



U.S. Department of Education

Comprehensive Centers Program: Content Centers

Assistance Listing Number: 84.283B

FY 2026 Grant Competition

Posted 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 CC 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 three Content Centers, including Content Centers based on field-

initiated priorities, and a Content Center focused on Emerging Needs. 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: 1894-0006¹.

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

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreements.

Estimated Available Funds: \$3,450,000.

Maximum Annual Award: See Award Details section below.

Estimated Range of Awards: See Award Details section below.

Estimated Number of Awards: 3-4.

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.

¹ 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 and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0006. *Note:* Please do not return completed applications to this address.

Award Details

The Department anticipates making at least 3 awards to Content Centers as specified below. The Department will not make an award exceeding the maximum amounts specified below for a single budget period of 12 months.

Content Center Priority	Estimated Number of Awards	Estimated Range of Awards	Maximum Annual Award
Field-Initiated Content Centers	At least 2	\$750,000-1,150,000	\$1,150,000
Emerging Needs Content Centers	1	\$750,000-1,150,000	\$1,150,000

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 Overview

This notice includes three absolute priorities and four competitive preference priorities. Absolute Priorities 1 and 3 are from the NFP. Absolute Priority 2 and Competitive Preference Priority 4 are from the Secretary's Supplemental Priority and Definitions on Meaningful Learning Opportunities (Meaningful Learning Opportunities Supplemental Priority), published in the *Federal Register* on February 12, 2026 ([91 FR 6625](#)). Competitive Preference Priorities 1-3 are 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, these absolute and competitive preference priorities are as reflected in this document.

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

Priorities: Emerging Needs Content Centers

Absolute Priorities: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet the absolute priorities. Absolute Priority 1 establishes an Emerging Needs Content Center. Absolute Priority 2 (Meaningful Learning Opportunities: Strategic Staffing) establishes the focus area of this Emerging Needs Content Center. Applicants must respond to both Absolute Priority 1 and Absolute Priority 2.

Competitive Preference Priority: Applicants applying to establish Emerging Needs Centers under Absolute Priorities 1 and 2 may also apply under Competitive Preference Priority 1 (Returning Education to the States). An application may receive a maximum of 10 additional points under Competitive Preference Priority 1. 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 that it wishes ED to consider.

Emerging Needs Centers Priority Summary Table

<i>Priority Type</i>	<i>Priority Title</i>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Priority Language</i>
Absolute Priority 1	Content Centers: Emerging Needs Centers	Yes	N/A	See below.

<i>Priority Type</i>	<i>Priority Title</i>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Priority Language</i>
Absolute Priority 2	Meaningful Learning Opportunities (Strategic Staffing)	Yes	N/A	Projects or proposals that are designed to strengthen core instruction through creating and supporting principals and other school leaders in implementing strategic staffing models, instructional leadership roles, or developing models for teacher and paraprofessional advancement that incentivize high-performing educators with opportunities and leverage their time, resources, and talent in innovative ways to better support student learning and achievement.
Competitive Preference Priority 1	Returning Education to the States	No	0 or 10 points	Projects or proposals that will be carried out by one or more of the following: (a) State educational agencies (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(49)), (b) Entities identified, designated, or endorsed by a Governor or chief State education official for purposes of implementing the project or proposal, (c) A Tribal educational agency (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7452(b)(3)), or (d) Consortia of the entities identified under this priority.

Absolute Priority 1 Language

Content Centers: Emerging Needs Centers

Projects that propose to establish and implement a Content Center to provide technical assistance on a specific topic of national or regional importance reflected across State and local needs and priorities. Content Centers must provide high-quality, useful, and relevant

client-driven, targeted and universal capacity-building services to SEA, REA, TEA, LEA, and, for the NCIL, family clients designed to build State and local capacity and improve educational opportunities, educator practice, and student outcomes (as described in section 203(f) of the Education Technical Assistance Act of 2002 (ETAA)) related to their specified topic area. Content Centers must support Regional Centers, as needed, with subject matter expertise to enhance the intensive capacity-building services provided by the Regional Centers or to design universal or targeted capacity-building services to meet identified client needs.

The project must be aligned to the following focus area:

Emerging Need Centers: To meet this focus area, an applicant must propose to establish and operate a Content Center to provide technical assistance to CC clients on an education topic of significant national or regional need. For FY 2026 or any year in which this priority is used, the Department will identify specific topics of emerging national or regional need for the Center; topics will be aligned to the Secretary's Supplemental Priorities, areas of need identified in the Regional Advisory Committee reports, the technical assistance topics identified in the ETAA, or other critical aspects of need related to quality implementation of programs under the ESEA. Applicants will be required to address the identified topic areas in order to be considered for funding under this focus area.

Proposals for Emerging Need Centers must clearly demonstrate how the Center will address the established topic, provide data and evidence to illustrate the technical assistance needs of CC clients related to the topic and propose an approach to capacity-building services that meet these technical assistance needs in the established topic area.

Emerging Need Centers must provide high-quality, useful, and relevant targeted and universal capacity-building services in the designated content area of expertise to SEA, REA, TEA, and LEA clients. Services must be designed to improve educational opportunities, educator practice, and student outcomes as described in section 203(f) of the ETAA. Content Centers must identify, synthesize, and disseminate evidence-based practices to build the capacity of practitioners, education system leaders, schools, LEAs, and SEAs to use evidence in the designated content area.

Priorities: Field-Initiated Content Centers

Absolute Priorities: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet the absolute priority. Absolute Priority 3 establishes Field-Initiated Content Centers.

Competitive Preference Priorities: Applicants under Absolute Priority 3 may also apply for competitive preference points under Competitive Preference Priority 2 (Returning Education to the States) and either Competitive Preference Priority 3 (Evidence-Based Literacy) or Competitive Preference Priority 4 (Meaningful Learning Opportunities: Mathematics). Applicants are not required to address Competitive Preference Priorities. An application may receive a maximum of 10 additional points under Competitive Preference Priority 2 and a maximum of 5 additional points for either Competitive Preference Priority 3 or Competitive Preference Priority 4. 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 that it wishes ED to consider.

Note: The Secretary intends to fund no more than one Field-Initiated Center under either the Promoting Evidence-Based Literacy Competitive Preference Priority, the Meaningful Learning Opportunities (Mathematics) Competitive Preference Priority, or any other field-initiated topic proposed by applicants. Thus, the Secretary may fund applications out of rank order to ensure distinct focus areas of Field-Initiated Centers.

Field-Initiated Centers Priority Summary Table

<i>Priority Type</i>	<i>Priority Title</i>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Priority Language</i>
Absolute Priority 3	Content Centers: Field-Initiated	Yes	N/A	See below.
Competitive Preference Priority 2	Returning Education to the States	No	0 or 10 points	Projects or proposals that will be carried out by one or more of the following: (a) State educational agencies (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(49)), (b) Entities identified, designated, or endorsed by a Governor or chief State education official for purposes of implementing the project or proposal, (c) A Tribal educational agency (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7452(b)(3)), or (d) Consortia of the entities identified under this priority.

<i>Priority Type</i>	<i>Priority Title</i>	<i>Required</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Priority Language</i>
Competitive Preference Priority 3	Promoting Evidence-Based Literacy	No	0 or 5 points	Projects or proposals to do one or more of the following: (a) Advance, increase, or expand evidence-based literacy instruction (as defined in this notice), or (b) Focus on evidence-based literacy instruction (as defined in this notice).
Competitive Preference Priority 4	Meaningful Learning Opportunities (Mathematics)	No	0 or 5 points	Projects or proposals that are designed to strengthen core instruction through improving mathematics instruction to promote student achievement through assisting states in developing comprehensive statewide plans to raise mathematics achievement that align with mathematics instruction based on strong, moderate, or promising evidence (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1).

Absolute Priority 3 Language

Content Centers: Field Initiated

Projects that propose to establish and implement a Content Center to provide technical assistance on a specific topic of national or regional importance reflected across State and local needs and priorities. Content Centers must provide high-quality, useful, and relevant client-driven, targeted and universal capacity-building services to SEA, REA, TEA, LEA, and, for the NCIL, family clients designed to build State and local capacity and improve educational opportunities, educator practice, and student outcomes (as described in section 203(f) of the ETAA) related to their specified topic area. Content Centers must support Regional Centers, as needed, with subject matter expertise to enhance the intensive capacity-building services provided by the Regional Centers or to design universal or targeted capacity-building services to meet identified client needs.

The project must be aligned to the following focus area:

Field-Initiated: To meet this focus area, an applicant must propose to establish and operate a Content Center to provide technical assistance to CC clients on an education topic of significant national or regional need, as identified by States and other CC clients. Proposals for Field-Initiated Centers must clearly identify the topic to be addressed and utilize applicable regional, State, and local educational data and needs analyses to provide evidence to demonstrate the national need for the proposed Center. Field-initiated topics must be aligned to authorized purposes described in section 203(f) of the ETAA and may include, but are not limited to, proposals that focus on specific educational needs, such as improving math and literacy achievement, college and career readiness, closing achievement gaps, or encouraging and sustaining school improvement. Applicants must propose priority topics based on national or cross-regional needs expressed in State Learning Agendas or another similar identification of needs and priorities set forth by SEAs, REAs, TEAs or LEAs from more than one region².

Field-Initiated Centers must provide high-quality, useful, and relevant targeted and universal capacity-building services in the designated content area of expertise to SEA, REA, TEA, and LEA clients. Services must be designed to improve educational opportunities, educator practice, and student outcomes as described in section 203(f) of the ETAA. Content Centers must identify, synthesize, and disseminate evidence-based practices to build the capacity of practitioners, education system leaders, schools, LEAs, and SEAs to use evidence in the designated content area.

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria outline how the application will be scored. The maximum possible total score an application can receive for addressing the criteria is 100 points. The maximum possible score for addressing each criterion is indicated in parentheses following the criterion. The selection criteria for this competition are from [34 CFR 75.210](#).

(a) *Significance (up to 30 points):* The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

² In accordance with ETAA section 203, the Secretary established 10 Regional Advisory Committees (RACs) in 2023 to conduct an education needs assessment and identify each region's most critical educational needs and develop recommendations for technical assistance to meet those needs. Final RAC reports were published in December 2023 on the Department's website at <https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/regional-advisory-committees>.

- (1) The data presented (including a comparison to local, State, regional, national, or international data) that demonstrates the issue, challenge, or opportunity to be addressed by the proposed project (*up to 15 points*).
 - (2) 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 15 points*).
- (b) *Quality of the Project Design (up to 40 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 15 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 5 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 10 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 5 points*).
 - (5) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by the target population that it is intended to serve (*up to 5 points*).
- (c) *Quality of the Management Plan (up to 30 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 10 points*).

- (2) 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*).
- (3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors (*up to 5 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 Measure	Description
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

Content 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 delivered³, 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

³ 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.

will prioritize support for students and communities with the highest needs, as described in section 203(e) of the ETAA.⁴

- 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.
- 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) Consult and integrate feedback from States, CC clients (including, for the NCIL, families), the Department, National and Regional Centers, and other stakeholders and Department technical assistance Centers, as relevant to the Center's content area in developing the annual service plan to inform high-quality tools, resources, and overall technical assistance in priority areas.
- 7) Partner with the National Center and Regional Centers as needed to directly support their States in the development and implementation of State Learning Agendas; to address requests for assistance from States within the regions; and to strengthen Regional Center staff knowledge and expertise on the evidence base and effective practices as appropriate based on the Content Center's specific focus area.
- 8) Establish and provide copies to the Department of partnership agreements with the National Center, Regional Centers, as needed, and Department-funded technical

⁴ 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)].

assistance providers with expertise relevant to the Center's area. Partnership agreements must define processes to meet relevant CC program requirements.

- 9) The Project Director must be capable of managing all aspects of the Center and be either at a minimum of 0.5 FTE or there must be two Co-Project Directors at a minimum of 0.75 FTE collectively.

Application Requirements

Applicants for Content 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 carry out capacity-building services that address client needs and priorities (to include those of families, for applicants to NCIL) that amplify the use of evidence-based practices, products or tools amongst practitioners, education system leaders, elementary schools and secondary schools, LEAs, REAs and TEAs, and SEAs.
- 9) Propose an approach to providing universal capacity-building services, including how the Center will develop and widely disseminate evidence-based products or tools; outreach to practitioners, education system leaders, and policymakers in formats that are high quality, easily accessible, and understandable; identify intended beneficiaries; and ensure that proposed capacity-building services are driven by client needs and co-developed with client input.
- 10) Describe the educational challenges to be addressed by the project, including how the challenges to be addressed are aligned to Section 203(f)(1) of the ETAA and supported by data and evidence and reflected by cross-regional State and local needs and priorities. The description must utilize applicable national, regional, State, and local educational data to demonstrate the identified needs that could be addressed through the proposed capacity-building approach to implement and scale up evidence-based programs, practices, and interventions.

Application Submission Information

Competition Resources

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

Registration

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

Grants.gov registration involves several steps, including registration on [SAM.gov](#). 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](https://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](https://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 timely and validated successfully.

Helpful Hints When Working with Grants.gov

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

Submission Problems – What should you do?

If you have problems submitting to Grants.gov before the closing date, please contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at: support@grants.gov. 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 under the same Absolute Priority (e.g., two applications for Field-Initiated Centers) 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 ESEA; and CFR 77.1; the 2025 SSPs; and the Meaningful Learning Opportunities Supplemental Priority. 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.

Evidence-based literacy instruction means literacy instruction that relates to explicit, systematic and intentional instruction in phonological awareness, phonic decoding, oral and sign language, vocabulary, language structure, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and writing; promotes knowledge-rich materials; and is backed by one or more of the following, as supported by an evidence framework (as defined in this notice):

(a) strong evidence, meaning an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study (strong evidence as defined in [20 U.S.C. 7801\(21\)\(A\)\(i\)\(I\)](#)) or

(b) moderate evidence, meaning an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study (moderate evidence as defined in [20 U.S.C. 7801\(21\)\(A\)\(i\)\(II\)](#)). (2025 SSPs)

Evidence framework means an approach to providing a determination about whether an activity, strategy, or intervention meets each aspect of the definition of strong evidence or moderate evidence (as defined in [20 U.S.C. 7801\(21\)\(A\)\(i\)\(I-II\)](#)), as applicable.

(a) An evidence framework must include each of the following:

(i) Whether or not a study is an experimental study or quasi-experimental design study;

(ii) Whether or not a study shows a positive, statistically significant effect on student outcomes or other relevant outcomes;

(iii) Whether or not a study uses outcome measures that demonstrate validity and reliability, that do not give an unfair advantage to participants in one condition over

another, and that are measured consistently for the groups or participants that are being compared;

(iv) Whether or not a study design is otherwise of high quality, including whether it minimizes factors outside the intervention that could affect student or other relevant outcomes (confounds) and whether random assignment (if used) was done with integrity; and

(v) Whether or not study implementation and analysis is appropriate, including whether groups or participants being compared demonstrate baseline equivalence on key individual and other relevant characteristics, whether differences in baseline equivalence are statistically controlled, and by considering the impact on the validity of the study of any changes to the sample over time.

(b) An evidence framework may be implemented or verified by an organization with relevant expertise that has demonstrated to the Department that it has a rigorous, transparent (*i.e.*, publicly accessible) process for determining each aspect identified in (a). (2025 SSPs)

Experimental study means a study that is designed to compare outcomes between two groups (such as students) that are otherwise equivalent except for their assignment to either a treatment group receiving an activity, strategy, intervention, process, product, practice, or policy as compared with a control group that does not. Experimental studies can support claims of strong evidence. Randomized controlled trials and single-case design studies are specific types of experimental studies that meet this definition. (2025 SSPs)

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. (2024 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](#).

Quasi-experimental design study means a study using a design that attempts to approximate an experimental study by identifying a comparison group that is similar to the treatment group in important respects. Cross-sectional group designs, comparative interrupted time series, difference-in-difference designs, and growth curve designs are specific types of quasi-experimental studies that meet this definition. This type of study can meet the definition of moderate evidence but not strong evidence. (2025 SSPs)

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

Strategic Staffing means a team-based approach to school staffing that replaces the traditional one-teacher, one-classroom model. In this model, at least two professional educators, which can include paraprofessionals and other licensed educators, share responsibility for a common roster of students during the same blocks of time in the school day. Teamed educators have differentiated roles and distributed expertise, allowing for flexible student grouping, more effective use of instructional time, and expanded career entry and advancement opportunities. (Meaningful Learning Opportunities Supplemental Priority)

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; (g) The Meaningful Learning Opportunities Supplemental Priority.

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 Agreements, 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 or Priorities 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 Agreements, 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.