities to return education to the States and promote meaningful learning opportunities to improve academic outcomes for all students.

Through this notice, the Department intends to fund one National Center to provide nationally relevant technical

assistance to CC clients and coordination across the Comprehensive Centers program. The Department may choose to make awards in this or subsequent fiscal years.

*Assistance Listing Number:* 84.283B.

*Program Authority:* [20 U.S.C. 9601](#) et seq.

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

*For Further Information:* Dr. Michelle Daley. Telephone: (202) 987-1057. Email: [OESE.ComprehensiveCenters@ed.gov](mailto:OESE.ComprehensiveCenters@ed.gov).

*Type of Award:* Cooperative Agreements.

*Estimated Available Funds:* \$6,500,000.

*Maximum Annual Award:* We will not make an award exceeding \$6,750,000 for a single budget period of 12 months.

*Estimated Number of Awards:* 1.

*Project Period:* Up to 60 months.

*Application Deadline:* June 30, 2026

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

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 80 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and

reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit and voluntary. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0006. *Note:* Please do not return completed applications to this address.

# Eligibility

## Eligible Applicants

Research organizations, institutions, agencies, institutions of higher education (IHEs), or partnerships among such entities, or individuals, with the demonstrated ability or capacity to carry out the activities described in this notice, including regional entities that carried out activities under the Educational Research, Development, Dissemination, and Improvement Act of 1994 (as such Act existed on the day before November 5, 2002) and title XIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (as such title existed on the day before January 8, 2002). A group of eligible entities may apply as a consortium, in accordance with the requirements in [34 CFR 75.127-129](#).

## Costs

### Cost Sharing

This competition does not require cost sharing or matching.

### Indirect Cost Rate Information:

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

### Administrative Cost Limitation

This program does not include any program-specific limitation on administrative expenses. All administrative expenses must be reasonable and necessary and conform to Cost Principles described in [2 CFR part 200 subpart E](#) of the Uniform Guidance.

### Subgrantees

Under 34 CFR 75.708(b) and (c) a grantee under this competition may award subgrants—to directly carry out project activities described in its application—to the following types of entities: Research organizations, institutions, agencies, IHEs, or partnerships among such entities, or individuals, with the demonstrated ability or capacity to carry out the activities described in this notice. The grantee may award subgrants to entities it has identified in an approved application.

# Submission Requirements and Deadlines

Applications Available	May 8, 2026
Application Deadline	June 30, 2026
Deadline for Intergovernmental Review	September 8, 2026

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

*Note:* For new potential grantees unfamiliar with grantmaking at ED, please consult our [“Getting Started with Discretionary Grant Applications”](#) webpage.

## Program Description

### Priorities

This notice includes one absolute priority and one competitive preference priority. The Absolute Priority is from the NFP. The Competitive Preference Priority is from the 2025 Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grants Programs (2025 SSPs), published in the Federal Register on September 9, 2025 ([90 FR 43514](#)).

An applicant must identify in the abstract form and the project narrative section of the application any priority that it addresses.

For FY 2026, and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications for this competition, the absolute and competitive preference priorities are as reflected in this document.

*Absolute Priority:* Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet the absolute priority.

*Note:* The Department is concurrently accepting applications for Regional Centers, Emerging Needs Content Centers, Field-Initiated Content Centers, and for the National Center on Improving Literacy for Students with Disabilities under separate competitions and priorities, in addition to applications for the National Center through this competition. Please visit [Grants.gov](#) for information on these competitions. If an applicant wishes to apply to operate more than one CC, the applicant must submit a separate application for each Center it wishes to operate. The Department intends to create multiple separate funding slates: one for the National Center, one for each Regional Center, one for the National Center on Improving Literacy for Students with Disabilities, one for awards under

the Field-Initiated Content Center priority, and one for awards under the Emerging Needs Content Center priority.

*Competitive Preference Priority:* An application may receive a maximum of 10 additional points under the Competitive Preference Priority. ED will not review or award points for the competitive preference priority if an applicant fails to clearly identify it as a competitive preference priority.

**Priority Summary Table**

<i>Priority Type</i>	<i>Priority Title</i>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Priority Language</i>
Absolute Priority	National Center	Yes	N/A	See below.
Competitive Preference Priority	Returning Education to the States	No	Up to 10 points	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.

Note: ED will advise reviewers to score the Competitive Preference Priority based on the number of States that have identified, designated or endorsed the applicant’s proposal, as demonstrated by formal letter of designation or endorsement signed by the Governor or Chief State School Officer from a State, based on the suggested rubric below:

<b>Number of Endorsements</b>	<b>Suggested Points</b>
0 / Not Addressed	0 points
Identification, designation or endorsement from officials of 1 State	1 point
Identification, designation or endorsement from officials of 2-4 States	2 points
Identification, designation or endorsement from officials of 5-7 States	3 points
Identification, designation or endorsement from officials of 8-9 States	4 points
Identification, designation or endorsement from officials of 10-11 States	5 points

<b>Number of Endorsements</b>	<b>Suggested Points</b>
Identification, designation or endorsement from officials of 12-13 States	6 points
Identification, designation or endorsement from officials of 14-15 States	7 points
Identification, designation or endorsement from officials of 16-17 States	8 points
Identification, designation or endorsement from officials of 18-19 States	9 points
Identification, designation or endorsement from officials of 20+ States	10 points

**Absolute Priority Language**

*National Center*

Projects that propose to establish and operate a National Center to coordinate client-driven technical assistance to address SEA, REA, TEA, and LEA priorities related to evidence use and implementation of evidence-based practices to improve student outcomes. The National Center will serve as a lead coordinator across the CC program to promote overall alignment and coherence of CCNetwork services, reduce burdens and barriers to service for States and beneficiaries, support coordination, knowledge sharing, and connection across Centers where multi-provider engagement is needed, and facilitate efficient use of program resources. The Center must conduct and share annual analyses of high-leverage problems identified by States; develop tools and resources that support delivery of high-quality, high-impact, differentiated technical assistance and capacity-building services across the CCNetwork, including common tools and resources to align capacity assessment, tracking, and reporting, support for State Learning Agendas, and quality assurance processes.

The Center must also procure expertise to provide high-quality, high-impact technical assistance to address common multi-State needs through targeted and universal capacity-building services through avenues such as State-to-State learning communities, in coordination with Regional and Content Centers; RELs; and other Department technical assistance providers, as applicable, to promote State engagement and avoid duplication.

Services must be designed to improve educational opportunities, educator practice, and student outcomes as described in section 203(f) of the Education Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (ETAA). Services shall address evidence-based national needs not already addressed by other federal investments, in consultation with the Center’s Advisory Board,

including: priorities identified through the analysis of high-leverage problems across the entire CCNetwork; priorities publicly established by clients and potential clients, such as those identified in State Learning Agendas; common high-leverage problems identified in Regional Center service plans; findings from finalized Department monitoring reports or audit findings; implementation challenges faced by States and LEAs related to teaching, learning, and development; needs of schools designated for improvement; needs to improve core academic instruction; needs to address unique educational obstacles faced by rural and tribal students; and emerging education topics of national importance.

The Center will streamline access to qualified technical assistance providers by serving as a concierge-style support to intake technical assistance requests from SEAs, REAs, TEAs, and LEAs and facilitate access to Department technical assistance services within and beyond the CC program. In this capacity, the Center will design and implement a system to review inquiries and voluntary requests for technical assistance; identify technical assistance providers with relevant expertise, which may include Regional Centers and Content Centers within the CCNetwork, other Department technical assistance providers, and providers from a maintained registry cadre of qualified national subject matter experts to meet client needs; and coordinate support as needed for clients to access services from identified TA providers.

## Selection Criteria

Selection criteria outline how the application will be scored. The maximum possible total score an application can receive for addressing the criteria is 110 points. The maximum possible score for addressing each criterion is indicated in parentheses following the criterion. The selection criteria for this competition are from [34 CFR 75.210](#).

(a) *Significance (up to 20 points)*: The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local, State, regional, or national capacity to provide, improve, sustain, or expand training or services that address the needs of underserved populations (*up to 10 points*).
- (2) 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 10 points*).

(b) *Quality of the Project Design (up to 55 points)*: The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The extent to which the 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 10 points*).
- (2) The adequacy of plans for ensuring the use of quantitative and qualitative data, including meaningful community member and partner input, to inform continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project (*up to 10 points*).
- (3) 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 15 points*).
- (4) The extent to which the proposed project will include coordination with other Federal investments, as well as appropriate agencies and organizations providing similar services to the target population (*up to 15 points*).
- (5) The quality of the logic model or other conceptual framework underlying the proposed project, including how inputs are related to outcomes (*up to 5 points*).

(c) *Quality of the Management Plan (up to 35 points)*: The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The feasibility of the management plan to achieve project objectives and goals on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (*up to 15 points*).
- (2) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (*up to 5 points*).
- (3) The extent to which the key personnel in the project, when hired, have the qualifications required for the proposed project, including formal training or work experience in fields related to the objectives of the project, and represent or have lived experiences of the target population (*up to 10 points*).

- (4) The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project and the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project (*up to 5 points*).

Note: In responding to the selection criteria factor (a)(1) under *Significance*, applicants are encouraged to define “underserved population” in the context of students identified for prioritization under the ETAA, namely those from low-income families and students attending schools implementing comprehensive support and improvement or targeted or additional targeted support and improvement activities under ESEA section 1111(d)). In responding to the selection criteria factor (c)(3) under *Quality of the Management Plan*, applicants are encouraged to define “target population” in the context of the universe of CC clients (i.e., SEAs, REAs, LEAs, and schools identified for support under the ETAA) to be served by the applicant. In both cases, applicants should ensure these terms are defined in a manner that is consistent with the [U.S. Department of Justice’s Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination](#) released on July 29, 2025.

## Performance Measures

ED has developed the following performance measures for the purpose of reporting to ED under [34 CFR 75.110](#):

*Program Performance Measures.* The Department has established the following set of performance measures that are designed to evaluate the effectiveness of each Center, as well as the Comprehensive Centers Program as a whole.

Program Measure	Description
Program Performance Measure 1	The extent to which Comprehensive Center clients are satisfied with the quality, usefulness, and relevance of services provided.
Program Performance Measure 2	The extent to which Comprehensive Centers provide services and products to a wide range of recipients.
Program Performance Measure 3	The extent to which Comprehensive Centers demonstrate that capacity-building services were implemented as intended.
Program Performance Measure 4	The extent to which Comprehensive Centers demonstrate recipient outcomes were met.

In accordance with [34 CFR 75.110\(b\)](#), applications must describe:

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

2. The applicant's capacity to collect and report reliable, valid, and meaningful performance data, as evidenced by high-quality data collection, analysis, and reporting in other projects or research.

## Requirements

### Program Requirements

National Center grantees under this program must:

- 1) Create client driven service plans annually for carrying out the technical assistance and capacity-building services to be delivered by the Center in response to identified educational challenges facing students, practitioners, and education system leaders. In developing the annual service plan, the Center must demonstrate that services reflect State-identified needs and leadership priorities for assistance, such as through documentation of State approval of services and alignment to State Learning Agendas. Plans must include: High-leverage problems to be addressed, including identified client needs, capacity-building services to be delivered<sup>2</sup>, time-based outcomes (i.e., short-term, mid-term, long-term), responsible personnel, key technical assistance partners, milestones, outputs, dissemination plans, fidelity measures, if appropriate, and any other elements specified by the Department. Additionally, plans must demonstrate how services will prioritize support for students and communities with the highest needs, as described in section 203(e) of the ETAA<sup>3</sup>
- 2) Design and implement streamlined client-driven capacity-building services in partnership with State and local beneficiaries to reflect and address specific client needs and desired outcomes.
- 3) Demonstrate to the Department that it has engaged clients in defining proposed service projects and that it has secured client and partner commitments to carry out proposed annual service plans.

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<sup>2</sup> Services may include universal, targeted, and intensive capacity-building services in any of the four dimensions of capacity building services as defined by this program: human capacity, organizational capacity, policy capacity, and resource capacity.

<sup>3</sup> Section 203(e) of the ETAA requires each CC to prioritize school serving high percentages or number of students from low-income families, including such schools in rural and urban areas and those receiving assistance under Title I of the ESEA; LEAs with high percentages or numbers of school-age children from low-income families, including such LEAs in rural and urban areas; and schools implementing comprehensive support and improvement activities or targeted support and improvement activities under section 1111(d) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [[20 U.S.C. 6311\(d\)](#)].

- 4) Develop and implement an effective performance management and evaluation system that integrates continuous improvement to promote effective achievement of client outcomes. The system must include methods to measure and monitor progress towards agreed upon outcomes, outputs, and milestones and to measure the reach, use, and impact of the services being delivered to ensure capacity-building services are implemented as intended, reaching intended clients and recipients, and achieving desired results. Progress monitoring must include periodic assessment of client satisfaction and timely identification of changes in State contexts that may impact the project's success. The performance management system must include strategies to report on defined program performance measures.
- 5) Participate in a national evaluation of the CC Program.
- 6) Include in its service plan, specifically in the first year, and additionally in subsequent years, projects to develop the tools, resources, services, and processes it will implement to adequately support collaboration, coordination, continuous improvement, dissemination and knowledge sharing across the CCNetwork, including common tools and resources to align capacity assessment, tracking, and reporting to deliver services that effectively build client capacity for evidence use and implementation of evidence-based practices to improve student outcomes.
- 7) Coordinate and refine processes, tools, and resources to support Regional Centers and RELs to work with individual States to develop or refine, as appropriate, and implement a multi-year State Learning Agenda to identify needs and set priorities for evidence building and educational program implementation and that will serve as a key input in annual service plans and capacity-building services.
- 8) Design and implement a coordinated process to identify emerging high-leverage problems that could be effectively addressed through client driven annual service plans. Conduct and publish an annual synthesis of common high-priority needs across States and consult with and integrate ongoing feedback from its Advisory Board, the Department, Regional Centers, and Content Centers to inform targeted and universal support needs from the National Center, Content Centers, or other Centers, as needed, and enable cross-regional peer learning on shared challenges.
- 9) Design effective services to meet demonstrated collective needs with tangible, achievable capacity-building outcomes resulting from beneficiary participation. Provide opportunities for beneficiaries, including States, to learn from their peers and subject matter experts through targeted and universal capacity-building services. Universal services must be produced in a manner that beneficiaries are most likely to use, be shared via multiple digital platforms, such as the CCNetwork

website, social media, and other channels as appropriate, and be relevant for a variety of education stakeholders, including the general public.

- 10) Solicit, vet, and provide access to an expansive and comprehensive cadre of national subject matter experts available to support Comprehensive Center services, that includes qualified education practitioners, researchers, policy professionals, and other implementation consultants with (i) direct experience and demonstrated impact working in or with SEAs, REAs, TEAs and LEAs to improve student outcomes, and (ii) in-depth expertise in specific subject areas available to support universal, targeted and intensive services in a variety of content areas as reflected by State and local priorities and other emerging needs to be made available to support State needs for any National, Regional Center, REL or Content Center projects. Make the cadre available through a registry containing sufficient and transparent information that clients may request in determining the most appropriate providers to meet their needs, including client reviews of past performance, demonstrated products and outcomes of services provided, and transparent service pricing. The cadre should reflect client input and be continually expanded to include new providers, as needed, to meet client needs.
- 11) Design and implement a concierge-style service to intake and assess inquiries and voluntary technical assistance requests from CC clients, including States, identify technical assistance providers with relevant expertise, and direct client requests for technical assistance to their Regional Center, REL, and other Department technical assistance providers to streamline awareness and access to technical assistance while maintaining client autonomy in selecting the technical assistance services, provider(s), and supports received. This service must encompass systems to review incoming inquiries and requests for technical assistance from CC clients; to identify appropriate resources and technical assistance providers, which may include Regional Centers and Content Centers within the CCNetwork, other Department technical assistance providers, and national subject matter experts as needed to meet client needs; and to coordinate support for clients to access services from identified TA providers. This service must encompass Department technical assistance investments within and beyond the CCNetwork.
- 12) Design, operate and maintain communications and dissemination vehicles for the CCNetwork, including maintaining the CCNetwork website with an easy-to-navigate design that meets government or industry recognized standards for accessibility, including compliance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and maintain a consistent media presence, in collaboration with Regional and Content Centers and the Department, utilizing effective media and dissemination strategies that promote increased access and engagement with CCNetwork resources.

- 13) Create peer learning opportunities for CCNetwork staff (and other partners, as appropriate) to address implementation challenges and scale effective best practices to improve service delivery across the CCNetwork.
- 14) Ensure that the Project Director can manage all aspects of the Center and is either staffed at 1 FTE or the Project Director and Co-Director or Deputies are staffed at a minimum of 1.5 FTE collectively. Dedicate sufficient resources within the Center's annual budget to meet all aspects of the priority and program requirements, including sufficient capacity for coordination responsibilities and direct services, as needed.

## Application Requirements

Applicants for National Center grants under this program must:

- 1) Describe its proposed approach to capacity-building services. This must include a logic model, as well as a description of the evidence base and strategies that support its approach to capacity building services; evidence of the applicant's ability to provide effective capacity building services, such as relevant expertise and demonstrated results from similar projects and demonstrated expertise of key personnel; the impact the Center plans to achieve and how they will measure that impact; and the proposed approach to providing capacity-building services to students with the greatest need as described in Sec. 203(e) of the ETAA, to address the needs of all SEAs, REAs, TEAs, LEAs, and, as appropriate, schools served.
- 2) Describe the proposed process to identify, in partnership with CC clients, the most urgent educational challenges to be addressed, including how the Center will ensure that the challenges to be addressed are supported by data and evidence and reflected by State and local needs and priorities.
- 3) Describe the proposed approach to measure and monitor client progress or success in overcoming the challenges to be addressed, including how the Center will use data and evidence to demonstrate outcomes of universal, targeted, and intensive capacity building services, as applicable.
- 4) Demonstrate expertise in providing highly relevant and highly effective technical assistance, including by demonstrating expertise in the current research on adult learning principles, coaching, and implementation science.
- 5) Include in the budget narrative explanation of and estimated costs for intensive, targeted, and universal capacity-building services. Describe how the Center will promote cost-effectiveness of services, including ensuring that the estimated costs are aligned to market expectations for similar services.

- 6) Describe the proposed leadership structure for the Center and how the organizational leadership will effectively manage the project according to the needs of the program, including how the leadership structure provides organizational capacity to assess, manage, and strategically utilize program resources.
- 7) Include in the budget a line item for an annual set-aside of five percent of the grant amount to support emerging needs that are consistent with the proposed project's intended outcomes.
- 8) Propose an approach to leading coordination and collaboration of the entire CCNetwork, including how the Center will fulfill the requirements to serve as a concierge-level point of entry to Department technical assistance for States and other CC clients; to develop and administer access to a national cadre of subject matter experts with a broad range of expertise, demonstrated impact, and proven satisfaction serving CC clients; to coordinate and refine processes, tools, and resources to support Regional Centers and RELs to develop or refine and implement multi-year State Learning Agendas; and to identify emerging high-leverage problems that could be effectively addressed through client driven annual service plans.
- 9) Demonstrate a high level of expertise in leading communication and digital engagement strategies to attract and sustain the involvement of a wide range of education stakeholders. Provide an approach to creating a robust web and social media presence, overseeing customer relations management, providing editorial support to Regional and Content Centers, and utilizing web analytics and other tools to improve content engagement.
- 10) Propose an approach to procuring expertise to provide targeted and universal capacity-building services to support beneficiaries in addressing common high-leverage problems, including how the applicant intends to collaborate with Regional Centers to identify potential beneficiaries, and to maximize how many SEAs, REAs, TEAs, and LEAs it has the capacity to reach with available services.

## Application Submission Information

### Competition Resources

Pre-application webinars and other resources specific to this competition will be available at the [Comprehensive Centers program website](#).

### Registration

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

Grants.gov registration involves several steps, including registration on [SAM.gov](#). You may begin working on your application while completing the registration process, but you cannot apply until all registration steps are complete. Once your SAM registration is active, it will take 24-48 hours for the information to become available in Grants.gov. For detailed information on the registration steps, please go to: [Grants.gov Applicant Registration](#). Please note that your organization will need to update its SAM registration annually.

### **SAM.gov**

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

To register, go to [SAM.gov](#) and click on "[Get Started](#)."

Click on the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for the information you will need to register in SAM.gov.

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

### **Grants.gov**

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

To register, go to [Grants.gov](#) and click "[Register](#)." When ready, click on "[Get Registered Now](#)" and complete the required fields.

For more information or assistance, click on "[Applicant Registration Page](#)."

ED strongly recommends that you do not wait until the last day to submit your application. Grants.gov will put a date/time stamp on your application and then process it after it is fully uploaded. If Grants.gov rejects your application, you will need to resubmit successfully to Grants.gov before 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the deadline date.

You must provide the Unique-Entity ID (UEI) on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov. This UEI is assigned to your organization in SAM at the time your organization registers in SAM. If you do not enter the UEI assigned by SAM on your application, Grants.gov will reject your application.

A Grants.gov applicant must apply online using Workspace, a shared environment in Grants.gov where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different web forms within an application. The Grants.gov website contains [further instructions on how to apply](#).

## **Intergovernmental Review**

This is subject to Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs) and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. One of the objectives of Executive Order 12372 is to strengthen federalism – or the distribution of responsibility between localities, States, and the Federal government – by fostering intergovernmental partnerships. This idea includes supporting processes that State or local governments have developed to coordinate and review proposed Federal financial grant applications. Grant applicants need to contact State Single Points of Contact (SPOC) for information on their State’s procedures. Multi-State applicants should follow procedures specific to each state. Further information about the [SPOC List and the official list of entities](#) can be found online.

## **Verify Submission**

Verify that Grants.gov received your application submission on time and that it was validated successfully. To see the date/time your application was received, log in to Grants.gov and click on the Track My Application link. For a successful submission, the date/time received should be earlier than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on the deadline date, AND the application status should be: Validated, Received by Agency, or Agency Tracking Number Assigned. Once ED receives your application from Grants.gov, an Agency Tracking Number (PR/award number) will be assigned to your application and will be available for viewing on Grants.gov’s Track My Application link.

If the date/time received is later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the deadline date, your application is late. If your application has a status of “Received,” it is still awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will either change to “Validated” or “Rejected with Errors.” If the status is “Rejected with Errors,” your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found on the [Encountering Error Messages](#) page at Grants.gov.

For more detailed information on troubleshooting Adobe errors, you can review the [Adobe Reader Software Tip Sheet](#). If you discover your application is late or has been rejected, please see the instructions below. Note: You will receive a series of confirmations both online and via e-mail about the status of your application. Please do not rely solely on e-mail to confirm whether your application has been received in a timely manner and was validated successfully.

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

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

## Submission Problems – What should you do?

If you have problems submitting to Grants.gov before the closing date, please contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). You may also access the [Grants.gov Self-Service Knowledge Base web portal](#).

## Application Review Information

*Review and Selection Process:* We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, 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 ED program; and
- (3) Concerning the applicant's failure under any ED program to submit a performance report or its submission of a performance report of unacceptable quality.

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

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

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

*Tiebreaker:* If two or more applicants for any one Center receive the same total scores, the Secretary will select for funding among the tied applications, as appropriate, according to the following factors:

1. The applicant that has the lower effective indirect cost rate, as indicated in the ED Form 524 Section A submitted with the application.
2. If still tied after implementing the first tiebreaker, an applicant that has not received the highest overall score in this competition for any other Comprehensive Center will be ranked higher than an applicant that has received the highest overall score in this competition for any other Comprehensive Center.
3. If still tied after implementing the second tiebreaker, an application that scores higher on a selection criterion following this order will be ranked higher than an application with the same overall score: Quality of Project Design; Quality of the Management Plan; and Significance.

*Page Limit Recommendation:* ED encourages applicants to limit the Project Narrative section of the application to the equivalent of no more than 75 pages. While applicants may exceed this limit, ED will instruct peer reviewers to read and score only the first 75 pages of this section of the application.

## Definitions

The definitions are from the NFP; the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA); and 34 CFR 77.1. The source of each definition is indicated below.

*Beneficiary* means organizations including, but not limited to, SEAs, LEAs, REAs, TEAs, and schools that have received “intensive” and “targeted” capacity-building services and products from Regional Centers, or that received “targeted” or “universal” capacity-building services and products from the National Center or Content Centers. (NFP)

*Capacity-building services* means assistance that strengthens an individual’s or organization’s ability to engage in continuous improvement and achieve expected outcomes. (NFP)

*Client* means the organization with which the Center enters into agreement for negotiated capacity-building services. The client is engaged in defining the high-leverage problems, capacity-building services, and time-based outcomes for each project noted in the Center’s annual service plan. Representatives of clients include but are not limited to Chief State School Officers or their designees, LEA leaders, and other system leaders. (NFP)

*Collaboration* means exchanging information, altering activities, and sharing in the creation of ideas and resources to enhance the capacity of one another for mutual benefit to accomplish a common goal. (NFP)

*Coordination* means exchanging information, altering activities, and synchronizing efforts to make unique contributions to shared goals. (NFP)

*Educator* means an individual who is a teacher (including an early education teacher), principal or other school leader, administrator, specialized instructional support personnel (e.g., school psychologist, counselor, school social worker, librarian, early intervention service personnel), paraprofessional, faculty, and others. (NFP)

*Evidence-based* has the meaning ascribed in section 7801(21) of the ESEA.

*Four dimensions of capacity-building services* are:

(1) *Human capacity* means development or improvement of individual knowledge, skills, technical expertise, and ability to adapt and be resilient to policy and leadership changes.

(2) *Organizational capacity* means structures that support clear communication and a shared understanding of an organization's visions and goals and delineated individual roles and responsibilities in functional areas.

(3) *Policy capacity* means structures that support alignment, differentiation, or enactment of local, State, and Federal policies and initiatives.

(4) *Resource capacity* means tangible materials and assets that support alignment and use of Federal, State, private, and local funds. (NFP)

*High-leverage problems* means problems that (1) if addressed could result in substantial improvements for groups of students with the greatest need, including for students from low-income families and for students attending schools implementing comprehensive support and improvement or targeted or additional targeted support and improvement activities under ESEA section 1111(d); (2) are priorities for education policymakers, particularly at the State level; and (3) require intensive capacity-building services to achieve outcomes that address the problem. (NFP)

*Intensive capacity-building services* means assistance often provided on-site and requiring a stable, ongoing relationship between the Comprehensive Center and its clients and recipients, as well as periodic reflection, continuous feedback, and use of evidence-based improvement strategies. This category of capacity-building services should support increased recipient capacity in more than one dimension of capacity-building services and result in medium-term and long-term outcomes at one or more system levels. (NFP)

*Key personnel* means any personnel considered to be essential to the work being performed on the project. (NFP)

*Logic model* has the meaning ascribed in 34 CFR 77.1(c).

*Milestone* means an activity that must be completed. Examples include: Identifying key district administrators responsible for professional development, sharing key observations from needs assessment with district administrators and identified stakeholders, preparing a logic model, planning for State-wide professional development, identifying subject matter experts, and conducting train-the-trainer sessions. (NFP)

*Outcomes* means demonstrable effects of receiving capacity-building services and must reflect the result of capacity built in at least one of the four dimensions of capacity building. “Outcomes” includes short-term outcomes, medium-term outcomes, and long-term outcomes:

(1) *Short-term outcomes* means effects of receiving capacity-building services after 1 year.

(2) *Medium-term outcomes* means effects of receiving capacity-building services after 2 to 3 years.

(3) *Long-term outcomes* means effects of receiving capacity-building services after 4 or more years. (NFP)

*Outputs* means products and services that must be completed. Examples include: Needs assessment, logic model, training modules, evaluation plan, and 12 workshop presentations. (NFP)

*Note:* A product output under this program would be considered a deliverable under the open licensing regulations at [2 CFR 3474.20](#).

*Regional educational agency* means educational agencies that serve regional areas within a State. (NFP)

*Targeted capacity-building services* means assistance based on needs common to multiple clients and recipients and not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the recipient(s), the National Center or Content Center, and Regional Center(s), as appropriate. This category of capacity-building services includes one-time, labor-intensive events, such as facilitating strategic planning or hosting national or regional conferences. It can also include services that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls, virtual or in-person meetings, or learning communities on single or multiple topics that are designed around the needs of the

recipients. Facilitating communities of practice can also be considered targeted capacity-building services. (NFP)

*Tribal educational agency* has the meaning ascribed in section 6132(b)(3) of the ESEA.

*Universal capacity-building services* means assistance and information provided to independent users through their own initiative, involving minimal interaction with National or Content Center staff. This category of capacity-building services includes information or products, such as newsletters, guidebooks, policy briefs, or research syntheses, downloaded from the Center's website by independent users, and may include one-time, invited or offered webinar or conference presentations by National or Content Center staff. Brief communications or consultations by National or Content Center staff with recipients, either by telephone or email, are also considered universal services. (NFP)

## Award Requirements

### Terms and Conditions

If you are awarded a grant under this competition, you must ensure and may be required to demonstrate that federal funds will not be used under this project in any manner that violates the United States Constitution, Title VI or Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.](#) or [42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.](#)), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ([20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.](#)), section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act ([29 U.S.C. 794](#)), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 ([42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.](#)), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ([42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.](#)), the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001 ([20 U.S.C. 7905](#)), section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended ([20 U.S.C. 1011f](#)), or other applicable Federal law.

Please note the provisions of Executive Orders 14151, 14168, 14173, and 14190 as well as the U.S. Department of Justice's July 29, 2025, non-regulatory "[Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination](#)" clarify the application of Federal antidiscrimination laws to programs or initiatives that may involve discriminatory practices, including those labeled as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion ("DEI") programs.

Such activities may risk violating Federal civil rights laws and may jeopardize Federal funding. This includes any discriminatory equity ideology in violation of a Federal anti-discrimination law. A definition of "discriminatory equity ideology" is contained in Section 2(b) of Executive Order 14190. To the extent that any entity receiving grant funds under this grant uses those grant funds for such unallowable activities, ED reserves the right to take appropriate enforcement actions, including the recovery of grant funds. The Grant Award Notification document accompanying your award may contain further terms and

conditions, as necessary, to ensure grantee compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and administrative priorities.

### **Applicable Regulations**

The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in [34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99](#). (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in [2 CFR part 180](#), as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in [2 CFR part 3485](#). (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in [2 CFR part 200](#), as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in [2 CFR part 3474](#). (d) The NFP. (f) The 2025 SSPs.

*Note:* The regulations in [34 CFR part 86](#) apply to institutions of higher education only.

### **Continuation Awards**

In making a continuation award determination under [34 CFR 75.253](#), ED considers, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; if ED has established performance measurement requirements, whether the grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the performance targets in the grantee's approved application; or whether the grant continues to be in the best interest in the federal government.

In making a continuation award determination, ED also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the terms and conditions specified elsewhere in this notice and the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from ED ([34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23](#)). In making any continuation award determination, ED may consider all relevant information.

# Application Checklist

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

## 1. Standard Documents

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

## 2. Budget Information

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

## 3. ED Abstract Form

- Project Abstract

## 4. Project Narrative

- Application Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form)

## 5. Budget Narrative

- Budget Narrative Attachment Form

## 6. Other Attachment Forms

- Reference List/Bibliography
- Individual Resumes for Project Director & Key Personnel
- Copy of Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable
- Letters of Designation/Endorsement, if applicable

## 7. Assurances and Certifications

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

### Part 1: Standard Documents

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)

For additional information on Form SF 424, please visit [Forms Repository for SF-424](#) and [SF-424 Instructions](#).

- ED Supplemental Information for SF 424

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Part 2: Budget Information

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

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

Applicants must provide a summary of requested Federal funds for each line-item category included on the worksheet. Applicants should provide dollar amounts for all requested years of the desired grant award. Please see [Example ED 524 Budget Information Form](#).

Instructions for completing ED Form 524 Section A:

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

- *Fringe Benefits (line 2)*: The institution's normal fringe benefits contribution may be charged to the program. Leave this line blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of the indirect cost.
- *Travel (line 3)*: Indicate the travel costs of employees and participants only. Include travel of persons such as consultants on line 6.
- *Equipment (line 4)*: Indicate the cost of tangible, non-expendable personal property that has a usefulness greater than one year and acquisition costs that are the lesser of the capitalization level established by the applicant entity for financial statement purposes or \$10,000 per article. Lower limits may be established to maintain consistency with the applicant's policy.
- *Supplies (line 5)*: Show all tangible, expendable personal property. Direct supplies and materials differ from equipment in that they are consumable, expendable, and of a relatively low unit cost. Supplies purchased with grant funds should directly benefit the grant project and be necessary for achieving the goals of the project.
- *Contractual (line 6)*: The contractual category should include all costs specifically incurred with actions that the applicant takes in conjunction with an established internal procurement system. Include consultant fees, expenses, and travel costs in this category if the consultant's services are obtained through a written binding agreement or contract.
- *Construction (line 7)*: Construction funds are not authorized.
- *Other (line 8)*: Indicate all direct costs not covered on lines 1-6. For example, include costs such as space rental, required fees, honoraria and travel (where a contract is not in place for services), training, and communication and printing costs. Do not include costs that are included in the indirect cost rate.
- *Total Direct Costs (line 9)*: The sum of lines 1-8.
- *Indirect Costs (line 10)*: Indicate the applicant's approved indirect cost rate, per sections 75.560-75.564 of EDGAR. If an applicant does not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement with a cognizant Federal agency, the applicant must apply to ED for a temporary indirect cost rate if it wishes to charge indirect costs to the grant. For more information, go to [ED's website](#). In addition, a grantee, if it is eligible, may also use a de minimis rate as provided for under 2 CFR 200.414(f).
- *Training Stipends (line 11)*: Not Applicable for this program.

- *Total Cost (line 12)*: This should equal to sum of lines 9-11 (total direct costs + indirect + stipends). The sum for column one, labeled Project Year 1 (a), should also be equal to item 15a on the application cover sheet (SF Form 424).

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

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

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

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

### **Part 4: Project Narrative**

This section should be attached as a single document to the Project Narrative Attachment Form 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 Education approved file types detailed in the [2025 Common Instructions](#).

#### **Table of Contents**

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

#### **Application Narrative**

ED encourages applicants to limit this section of the application to the equivalent of no more than 75 pages. While applicants may exceed this limit, ED will instruct peer reviewers to read and score only the first 75 pages of this section of the application. The recommended page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; or the project abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, or the letters of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to the Project Narrative, including all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.

### **Part 5: Budget Narrative**

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

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

Each application must also provide a Budget Narrative (which serves to meet the requirements of ED Form 524, Section C) for requested Federal funds. The Budget Narrative for requested Federal funds should provide a justification of how the money requested for each budget item will be spent.

This section requires an itemized budget breakdown for each project year and the basis for estimating the costs of personnel salaries, benefits, project staff travel, materials and supplies, consultants and subcontracts, indirect costs and any other projected expenditures. Be sure to complete an itemized budget breakdown and narrative for each year of the proposed project.

The Budget Narrative provides an opportunity for the applicant to identify the nature and amount of the proposed expenditures. The applicant should provide sufficient detail to enable reviewers and project staff to understand how requested funds will be used, how much will be expended, and the relationship between the requested funds and project activities and outcomes.

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

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

1. Provide an itemized budget breakdown and justification by project year. The budget narrative fulfills the requirement of Form ED 524 -Section C Budget Narrative. Find information below in Part 5 on completing the budget narrative. For this program, applicants do not need to fill in non-Federal funds or resources listed in Section B.
2. If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line 10, this information is to be completed by your Business Office. Specify the estimated amount of the base to which the indirect cost rate is applied and the total indirect expense. Depending on the grant program to which you are applying and/or your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, some direct cost budget categories in your grant application budget may not be included in the base and multiplied by your indirect cost rate. Please indicate which costs are included and which costs are excluded from the base to which the indirect cost rate is applied.

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

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

Ensure that you only attach the Education approved file types detailed in the [2025 Common Instructions](#) and that you upload the attachments in the order they should appear in the application.

Suggested order:

- Reference List/Bibliography
- Resumes/Vitae for Project Directors & Key Personnel
- Copy of Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable
- Letters of Designation/Endorsement, if applicable

### **Part 7: Assurances and Certifications**

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

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

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

### **Attaching Files – Additional Tips**

Please note the following tips related to attaching files to your application:

- When you submit your application electronically, you must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as read-only flattened Portable Document Formats (PDFs), meaning any fillable PDF files must be saved and submitted as non-fillable PDF files and not as interactive or fillable PDF files, to better ensure applications are processed in a more timely, accurate, and efficient manner.
- Grants.gov cannot process an application that includes two or more files that have the same name within a grant submission. Therefore, each file uploaded to your application package should have a unique file name.
- When attaching files, applicants should follow the guidelines established by Grants.gov on the size and content of file names. Uploaded file names must be fewer than 50 characters, and, in general, applicants should not use any special characters. However, Grants.gov does allow for the following UTF-8 characters when naming your attachments: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore, hyphen, space, period, parenthesis, curly braces, square brackets, ampersand, tilde, exclamation point, comma, semi colon, apostrophe, at sign, number sign, dollar sign, percent sign,

plus sign, and equal sign. Applications submitted that do not comply with the Grants.gov guidelines will be rejected at Grants.gov and not forwarded to ED.

- Applicants should limit the size of their file attachments. Documents submitted that contain graphics and/or scanned material often greatly increase the size of the file attachments and can result in difficulties opening the files. For reference, the average discretionary grant application package with all attachments is less than 5 MB. Therefore, you may want to check the total size of your package before submission.