

2015 SEED Competition Overview Webinar Transcript

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Welcome to the 2015 SEED Competition Overview webinar.

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Before we get started I wanted to remind everyone of some available resources.

If you have any questions remaining at the end of this webinar please attend the interactive Q&A Webinar. Program staff will be available to answer any remaining questions you may have about this year's competition. See the [SEED website](#) for how to access that webinar and all other applicant resources.

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The agenda for our webinar includes a general program overview, an update on what is new in this year's competition, the eligibility requirements of the SEED program, the absolute and competitive preference priorities being used in this year's competition, the selection criteria, and some guidance on how to submit an application.

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The purpose of the SEED program is to provide competitive grants for projects with a proven track record of success in preparing or providing professional enhancement activities to teachers, principals, or both.

This year we have roughly \$24 million available for new 36 month projects.

Eligible applicants are national not-for-profit organizations that propose projects supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness.

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As mentioned on the previous slide, a distinguishing characteristic of the SEED program is the use of rigorous evidence of effectiveness to make funding decisions.

The two levels of evidence that will be utilized in this competition are moderate and strong evidence of effectiveness. We'll go into more depth about how the evidence standards are applied in this competition, but first I want to discuss how to meet the evidence standards.

This chart displays the path that a study must navigate to meet each evidence standard based on the definition provided in the NIA. To meet Moderate Evidence you need a study that meets the WWC standards without reservations and has a significantly positive impact on a similar population to the one you propose to serve. Or if the study meets the WWC standards with reservations you will need a large sample size covering multiple sites to go along with the significantly positive impact. In other words if your study is not quite as rigorous in its design, then the population studied must be larger and more robust to meet the Moderate standard.

The strong evidence bar is obviously higher. All studies must include a large and multi-site sample and if it only meets the WWC standards with reservations then you must include more than one study to meet the strong evidence bar.

One of the main questions we get asked is how does a study meet the WWC Standards with or without reservations.

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This flowchart describes how a study is reviewed to determine if it meets the WWC standards. It was taken from the WWC Handbook and we recommend that all applicants review the entire handbook before determining whether their studies are sufficient to meet the necessary evidence standard. The characteristics that are taken into consideration are random assignment, sample attrition, and baseline equivalence.

If a study uses random assignment and there is little to no attrition, then it will meet the WWC standards without reservations.

If there is high attrition of the study participants (i.e. if many students move out of the district or many teachers decide they no longer want to participate), then the study must at least demonstrate that the treatment and control groups have similar characteristics to make a comparison between the two groups valid. If that is the case then it meets the standards with reservations.

The last possibility to meet the standards is if the assignment is not random, but the equivalence between the treatment and control groups is clearly established.

If none of these criteria are met, then the study will not meet the WWC standards and cannot be used to meet either the moderate or strong evidence levels.

Before moving on I want to point out that the studies that applicant submit to meet these evidence standards do not need to be done on their particular proposed intervention. However, applicants must demonstrate how their project aligns with the interventions being evaluated in the studies they submit so that the Department can determine that their project is in fact supported by rigorous evidence of effectiveness.

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We are now going to highlight some of the most significant changes between this competition and our previous one.

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The first major change you will likely notice is that the moderate evidence of effectiveness standard is now Absolute Priority 1 instead of an eligibility criterion. Functionally this will mean very little for applicants since the AP1 is now mandatory for all applicants, so the moderate evidence bar must still be met to be considered for funding. Applicants must also choose one of absolute priorities 2 through 4 to be considered for funding.

Absolute Priorities 2 through 4 are very similar to last year's priorities. The biggest difference is that now the priority that focuses on teacher professional development (AP3 this year) can include any content area or subject. Last year the focus had to be on writing, but that is no longer the case.

There is also an additional Competitive Preference Priority. The new priority supports the SEED program's emphasis on getting highly effective educators in front of the neediest students and encourages applicants to demonstrate how the educators they support will be able to address the particular needs of these students.

Lastly, some of the selection criteria that will be used to rate your applications are new this year. Most notably, one factor under the evaluation criterion will give points to applicants who can demonstrate that their projects will produce evidence that meets the WWC standards.

We'll go into more detail on each of these later in the presentation, but we wanted to highlight these key changes.

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Now we'll begin to dig into the application in more detail, starting with the eligibility requirements.

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National Not-for-Profit Organizations are the only type of eligible applicant.

National not-for-profit organization means an entity that meets the definition of "nonprofit" under [34 CFR 77.1\(c\)](#) and is of national scope, meaning that the entity *provides services in multiple States to a significant number or percentage of recipients and is supported by staff or affiliates in multiple States.*

Applicants should provide an explanation of how they meet this definition in their application.

Italics are added for emphasis here to call attention to the main criteria that are used to determine if an applicant meets the definition for national not-for-profit. This determination will be made using the information provided in your application. If it is not clear how an applicant meets these criteria, it will not be considered for funding.

This is the only eligibility requirement this year as the moderate evidence bar has been moved to an absolute priority this year.

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On that note, we'll move to discuss the priorities used in this year's competition.

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There are 8 total priorities, 4 absolute priorities and 4 competitive preference priorities.

All applicants must address AP1 and one of APs 2 through 4.

Applicants may address any or all four of the competitive preference priorities. They will receive additional depending on how well they address the CPPs.

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In case you couldn't tell we are really trying to emphasize that all applicants must respond to Absolute Priority 1 and at least one of Absolute Priorities 2 through 4.

Applicants may respond to more than one of AP 2 through 4 however they will receive no competitive advantage by doing so.

Applicants should clearly identify the priorities for which they are applying.

Applicants' approaches to the absolute priorities will be reviewed and receive points based on the selection criteria.

Some of the priority language is too long to fit on a slide, so we will be highlighting some of the key pieces of the priorities. The exact wording for priorities may be found in the NIA on the SEED website:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/edseed/applicant.html>

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Absolute Priority 1: Supporting Practices and Strategies for Which There Is Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness

As mentioned earlier this is a small change from the previous competition. Instead of an eligibility criterion, Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness is now a required Absolute Priority. Functionally this change means very little from an applicant's perspective because only applicants who meet this priority will be considered for funding.

IES will review the studies provided by applicants to determine if they meet this absolute priority.

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Absolute Priority 2: Teacher or Principal Recruitment, Selection, and Preparation.

As mentioned before some of the priority language is too long to fit on a slide. So here we emphasize three key parts. Please see the NIA for the full language.

This priority focuses on recruiting and preparing teachers or principals to work in schools with high concentrations of High-need Students. As a part of that process applicants must demonstrate that they will utilize a rigorous selection process to select only the best possible candidates to enter their preparation programs.

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Absolute Priority 3: Professional Development for Teachers of Academic Subjects.

As mentioned before this priority has been updated to include content areas other than writing which was the focus last competition. While the other absolute priorities allow applicants to work with both teachers and principals, this priority is focused on providing content area PD specifically to teachers.

Applicants must demonstrate how their project is meeting the need of the areas they plan to serve through this project. Additionally, applicants must describe how they will measure the impact the PD they provide will have on their participants.

While there is a list of subjects included in the priority language, this list is not meant to be all-inclusive. To clarify this, we included a note at the end of this priority that reads:

The list of subjects provided in this priority is illustrative. Applicants may propose to address other academic subjects or areas, such as writing, reading, or mathematics, which partner schools and districts have demonstrated to be high-need.

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Absolute Priority 4: Advanced Certification and Advanced Credentialing

This priority focuses on supporting nationally recognized, standards-based advanced certification for teachers or principals.

Additionally, applicants must measure the effectiveness of the educators who receive the advanced credential.

This priority also requires a rigorous selection process so that educators who would like to receive an advanced credential have demonstrated their ability.

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In addition to the Absolute Priorities there are 4 competitive priorities.

Four optional priorities that applicants may choose to include in their projects. Applicants may respond to as many CPPs as they wish. Applicants should clearly identify the priorities for which they are applying. Applicants may receive additional points based on how well they address these priorities, at the discretion of reviewers.

Specific wording for priorities may be found in the NIA on the SEED website:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/edseed/applicant.html>

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CPP 1: Strong Evidence of Effectiveness

This priority funds projects that are supported by Strong Evidence of Effectiveness.

Applicants will receive either 5 points or 0 points. Priority documentation will be reviewed by IES. Applicants should review the WWC Handbook Version 3.0 to ensure the studies they submit meet the WWC Standards. <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>

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CPP 2: Improving Efficiency (Cost-Effectiveness)

This priority funds projects that identify strategies for providing cost-effective, high-quality services at the State, regional, or local level by making better use of available resources. Such projects may include innovative and sustainable uses of technology, modification of school schedules and teacher compensation systems, use of Open Educational Resources, or other strategies.

Applicants will receive 0 or 1 point. Priority documentation will be reviewed by peer reviewers.

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CPP 3: Promoting STEM Education

This priority funds projects that address one or both of the following priority areas:

(a) Increasing the opportunities for high-quality preparation of, or professional development for, teachers of STEM subjects.

(b) Increasing the number of individuals from groups traditionally underrepresented in STEM, including minorities, individuals with disabilities, and women, who are teachers of STEM subjects and have increased opportunities for high-quality preparation or professional development.

In addition, applicants must describe how they plan to measure the impact the proposed project activities have on teacher effectiveness. Applicants must determine teacher effectiveness through a rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation in which performance is differentiated using multiple measures of effectiveness and based in significant part on Student Growth.

Applicants will receive 0 or 2 points. Priority documentation will be reviewed by peer reviewers.

This priority is identical to last competition's priority, however the point value has shifted slightly. Instead of 0 to 3, applicants may receive either 0 or 2 points.

One additional update is a note that accompanies this priority that clarifies how reviewers will score the priority. The note reads:

The Department encourages applicants to provide a thoughtful, in-depth response to the priority area(s) under Competitive Preference Priority 3 to which they are well-suited to respond. Applicants may choose to respond to one or both of the priority areas and are not required to respond to each priority area in order to receive the maximum available points under this competitive preference priority.

In other words, applicants do not need to respond to both parts a and b in order to receive full points for this priority

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CPP 4: Supporting High-Need Students

This priority funds projects that are designed to improve:

- (a) Academic outcomes;
- (b) Learning environments; or
- (c) Both,

For one or more of the following groups of students:

- (i) Students served by Rural Local Educational Agencies.
- (ii) Students with disabilities.
- (iii) English learners.
- (iv) Students in Lowest-performing Schools.
- (v) Students who are living in poverty and are served by schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty.

(vi) Disconnected Youth or migrant youth.

(vii) Students who are members of federally recognized Indian tribes.

Applicants will receive 0 to 4 points. Priority documentation will be reviewed by peer reviewers. This priority is new to this year's competition and unlike other Competitive Priorities applicants may receive a range of points from 0 to 4 depending on how well their responses meet the priority.

This priority contains a note identical to the one found in CPP3. It also clarifies that applicants do not need to address all subfactors of this priority to receive full points.

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We will now discuss the selection criteria that peer reviewers will use to score the applications.

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The overall categories remain the same as the last competition however the point values have shifted and some of the factors that define each category have been updated. The rank order that determines the funding decisions will be made using the peer reviewer scores of these criteria along with the competitive priorities discussed earlier. Again the criteria are too long to fit on a slide so please see the NIA for the exact language.

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The significance criterion has three subfactors and is worth up to 10 points total.

The first factor focuses on the national impact the project will have. While a project is not required to include multiple states or even multiple districts, an applicant will need to describe how their project will have a national impact.

The second factor focuses on the contribution that the project will have to the field of educator development.

The third factor focuses on the likely impact a project will directly have on student and educator outcomes.

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The Project Design Criterion has 5 factors and is worth a total of 35 points.

The first factor focuses on having clear and measureable goals.

The second factor emphasizes that this should be part of a broader effort to improve teaching and learning.

The third factor focuses on ensuring that the training or other services provided will be sufficient to lead to improvement in the recipients of those services.

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These last two factors are new for this year's competition. They both support the SEED program's focus on getting the neediest students access to the highest performing teachers and principals.

The fourth factor focuses on preparing personnel to address shortage areas.

The fifth factor focuses on serving the needs of disadvantaged individuals.

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The Management Plan criterion has three factors and is worth a total of 20 points.

The first factor focuses on ensuring that the project will be run by qualified personnel.

The second factor emphasizes the need for a clear plan to keep the project on track.

The third factor focuses on having sufficient and reasonable resources available to carry out the project, including the evaluation.

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The sustainability criterion has 3 factors and is worth a total of 15 points.

The first factor emphasizes the impact the project will have beyond the grant period.

The second factor focuses on supporting an impact beyond the grantee organization to better inform the field.

The third factor emphasizes the dissemination of the outcomes from the project.

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The Project Evaluation Criterion has 4 factors and is worth a total of 20 points.

The first factor focuses on ensuring that the evaluation includes thorough and appropriate methods to evaluate the project.

The second factor emphasizes that the evaluation include both quantitative and qualitative data collection.

The third factor focuses on formative feedback to improve the project throughout the grant period.

The fourth factor is new this year. This factor raises the expectations of grantees to produce high-quality and rigorous evidence aligned with the WWC standards that demonstrates the continued success of the implementation of grantees' interventions.

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Lastly, we will discuss the process of submitting an application.

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Applications for the SEED competition must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov site (www.Grants.gov).

To submit an application in Grants.gov, your organization must have an active System for Award Management (SAM) registration. Please verify that your SAM registration is still active.

Be sure to budget sufficient time for registering for SAM and Grants.gov if necessary. Waiting until the last week to complete these tasks is a surefire way to ensure that your application will not be submitted on time.

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In order to apply for a SEED grant, you must complete the Grants.gov registration process.

Go to the “Get Registered” link on the left side of the Grants.gov homepage.

Tutorial on this page instructs applicants how to complete the registration process.

The registration process can take 3-5 business days (or up to 4 weeks if all steps are completed promptly)

So please register early!

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To apply for a SEED grant, go to the “Apply for Grants” link on the left side of the Grants.gov homepage.

Next, follow the step-by-step application instructions. The CFDA number you will enter for Step 1 is 84.367.

Contact the Grants.gov helpdesk if you experience problems submitting your application.

Phone: 1-800-518-4726

Email: support@grants.gov

NOTE: You can download the application package without registering, but you cannot submit the application until registering.

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Here are some cautions from previous competitions:

Upload PDFs

All files uploaded into Grants.gov must be in PDF format; all other file formats may not convert properly.

Submit Early

Applications submitted after the April 13th (4:30:00 PM Washington, DC time) deadline will be rejected.

READ THE NOTICES and FAQs, UNDERSTAND THE REQUIREMENTS, AND PLAN AHEAD

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Here is a timeline of upcoming competition events. On March 10 there will be a Pre-Application Question and Answer session at 2 PM Eastern. See the SEED website for information about the Q&A Webinar <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/edseed/index.html>. On March 12 the Intent to Apply Email is due, while it is not mandatory to in order to apply it does help us plan the competition. And most importantly, on April 13

the full application is due at 4:30:00 PM Eastern. Applications time stamped after 4:30:00 PM DC Time will not be reviewed.

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And finally here are some additional competition related resources. Go to the SEED Website: (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/edseed/index.html>) for the Notice Inviting Applications, a sample Application Package, Frequently Asked Questions, and Applications from 2012 and 2013 Winners

All questions about SEED may be sent to SEED@ed.gov

Thank you for your time today.