

National Professional Development (NPD) Grant Program

2024 Competition

Frequently Asked Questions



March 12, 2024

1. What is the purpose of the NPD Program?

The NPD Program provides grants for eligible entities to implement professional development activities intended to improve instruction for English Learners (ELs) and assists education personnel working with ELs to meet high professional standards. Professional development activities may include preservice activities.

2. Who is eligible to apply for a grant under the NPD Program?

Entities eligible to apply for NPD grants are institutions of higher education (IHEs) or public or private entities with relevant experience and capacity, in consortia with local educational agencies (LEAs) or State educational agencies (SEAs).

3. Who is an eligible public or private entity that could apply to the NPD Program? Entities with relevant capacity and experience could include private for-profit entities, which could also include private for profit LEAs.

4. What activities are allowable under the NPD Program?

Grants awarded under this program may be used for one or more of the following activities: (1) Pre-service professional development programs that will assist schools and IHEs to upgrade the qualifications and skills of educational personnel who are not certified or licensed, especially educational paraprofessionals; (2) The development of program curricula appropriate to the needs of the consortia participants involved; and (3) Financial assistance to pay for costs of tuition, fees, and books for enrolling in courses required to complete the degree involved, to meet certification or licensing requirements for teachers who work in language instruction educational programs or serve ELs.

5. Is there a Cost Sharing or Matching requirement?

This program does not require cost sharing or matching.

6. How are indirect costs calculated for the NPD Program?

If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs, this information is to be completed by your Business Office: 1) indicate whether your organization has an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement that was approved by the Federal government 2) indicate the beginning and ending dates covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. In addition, indicate whether ED or another Federal agency issued the approved agreement. An applicant must specify the name of the Federal agency that issued the approved agreement. Because the National Professional Development program is a training grant as described in 34 CFR 75.562, then your reimbursement for indirect costs is limited to "actual indirect costs, as determined in its negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or eight percent of a modified total direct cost base, whichever amount is less."

7. Are grantees permitted to use funds for a planning period?

Grantees are permitted to use funds for a planning period. An applicant that proposes a planning period should describe the activities it proposes to conduct during the planning period. A grantee may, or may not, serve participants during a planning period.

8. What are the reporting requirements for NPD grantees?

All NPD grantees must submit an annual performance report (APR) that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information. The APR must include information on performance outcomes related to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) as well as project-specific performance measures. The Department will consider this data in making annual continuation awards. At the end of the project period, grantees must submit a final performance report, including financial information, goal attainment, and program evaluation. In addition, according to the ED Discretionary Handbook, it is

Departmental policy to monitor active discretionary grants with a focus on technical assistance, continuous improvement, and attaining promised results. To that end, NPD grantees will be required to submit project update reports on a periodic basis as determined by the program office.

NPD 2024 COMPETITION APPLICATION CONTENT

9. What is the estimated number and range of awards for the NPD 2024 Competition?

The total estimated available funding for the NPD 2024 Competition is \$8,400,000. The estimated range of awards is \$600,000 - \$700,000 annually, and the maximum award is \$700,000. The estimated number of awards is 12. However, the Department is not bound by any estimates in the notice.

10. If awarded a grant, may a grantee count on receiving funding for the full period of five years?

The actual level of program funding, if any, depends on final Congressional action each fiscal year. In making continuation awards under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: whether the grantee has made substantial progress toward meeting the project objectives and program performance measures; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner consistent with its approved application; and whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application.

11. What are the differences between an absolute, a competitive and an invitational priority?

All applicants must address the absolute priority in order for their applications to be eligible for review. Competitive priorities are optional. Applicants may or may not address the competitive priority. Applications that satisfactorily address how a competitive priority would be met in their proposal narrative may receive additional points. The invitational priority is also optional. Applications that address and meet an invitational priority receive no additional points or preference over other applications.

12. What are the absolute, competitive and invitational priorities for the NPD 2024 Competition?

- Absolute Priority: Increase the Number of Bilingual or Multilingual Teachers Through a Grow-Your-Own (GYO) Pre-Service Program that Recruits Teacher Candidates who are Bilingual or Multilingual
- Competitive Preference Priority 1: Applications from New Potential Grantees (0 or 5 points)
- Invitational Priority 1: Service to Students from First-Generation or Low-Income Backgrounds

13. Are applicants required to address both the Competitive and Invitational Priorities in the NPD 2024 Notice Inviting Application?

Applicants are not required to address the competitive and invitational priorities. Submitting an application that addresses all priorities may result in an unfocused program design. Applicants should address only the priorities for which they can demonstrate strong capacity to implement and which would directly apply to their LEA/SEA partner(s).

14. Other than addressing it in the project narrative, is there a form needed to be filled out if an applicant is addressing Competitive Preference Priority 1?

There is no separate form to be completed if an applicant is addressing Competitive Preference Priority 1, and the applicant is asked to indicate this in their abstract.

15. What is the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)?

Under GPRA, Federal departments and agencies must clearly describe the goals and objectives of programs, identify resources and actions needed to accomplish goals and objectives, develop a means of measuring progress made, and regularly report on achievement.

16. How should an applicant address the GPRA measures in its application?

Applicants should develop a thorough understanding of the NPD program GPRA measures and must propose an annual and a final measurable target in their application for each of the GPRA measures based on the first-year baseline data. Applicants should include information on how these targets will be met in their application narrative.

17. What are the GPRA measures for the FY2024 NPD Competition?

The Department has developed the following GPRA performance measures for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the NPD program:

- **Measure 1:** The percentage of project-specific annual goals the program met.
- **Measure 2:** The number of bilingual or multilingual pre-service program participants enrolled annually.
- **Measure 3:** Under measure 2, the number of bilingual or multilingual participants who are making progress toward becoming State certified, licensed, or endorsed in EL instruction.
- **Measure 4:** Under measure 2, the number of bilingual or multilingual participants who have become fully State certified, licensed, or endorsed annually.

18. How are performance targets set for the GPRA measures?

First, applicants must identify the baseline data for each of the GPRA measures in their project based on existing circumstances. Next, applicants must state proposed annual performance outcome targets for each of the GPRA measures. The proposed targets must be ambitious yet achievable.

19. What information should be included in the project abstract?

The project abstract is a one-page, single-spaced summary of your project. It should include the following:

- 1) Name of the entity
- 2) Partners: Include applicable LEAs or SEAs
- 3) Title of the proposed project, if applicable
- 4) Priorities: Indicate which, if any, of the competitive and invitational priorities your project is addressing.
- 5) Brief Project Description: Include major project activities
- 6) Number and type of participants projected to be served by the project (i.e. preservice teachers, school administrators, other school personnel, parents, community members)
- 7) Type and number of participants served each year
- 8) Type and number of participants served by the end of the project
- 7) Project goals, objectives, and performance outcomes
- 8) Contact: Project Director's name, telephone, and e-mail

NPD 2024 COMPETITION APPLICATION REVIEW

20. How are applications selected for funding?

Peer reviewers will review all eligible applications for NPD grants that are submitted by the established deadline. For the FY 2024 NPD grant applications, the Department intends to conduct a two-part review process to review and score all eligible applications.

Part One: Content reviewers will review and score all eligible applications on the following four selection criteria: a) The quality of the project design; b) the quality of project personnel; c) the quality of the management plan; and d) the adequacy of resources. These reviewers will also review and score the second competitive preference priority. Peer reviewers with evaluation expertise will review and score criterion e) the

quality of the project evaluation plan.

Part Two: The Department will review the applications to determine whether they meet the criteria for Competitive Preference Priority 1.

21. Is an applicant's past performance a factor in the application review process?

Yes. The Department will take into consideration the potential applicant's past performance in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Department may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality. 34 CFR 75.217(d)

22. Is there a page-limit to the NPD application?

No. However, we recommend that NPD grant program applicants limit the application proposal narrative to no more than 35 double-spaced pages. Applicants are also strongly encouraged not to include lengthy appendices that contain information that they were unable to include within the page limits for the narrative. In addition to the proposal narrative, applicants must submit all required documents, including the following forms: the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications.

23. How long does it take the Department of Education to complete the review process and when will funds be available?

Typically, the review process takes about six months from the application deadline to the issuance of the signed Grant Award Notification. The list of grantees will be published at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/nfdp/applicant.html> and <https://ncela.ed.gov/>.

24. How does an applicant comply with Executive Order 12372, the Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs?

This competition is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this competition.

NPD 2024 COMPETITION – GRANT APPLICATION

25. How do I get a copy of the NPD grant application?

You may access the electronic grant application for the NPD program at www.Grants.gov. You must search for the downloadable application package for this competition by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.365, not 84.365Z).

You can also obtain an application package via the Internet using the following address: www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call, toll free: 1-877-576-7734. Individuals with disabilities can obtain a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotope, or compact disc) by emailing their request to NPD2024@ed.gov.

26. Why is it helpful for a potential applicant to submit a Notice of Intent to Apply?

A Notice of Intent to Apply from potential applicants informs the Department of the approximate number of applications the program may receive so that the grant review process can be more efficiently planned. We strongly encourage each potential applicant to notify us of the applicant's intent to submit an application by

emailing NPD2024@ed.gov with the **subject line: Intent to Apply** and include in the content of the email the following information: (1) the applicant's name and address, and (2) any competitive preference priority or priorities and invitational priority or priorities the applicant is addressing in the application. Applicants that do not complete this form may still submit an application.

27. Is a proof of partnership a required part of the application?

Yes. Applicants are required to work in partnership with one or more LEAs or SEAs. Applicants should include letters of support or a Memorandum of Understanding with each of their LEA or SEA partner(s) that clearly identifies the roles, responsibilities, and obligations that each entity agrees to commit in order to meet the project goals, objectives and the NPD GPRA outcome measures.

28. Where does a potential applicant locate resources, information, on the NPD Program and the application support?

Potential applicants may obtain an application package via the Internet or from the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs). To obtain a copy via the Internet, use the following address:
www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html.

For guidance on ED's discretionary grant process and the laws and regulations that govern it, please refer to "Grant making at ED: Answers to Your Questions about the Discretionary Grants Process" at:
<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/about/grantmaking/index.html>.

Additional resources can be found at the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition website:
<https://ncela.ed.gov/>.

The NPD program office intends to hold a webinar designed to provide technical assistance to interested applicants. Detailed information regarding this training will be provided on the NPD Web site at
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/nfdp/applicant.html>.

In addition, we invite applicants to view two Webinar recordings that were hosted by the Institute of Education Sciences. The first Webinar addresses strategies for designing and executing well-designed quasi-experimental design studies. This Webinar is available at: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Multimedia.aspx?sid=23>. The second Webinar focuses on more rigorous evaluation designees, including strategies for designing and executing randomized controlled trials. This webinar is available at:
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Multimedia.aspx?sid=18>.

NPD 2024 COMPETITION APPLICATION SUBMISSION

29. In what format can an application be submitted under the FY 2024 NPD Program competition?

Applications for grants under the NPD program must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov in a Portable Document Format (PDF). Through this site, applicants will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload to submit the application. Applicants may not email an electronic copy of a grant application to the Department. An application submitted in paper format will be rejected unless the applicant qualifies for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement as described in the NPD Notice Inviting Applications. *To submit your application via Grants.gov, you must (1) be designated by your organization as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (2) register yourself with Grants.gov as an AOR. Details on these steps are outlined at the following Grants.gov Web page:*
www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html.

30. May applicants submit personnel resumes as an appendix to the application?

Applicants should address qualifications of personnel in the narrative response to the key personnel criterion. In addition, applicants may want to describe relevant training and experience of key personnel who are current employees, which may include, for example, the project director, the project coordinator, project evaluators, and LEA and SEA partner staff. *Applicants are requested **not** to submit resumes*, but can instead provide position descriptions for key personnel, including current staff, as well as those it expects to recruit as an attachment.

31. How much time does it take to upload an application?

The amount of time it takes to upload an application varies depending on a variety of factors, including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. Applicants must upload any narrative sections and all other application attachments as files in a read-only, Portable Document Format (PDF).

Note: To submit successfully beginning on April 4, 2022, you must provide the 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, when that registration occurs after April 4, 2022. If you do not enter the UEI assigned by SAM on your application, Grants.gov will reject your application.

32. What should an applicant do in order to submit an electronic application on time?

You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for the NPD Program to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. Applications received by Grants.gov are date and time stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted and must be date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 11:59:59 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date to be eligible for reviewing. For specific guidance and procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov, please refer to the Grants.gov Web site at: www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

33. How would an applicant know that the application has been successfully submitted?

You will want to 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, login 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. Washington, DC time, on the application deadline, AND the application status should be: Validated, Received by Agency, or Agency Tracking Number Assigned. Once the Department of Education 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 the Grants.gov 'Track My Application' link.

NPD 2024 COMPETITION DEFINITIONS

34. What is the definition of a 'local educational agency' (LEA)?

The term 'local educational agency' means:

(a) A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control of or direction of, or to perform service functions for, public elementary or secondary schools in:

- (1) A city, county, township, school district or other political subdivision of a state; or
- (2) Such combination of school districts or counties a State recognizes as an administrative agency for its public elementary or secondary schools; or

(b) Any other public institution or agency that has administrative control and direction of a public elementary or secondary school.

(c) As used in 34CFR parts 400, 408, 525, 526 and 527 (vocational education programs), the term also includes any other public institution or agency that has administrative control and direction of a vocational education program. (34 CFR 77.1)

35. What is the definition of an 'institution of higher education' (IHE)?

Institution of higher education has the meaning given that term in Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Additional Definitions - These are the terms that applicants will find in the NPD FY2024 Competition

Ambitious means promoting continued, meaningful improvement for program participants or for other individuals or entities affected by the grant or representing a significant advancement in the field of education research, practices, or methodologies. When used to describe a performance target, whether a performance target is ambitious depends upon the context of the relevant performance measure and the baseline for that measure. (34 CFR 77.1)

Baseline means the starting point from which performance is measured and targets are set. (34 CFR 77.1)

Bilingual or multilingual means able to listen, speak, read, and write in two or more languages with at least a high level of proficiency in each language, as determined based on indicators of proficiency established by the grantee. Note, bilingual or multilingual means a high level of proficiency in the domains that exist for the language, which may be fewer than four domains for some languages.

Demonstrates a rationale means a key project component included in the project's logic model is informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes. (34 CFR 77.1)

English learner, when used with respect to an individual, means an individual—

- (A) Who is aged 3 through 21;
- (B) Who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
- (C)
 - (i) Who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
 - (ii) (I) Who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a Native resident of the outlying areas; and
(II) Who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
 - (iii) Who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
- (D) Whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual--
 - (i) The ability to meet the challenging State academic standards;
 - (ii) The ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
 - (iii) The opportunity to participate fully in society. (Section 8101 of the ESEA)

Evidence-based means the proposed project component is supported by moderate evidence. (34 CFR 77.1)

Experimental study means a study that is designed to compare outcomes between two groups of individuals (such as students) that are otherwise equivalent except for their assignment to either a treatment group receiving a project component or a control group that does not. Randomized controlled trials, regression discontinuity design studies, and single-case design studies are the specific types of experimental studies that, depending on their design and implementation (*e.g.*, sample attrition in randomized controlled trials and regression discontinuity design studies), can meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations as described in the WWC Handbooks:

(i) A randomized controlled trial employs random assignment of, for example, students, teachers, classrooms, or schools to receive the project component being evaluated (the treatment group) or not to receive the project component (the control group).

(ii) A regression discontinuity design study assigns the project component being evaluated using a measured variable (*e.g.*, assigning students reading below a cutoff score to tutoring or developmental education classes) and controls for that variable in the analysis of outcomes.

(iii) A single-case design study uses observations of a single case (*e.g.*, a student eligible for a behavioral intervention) over time in the absence and presence of a controlled treatment manipulation to determine whether the outcome is systematically related to the treatment. (34 CFR 77.1)

Immigrant children and youth means individuals who--

- (A) Are aged 3 through 21;
- (B) Were not born in any State; and
- (C) Have not been attending one or more schools in any one or more States for more than 3 full academic years. (Section 3201 of the ESEA)

Institution of higher education has the meaning given that term in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965. (Section 8101(29) of the ESEA)

Language instruction educational program means an instruction course--

(A) In which an English learner is placed for the purpose of developing and attaining English proficiency while meeting challenging State academic standards; and

(B) That may make instructional use of both English and a child's native language to enable the child to develop and attain English proficiency, and may include the participation of English proficient children if such course is designed to enable all participating children to become proficient in English and a second language. (Section 3201 of the ESEA)

Logic model (also referred to as a theory of action) means a framework that identifies key project components of the proposed project (*i.e.*, the active "ingredients" that are hypothesized to be critical to achieving the relevant outcomes) and describes the theoretical and operational relationships among the key project components and relevant outcomes. (34 CFR 77.1.)

Note: Applicants may use resources such as the Pacific Education Laboratory's Education Logic Model Application (<http://relpacific.mcrel.org/resources/elm-app>) to help design their logic models.

Pre-service means the period of preparation for a person who does not have a prior teaching certificate or license and who is enrolled in a State-approved teacher education program that leads to a full State-approved certificate or license.

Project component means an activity, strategy, intervention, process, product, practice, or policy included in a project. Evidence may pertain to an individual project component or to a combination of project components (*e.g.*, training teachers on instructional practices for English learners and follow-on coaching for these teachers). (34 CFR 77.1)

Relevant outcome means the student outcome(s) or other outcome(s) the key project component is designed to improve, consistent with the specific goals of the program. (34 CFR 77.1)