

PSC-ED-OUS

**Moderator: Ron Lessard
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1:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time, all participants are in listen-only mode. After the presentation, we will conduct the question-and-answer session. To ask a question, please press star and then the number 1.

This call is being recorded. And if you have any objections, you may disconnect at this point. Now I will turn the meeting over to your host, Mr. Ron Lessard. Sir, you may begin.

Ron Lessard: Thank you.

Good afternoon, everyone. I want to thank you for joining us today at Tribal Consultation Native American and Alaska Native Children in School Program, otherwise known as NAM. We want to thank you. And I want to turn it over to two colleagues from the US Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition, also known as OELA, and - who's Libia Gil, who's assistant deputy secretary and director, and Francisco Lopez, Education Program Specialist, Discretionary Grants Division.

Man: Okay. Hi. Thank you, Ron.

Before we start, we're just going to mention a few housekeeping items that you should be aware of.

The first thing is that there is a checkbox on your - the right-hand side of your screen. That is where you can enter any questions you may have throughout the presentation that we will get to after the presentation.

Also please note that we will e-mail the link to where this Webinar will be archive within two to three days once we have the recording and everything else as eligible for viewing.

So with that said, I'll turn it over to Libia.

Libia Gil: Okay, great. Thank you.

Hi, everyone. Delighted to be joining with you. Francisco and I will co-facilitate the first part of the presentation. And just very briefly to review the agenda, our purpose is to inform you about the current NAM grantee program and also the status and get your thoughts on it, as well as inform you about a new opportunity for grant competition for NAM starting in 2016, this year. We'll have a chance to discuss both opportunities and challenges and we will conclude with a couple of announcements that you might be interested in.

So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Francisco to get us started on what is the NAM program, what is Title III and what is the purpose.

Francisco Lopez: Okay. Thank you.

So we're going to switch slides here in just a second. And I just want to reference basically just to take in from our current statute two main points. The first focuses on, as Libia mentioned, the purpose. And this really just focuses on our students. And that is to help ensure that Native American/Alaska Native students who are classified as EL are able to meet the same exact challenging expectations as every other student in our country.

The second point talks about essentially the agents that help facilitate that first goal. And that is, as described in our statute, essentially types of eligible entities. Typically they are Indian tribes, Bureau of Indian Education as well or local education agencies have all been recipients of these grants. It's taken, like I said, from our current statute and is unchanged with the new legislation, ESSA.

Some examples of supported activities include the following. And it really is determined the extent of the activities. They're determined by the applicants who received the grant that's described in their applications.

Most, as you can see, focus on either development or implementation of certain systems. But again, the details are up to the grantees and what activities they've decided to help their students.

So here you have just sort of illustration of where our grantees are located. Currently, there are 25 NAM grantees, 13 grantees in the 2011 cohort, which is when we made our first round of awards, and 12 in the 2013 cohort. Lifespan of our grant is five years. And so 13 are actually getting ready to close out this summer and that's a 2011 cohort. The 2013 cohort will of course then - still has up to the summer of 2018 to finish the event.

Okay. In terms of the students, the great served. Most NAM grantees have a range of grades from early childhood through Grade 12, as you can see. There was an estimated total of 7800 students, more or less, are impacted by the grant across both cohorts. You see here that it really is heavy on the traditionally elementary middle and middle secondary. Of course we have a few postsecondary -- or two rather -- grantees in both the 2011 cohort and those are tribal entities as well.

So as we mentioned earlier, there are different types of agencies that can be - or that are eligible for receiving these funds. Then the 2011 cohort, the majority of the grantees are tribal schools. In 2013, you can see there that there are an equal number of LEA and tribal schools.

Okay. And so languages of instruction, these are the languages represented throughout both of our cohorts. Nineteen to be exact are represented in our NAM grantees.

Now, we want to mention though that the type of instruction does vary by grant. That means that some grantees have, for example, emerging programs while others may address it their language needs and afterschool program for example. So some do end up being more formal than others and that also just depends on the nature of their grants and all of that is described when they do apply in their application.

I want to shift gears a little bit here and just sort of elaborate on the priority areas for our current grantees, the 2011 and '13 cohorts. You can see here that in 2011, postsecondary success was the most common priority area. In 2013, database decision-making and parent involvement were the most common priority areas in the cohort.

Okay. Measure the progress. So this is a very kind of loose metric that we have for most grantees. And again, it does vary by grantee because they're all different projects but these are sort of the common denominators, if you will, of how we measure progress.

So the first one is really - just speaks to students going proficient or above on as applicable with valid and reliable state and local school reading assessments. So these are your local tests, your state tests and the measure here would capture that.

The second measure can be broken down into two separate categories and those deal with the ELP assessment, the English Language Proficiency assessment. And the first part of this measure speaks to a student making progress from year to year while the second speaks to a student obtaining proficiency in English and that's another way that this - we're able to capture success across different projects and programs.

So I know that's a lot of information. I'm just going to pause there for about 30 seconds or so. So do you have any brain questions at this point? As we mentioned, you can enter them into the chat box. We will open up the lines but that won't be until a little later in a few minutes when we conclude our side of the presentation. But if you have any questions on current grantees and the current status, please feel free to enter them into the chat box. So we'll just give you a few moments here.

Okay. You'll be able to enter them throughout the presentation. Just to keep us moving forward here, we have two slides. This is the first of two that describes our - the agency's supplemental priorities. And this is in addition to absolutely an invitational one. These are pre-established at our - have already been approved. And so we hope that by looking at these, you know, we're

able to generate some ideas on what would be helpful from your end, what is really essential to success of our students as - from your perspective. And really where we want to draw your attention to is Priority 4. That's where our EL Native American students would be represented throughout of course each different priority but that's where you - we would hope to find a bulk of representation.

These were published in December of 2014, so about two years ago. About a year ago, I'm sorry. And they are in the Federal Register.

The next slide has a link to that. And you can go to that Web site and find more information. Additionally, you can also find public comments that have - that were published and along with that the responses that we - the department gave to those public comments.

And so with that said, I'm going to turn it over to Libia.

Libia Gil: Hello again. I'm going to spend a few minutes just to walk through the 2016 NAM grant competition which will be awarded in this fiscal year. We have approximately \$3 million that we will be awarding for the first cohort and we're anticipating that the ranges of awards is anywhere from 300,000 to 400,000 per year. And again, it's a five-year commitment.

What I want to emphasize for all grant programs moving forward from the department is the expectation that we really want to create a stronger knowledge base. We talk about evidence based and that's a real key focus and emphasis for a learning agenda so we can expand our knowledge to support practice. And we know that we have to finalize our priorities for the NAM grant.

As Francisco mentioned earlier, this is a pretty broad eligibility group. So there's a variation from local school districts, tribal, BIE, as well as higher ed institutes are all eligible grantees.

So the question is, what could be some tribal impacts? And we did categorize these in two areas. We see an opportunity here to really have particular focus on supporting and strengthening educational outcomes for Native American children and youth. That's pretty broad. But that is really the charge of this and that the intent of this grant.

We want to also talk about what I just mentioned the importance of really identifying what are those effective practices that we can learn from and replicate and share with others.

And of course we are very interested in continuing to support the development and the expansion of capacity to serve Native American children and youth.

Some of the challenges that we have experienced, certainly with our current experiences. Data collection and data management is one of the challenges if there are no deep infrastructure support as well as ongoing issues of developing capacity and we're talking about teachers or even professionals. Recruitment, selection and retainment are always common issues that we have run into.

So the questions we would pose to you to get it started and certainly welcome other questions, are these basic ones?

Ron, you wanted to say something?

Ron Lessard: Yes. Operator, we're - we'll be ready to open up the lines soon to everyone. We would appreciate if you would state your name and your organization when you - before you ask the question.

And with that, Operator, open up the lines.

Coordinator: Thank you. We will now begin the question-and-answer session.

If you would like to ask a question, please press star and then the number 1. Please unmute your phone and record your name clearly when prompted. Your name is required to introduce your question.

To withdraw your request, please press star and then the number 2.

One moment, please, for the first question.

((Crosstalk))

Libia Gil: Oh. I was going to review the questions. We're asking people to provide comments if they wish. But if anybody would like to share their thoughts on what you see at the greatest area of need that we should focus on. Another question is, what is it in our current school situation that we are not addressing very well for Native American children? And then if you know of and aware of really effective practices, please let us know so that we can continue to pursue the creation of our knowledge base to help. And of course any other questions you'd like to respond to, we would welcome.

Coordinator: Thank you. Once again, to ask a question, please press star and then the number 1.

At this time, speakers, we don't have any questions on queue.

Libia Gil: Well, we do have a question from the chat box which I will go ahead and answer. And it's a question to clarify whether or not this program was intended for students who don't have English as their primary language.

That is the definition of English learners. Either they don't have their first language as English or do not have proficiency in English to be able to access and be successful with academic areas.

Well, having no additional questions, we'll go ahead and move to a couple of announcements and - okay, we do have a question, I'm sorry.

Man: The greatest gap between native and educational offering available nationwide as maternal language, how will this grant support development on native language or development in educational program?

Libia Gil: Great question. Can you read that out loud for everybody to hear, Ron, for those (unintelligible)?

Ron Lessard: The greatest gap, was that it?

Man: Yes.

Ron Lessard: The greatest gap between native and educational offering available nationwide is maternal language, how will this grant support the development of native language emergence or development educational program?

Libia Gil: Thank you for that question because it is actually part of the intent of this grant is to not only preserve but revitalize native languages. So that is a very I

think important component and obviously it's language and culture that this particular grant is focused on.

You're welcome to continue to send questions as we move forward. But there are a couple of announcements that we thought you might be interested in.

One on this page was just to refer you to our Web site both the NCLA National Clearinghouse for Language Acquisition and also the ed.gov which is our government agency Web site for the latest updates on announcements, on grant competition and resources and research access.

We also have a Facebook page that we usually give a lot of information. Again, informative announcements, time-sensitive activities and events and we really would encourage you and welcome your engagement with these Web sites because there is prize for you to ask questions or leave messages for us.

So the first announcement is to let everybody know that we are actually currently doing another discretionary competitive program called the National Professional Development Program. The closing date for this opportunity is February 19th. So we're right at the start of the application process.

This is specifically designed for institutes of higher education, schools of education to develop both pre-service and in-service teacher preparation. And it is very specifically encouraged to work on biliteracy, bilingual approaches. And if you need more information, you can see and access the application package right now.

But in particular, we do call out Native American-serving institutions. So if you know of people who are interested or pass the word on, please, because

this is a wonderful opportunity. It's also a five-year cycle. And the awards are slightly larger, 450,000 to 550,000 per year because it is a major investment in preparing and developing capacity of our professionals and support staff to deliver appropriate services to all of our children.

Ron Lessard: We have an additional question and comment. So the question comes with a comment, thank you. We do not have many students who are EL. However, our native students definitely struggle with meeting standards on the reading and/or writing assignment. I'm curious if this would be considered. I have heard about successes with teaching native students the ancestral language, first in preschool and then introduce English with tremendous success. So I guess I'm asking if the EL classification can be extended to include our native students even though they do not actively speak their ancestral language.

Libia Gil: So we don't define the inclusion of EL for this particular program. Obviously it's a federal legislation and statute. However, what you're suggesting is what we actually encourage. We encourage approaches that honors and protects mother language, heritage language, native language as an approach to becoming more proficient in English because there's a lot of - and it's a growing body of research to support the efficacy of these approaches. So valuing home language, valuing native and heritage language is a high priority for us to elevate and emphasize for people.

Is there another - okay. So let me move on to the second announcement which I don't have a slide for but just for the group - oh, excuse me. This particular slide just gives you a visual of the combination of our current MPD grantees as well as our NAM grantees. So you can see it covers the countries fairly well except for a couple of prominent spots. The white spots are where we do not currently have grantees. That was just a little context for you. Okay.

So moving on to the second announcement, I don't have a slide for this but just for you to know that we are launching an evaluation of program study on Native American and Alaska Native children in school which is the NAM program. What we want to do is examine further how our current grantees are implementing the program to support academic outcomes, successful academic outcomes for Native American and Alaska Native students.

Be aware that the researchers intend to collect data from all of our current 23 grantees. And they will be looking at applications, looking at data outcomes from the grant but they will also be doing telephone interviews and we'll be doing some in-depth site visits to conduct interviews or focus group with key stakeholders who have been involved or interested. So hopefully, you'll have a chance to learn more about this as it's getting launched and just know that we are accelerating efforts to do much more research and studies to support the kind of work that we want to see happen that is going to be successful for our kids.

So with that, if there's no questions on the last two announcements, I'm going to turn it back over to Ron.

Ron Lessard: Thank you, Libia.

Operator, could we check one more time if there are any additional questions?

Coordinator: Thank you, sir.

Once again, to ask a question, please press star and then the number 1. One moment for the question.

Excuse me, speakers, the first question is coming from the line of (Gale Johansson).

Your line is now open.

(Gale Johansson): Good morning. I have a question on special ed. I work for the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the - those individuals or students are falling to the crack. The State Voca Rehab Program is not serving the Alaska Native, American Indian students because they're in the rural areas. And would that be one of the - would that fit on either requirements? I've seen a cognitive impairment on your priorities. But with the transition from school to work, services is not available for those particular students.

Libia Gil: That's a very real and challenging issue that we face for this particular grant under Title III. Students who have learning disabilities are also classified as English learners. So if we're talking about English learners with learning disabilities, yes, this could address if that's part of the grantee's application to really focus on providing appropriate support.

What we haven't gotten the details about it is in many ways, especially in remote areas or rural areas, is to do a better job of using technology or digital resources that you normally don't have access to. That actually is another study we're conducting right now to really go deeper and understand what are some tools that are available that we can help our students have access and certainly with special education services. And as you know, our students who are classified with special education needs have a lot of legal protection and they have - they should have access and they're required to be provided with support. So that would be a serious issue if some students are unable to access because of limitations of either resources or distance.

(Gale Johansson): Thank you so much.

Libia Gil: There's no reason why this can't be included in application if they're interested in doing that. That would be supported.

(Gale Johansson): Okay, thank you. I'm thinking about just printing that resource and connecting agencies and just building that rapport.

Libia Gil: Yes. You're talking about collaboration, sharing information and coordinating.

(Gale Johansson): Yes.

Libia Gil: Yes, okay. That's a good comment, thank you.

(Gale Johansson): Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you. Once again, to ask a question, please press star and then the number 1.

At this time, speakers, we don't have any questions on queue.

Libia Gil: Just to be clear, we do not have 2016 competition posted yet. One of the reasons we wanted to have this consultation in case we had comments or feedback that would be helpful that we're trying to move it very quickly because we have to provide the award by the end of this fiscal year. And the sooner that we can get this posted, the sooner or more time we're hoping that potential applicants will have to develop the application and submit it.

So please check our Web site to see when the posting date will be available because we're hoping it's going to be soon following, you know, our conversation. As you know, we have a session tomorrow as well. And so as much as we can give consideration to any feedback, comments, we want to address it before we do a final posting.

Ron Lessard: We have one more question. Question is, we are interested in accessing research about how native language instruction affects academic outcomes. Do you have any resources you would recommend?

Libia Gil: Yes, I do although as you probably know, we have very little rigorous empirical data or studies specific to Native Americans. We will be posting on our Web site I believe in the next week or two a literature review of all the studies that addresses dual language learning and some of the outcomes. There is reference to Native American language preservation and instruction.

But in comparison to other languages, it's not as robust but you might be interested in looking at least the latest research and we acknowledge that there is not enough but what we do have is very encouraging, very promising that was well implemented dual language or language immersion programs. What we are looking at the trend is that students do just as well or better than those students who are not classified as English learners.

So over time, it is a very encouraging trend. And so I would say in the next week or two we should have - it's called the dual language study and it's done by the American Institute of Research and it will be posted for public review.

Ron Lessard: We have another question. The United States has started to gather demographic data on Native Americans and Mexican and Latin American origin. Are Native American languages of indigenous people of Mexico or

Latin America currently spoken in the United States eligible to this grant especially those with cultural ties to languages in the United States such as (unintelligible) language families?

Libia Gil: The short response to that is yes, if the students are identified as English learners. So it doesn't matter what their home language is or their heritage language as long as they're also in the status of trying to learn and become proficient in English.

Obviously there's an assessment process and it's reading process to come in final eligibility. But in general, if I understand that question, I think it's appropriate.

Ron Lessard: The next comment we have is according to Section 103 of the Native American Language Act, Native American language is defined as historical traditional languages spoken by Native Americans. Thank you.

Libia Gil: Thank you.

Ron Lessard: One more time, Operator, just checking if we have any additional questions.

Coordinator: Thank you. Once again, to ask a question, please press star and then the number 1. One moment for the next question. Excuse me, speakers, at this time, we do not have any questions on queue.

Ron Lessard: Great. Well, thank you, everyone. And we wanted to mention that we will be taking feedback and comments. We ask that you send those to us by close of business, 5:00 pm, Eastern Standard Time, on January 19th.

Libia Gil: And there's my e-mail address.

Ron Lessard: And you'll see the e-mail address for Libia is there if you send your feedback and comments to that. We want to hear from you.

And with that, I want to thank everyone for joining us today. If you have colleagues that weren't able to get on this presentation today, we will be doing it again tomorrow at 1:00 pm, Eastern Standard Time. Please spread the word for us. And once again, I'd like to thank you again for joining us today. Thank you.

Coordinator: And that concludes today's conference. Thank you for participating. You may now disconnect.

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