Postsecondary Student Success Grant (PSSG) Program

Pre-Application Technical Assistance Webinar

Introductions

Office of Postsecondary Education

Beatriz Ceja-Williams
Senior Director of Institutional Services

Nemeka Mason-Clercin
Education Research Analyst and Co-Lead of PSSG

Nalini Lamba-Nieves
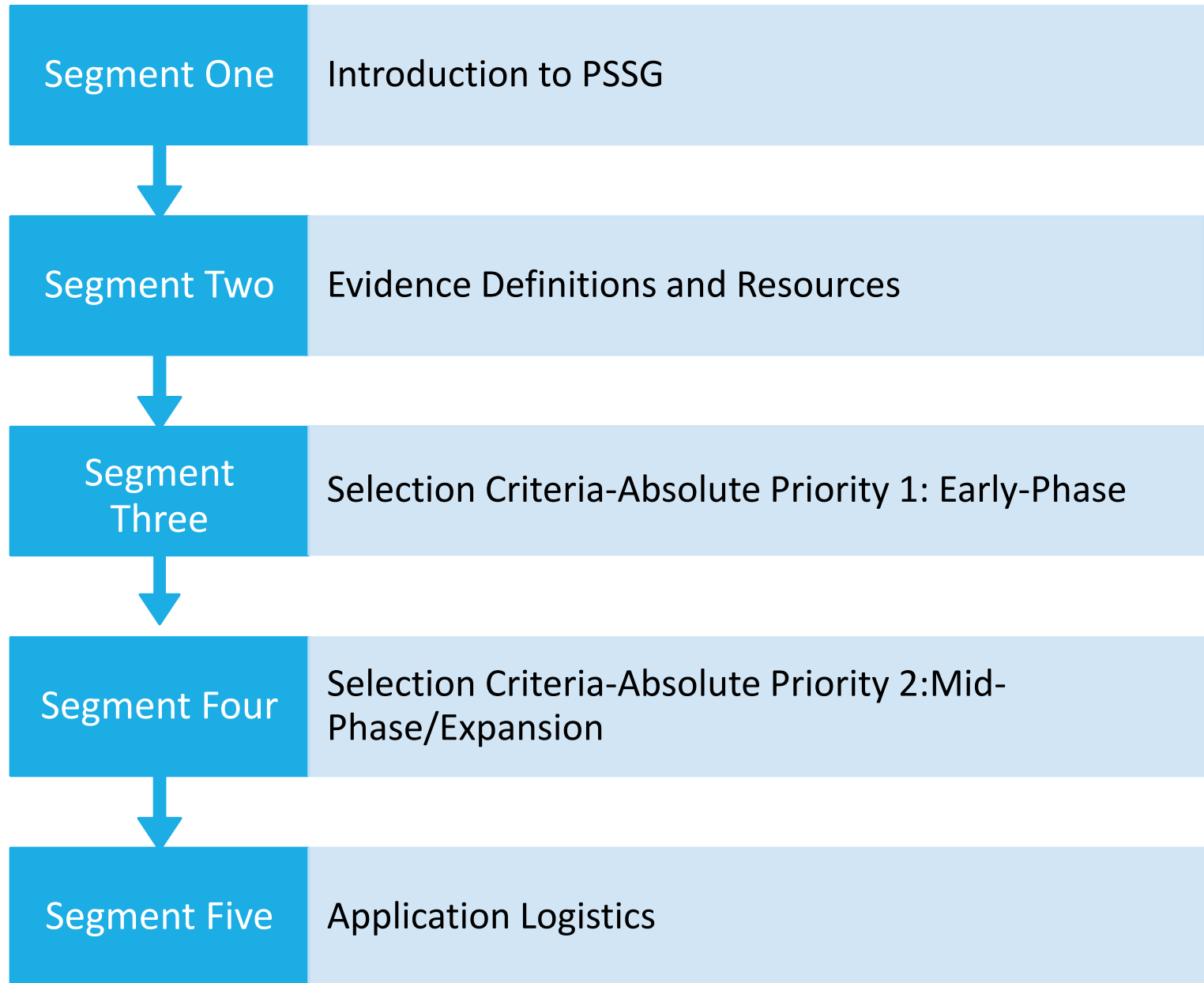Senior Program Management Analyst and Co-Lead of PSSG

Institute of Education Sciences

Jonathan Jacobson
Branch Chief for Knowledge Synthesis

Betsy Wolf
Senior Research Scientist

Felicia Sanders
Education Research Analyst

Agenda

These slides provide brief summary. Please refer to the **Notice Inviting Applications (NIA)** and **Application Booklet** for official guidance.

Segment One	Introduction to PSSG
Segment Two	Evidence Definitions and Resources
Segment Three	Selection Criteria-Absolute Priority 1: Early-Phase
Segment Four	Selection Criteria-Absolute Priority 2:Mid-Phase/Expansion
Segment Five	Application Logistics

Program Purpose:

To equitably **improve postsecondary student outcomes**, including retention, transfer (including successful transfer of completed credits), credit accumulation, and completion, by leveraging data and implementing, scaling, and rigorously evaluating **evidence-based activities to support data-driven decisions and actions** by institutional leaders committed to inclusive student success.
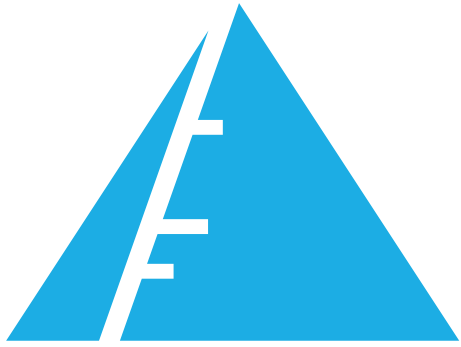
Two-tiered structure
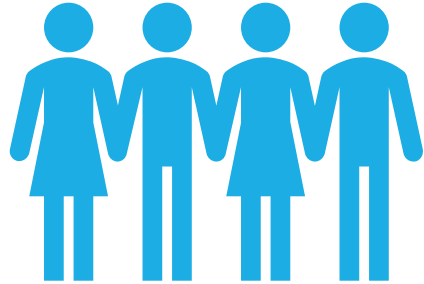
Target population of underserved students

Utilize evidence-based best practices

Independent Evaluation

Program Overview

Dates to Remember

Applications Available: July 26, 2023

Submission Deadline:

September 25, 2023, at 11:59pm EST

Notification of Successful & Unsuccessful Applications: December 2023

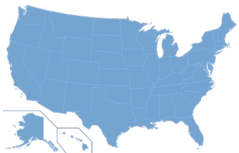Grant Activities Commence: January 2024
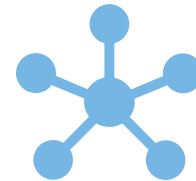
Program Requirements - Eligibility

Institutions designated as eligible to apply under Title III/V (including HBCUs, TCCUs, MSIs, and SIP institutions)

Nonprofits that are not institutions of higher education (IHEs) or associated with an IHE, in partnership with at least one eligible Title III/V IHE

States, in partnership with at least one eligible Title III/V IHE

Public systems of higher education institutions

Please refer to the 2023 Eligibility Matrix to verify designation as a Title III/V institution.

Absolute Priorities – AP1

- <u>Absolute Priority 1 (AP1)</u> - Applications that Demonstrate a Rationale, "Early-phase"

  Under this priority, an applicant proposes a project that **demonstrates a rationale** to improve postsecondary success for underserved students, including retention and completion.

Absolute Priorities – AP1

- Applicant must include in the <u>Evidence Form</u>:
  1. Provide the citation or link for the research or evaluation findings

  2. Describe how the research or evaluation findings suggest that the project component included in the logic model is likely to improve relevant outcomes.

  3. Explain how the project component(s) is informed by the research or evaluation findings.

Please cite page numbers and table numbers from the study or WWC publication, where applicable.

Absolute Priorities – AP2

- Absolute Priority 2 (AP2)— Applicants that Demonstrate Moderate Evidence, "Mid-phase" or Strong Evidence, "Expansion"

  - An applicant **proposes a project supported** by evidence that meets the conditions in the definition of "**Moderate Evidence**" or "**Strong Evidence**," to improve postsecondary success for underserved students, including retention and completion rates.

  - Projects must be implemented at a multi-site sample _**or**_ include at least 2,000 students.

Absolute Priorities – AP2

- Applicants addressing this priority must:
  1. Identify up to two studies to be reviewed against WWC standards;
  2. Clearly identify the citations and relevant findings for each study in the Evidence form; and
  3. Ensure that all cited studies are from publicly available.

Note: The studies may have been conducted by the applicant or by a third party. The Department may not review a study that an applicant fails to clearly identify for review.

Absolute Priorities – AP2

- Applicant must provide in the <u>Evidence Form</u>:
  1. The positive student outcomes the applicant intends to replicate and how these outcomes correspond to the positive student outcomes in the cited studies;

  2. The characteristics of the population or setting to be served and how these characteristics correspond to the characteristics of the population or setting in the cited studies; and

  3. The practice(s) the applicant plans to implement and how the practice(s) correspond with the practice(s) in the cited studies

Competitive Preference Priority (CPP)

This priority is:

- Applicants that have made progress towards or can demonstrate they have a plan to improve student outcomes for underserved students by using data to continually assess and improve the effectiveness of funded activities and sustain data-driven continuous improvement processes at the institution after the grant period (up to 6 points).

Competitive Preference Priority

- Applicants addressing this priority must:
  - (a) Identify or describe how they will develop the performance and outcome measures they will use to monitor and evaluate implementation of the intervention(s), including baseline data, intermediate and annual targets, and disaggregation by student subgroups (up to 2 points);

  - (b) Describe how they will assess and address gaps in current data systems, tools, and capacity and how they will monitor and respond to performance and outcome data to improve implementation of the intervention on an ongoing basis and as part of formative and summative evaluation of the intervention(s) (up to 2 points); and

  - (c) Describe how institutional leadership will be involved with and supportive of project leadership and how the project relates to the institution's broader student success priorities and improvement processes (up to 2 points).

Estimated Award Size

	Absolute Priority 1 - Early-Phase	Absolute Priority 2 - Mid-Phase/ Expansion
Estimated Available Funds	$22,275,000	$22,275,000
Estimated Range of Awards	$2-4 million	$6-8 million
Estimated Average Size of Awards	$3 million	$7 million
Maximum Amount of Award	$4 million	$8 million
Estimated Number of New Awards	5-8	3-4
Project Period for Award	48 months	48 months
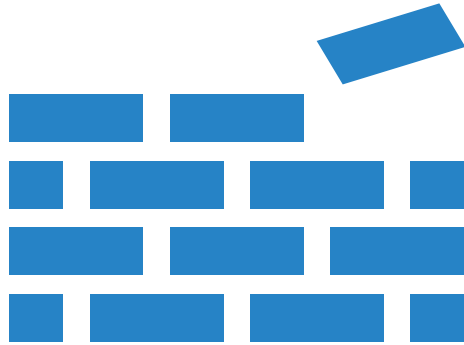
Absolute Priority 1: Early-Phase

Develop, **implement**, and **test the feasibility** of a program that prior research suggests is likely to improve relevant outcomes. Key project components informed by this research.

Absolute Priority 2: Mid-Phase/Expansion

Based on **proven, successful evidence-based practices** that provide vital insight such as for whom and in which contexts a practice/intervention is most effective, while addressing the barriers to scale.

Using and Building Evidence

TIERED EVIDENCE

	Absolute Priority 1	Absolute Priority 2
Phase	**Early Phase**	**Mid-Phase/Expansion**
Evidence Tier	Demonstrates a Rationale	Moderate Evidence or Strong Evidence
Evidence Requirement	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 student retention and completion.	WWC Practice Guide Reporting Strong or Moderate evidence base for corresponding recommendation. WWC Intervention Report reporting a "positive effect" or "potentially positive effect" on a relevant outcome based on a "medium to large" extent of evidence, with no reporting of a "negative effect" or "potentially negative effect" on a relevant outcome. Evidence from at least one well designed and well implemented quasi-experimental or experimental study.
Logic Model Required with Application	Yes	Yes
Minimum Evaluation Design for Project Evaluation Proposed by Applicant	Quasi-experimental	Experimental
Evaluation Design Must Meet WWC Standards	With or Without reservations	Without reservations

Match Requirement

- Applicants must provide a match of at least 10 percent of the requested grant funds.

- Types of acceptable match:
  - Other Federal Funds
  - State Funds
  - Local Funds
  - Private Source
  - In-Kind Contributions

Match Requirement Waiver

Waivers may be requested under the following:

1. Difficulty of raising matching funds for a program to serve a high poverty area defined as a Census tract, a set of contiguous Census tracts, an American Indian Reservation, Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area (as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau), Alaska Native Village Statistical Area or Alaska Native Regional Corporation Area, Native Hawaiian Homeland Area, or other tribal land as defined by the Secretary in guidance or county that has a poverty rate of at least 25 percent as set every 5 years using American Community Survey 5-Year data;

2. Serving a significant population of low-income students defined as at least 50 percent (or meet the eligibility threshold for the appropriate institutional sector) of degree-seeking enrolled students receiving need-based grant aid under Title IV; or

3. Showing significant economic hardship as demonstrated by low average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student, in comparison with the average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student of institutions that offer similar instruction.

Performance Measures – General

For the purpose of Department reporting under 34 CFR 75.110, the Department has established a set of required performance measures (as defined in the NIA):

1. First-year credit accumulation.

2. Annual retention (at initial institution) and persistence (at any institution) rates.

3. Success rates including graduation and upward transfer for two-year institutions.

4. Time to credential.

5. Number of credentials conferred.

Note: All measures should be disaggregated by race/ethnicity and Pell grant recipient status and should be inclusive of all credential-seeking students (e.g., full-time and part-time, first-time and transfer-in.)

Note: All measures should have baseline and performance targets.

Performance Measures – Project-Specific

Applications must provide the following information as directed under 34 CFR 75.110(b):

1. Performance measures.
    i. How each proposed performance measure would accurately measure the performance of the project and how the proposed performance measure would be consistent with the performance measures established for the program funding the competition.

2. Baseline (as defined in the NIA) data.
    i. Why each proposed baseline is valid; or
    ii. If the applicant has determined that there are no established baseline data for a particular performance measure, an explanation of why there is no established baseline and of how and when, during the project period, the applicant would establish a valid baseline for the performance measure.

3. Performance targets.
    i. Why each proposed performance target is ambitious yet achievable compared to the baseline for the performance measure and when, during the project period, the applicant would meet the performance target(s).

Data Collection & Reporting

Applications must also provide the following information as directed under 34 CFR 75.110(c):

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; and

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.

Data Collection & Reporting — Indicators of Success

Depending on the nature of the intervention proposed in the application, common metrics may include the following:

1. College-level math and English course completion in the first year (developmental education);

2. Unmet financial need (financial aid);

3. Program of study selection in the first year (advising);

4. Post-transfer completion (transfer); and

5. Re-enrollment (degree reclamation).

Tiebreaker Procedure

First Tiebreaker: The first tiebreaker will be the applicant with the highest percentage of undergraduate students who are Pell grant recipients. If a tie remains, the second tiebreaker will be utilized.

◦ We will use IPEDS Data. Please be sure to include the OPEID number and the name of each institution listed in the application.

Second Tiebreaker: The second tiebreaker will be the highest average score for the selection criterion titled "Significance."

Program Evaluation Requirements

Evaluation: This program uses the waiver authority of section 437(d)(1) of GEPA to require a grantee to conduct **an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of its project.**

Evidence Definitions and Resources

Jonathan Jacobson

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)
Institute of Education Sciences (IES)

whatworks.ed.gov

Evidence Tiers in ED Regulations

- ***Evidence-based*** means the proposed ***project component*** is supported by one or more of
  - ***Strong Evidence (Tier 1)***,
  - ***Moderate Evidence (Tier 2)***,
  - ***Promising Evidence (Tier 3)***, or
  - ***Evidence that Demonstrates a Rationale (Tier 4).***

- ***Strong Evidence*** and ***Moderate Evidence*** *need to meet* ***What Works Clearinghouse*** *standards*.

- *All tiers of evidence except* ***Evidence that Demonstrates a Rationale*** *need to include a statistically significant and favorable effect on a* ***relevant outcome***.

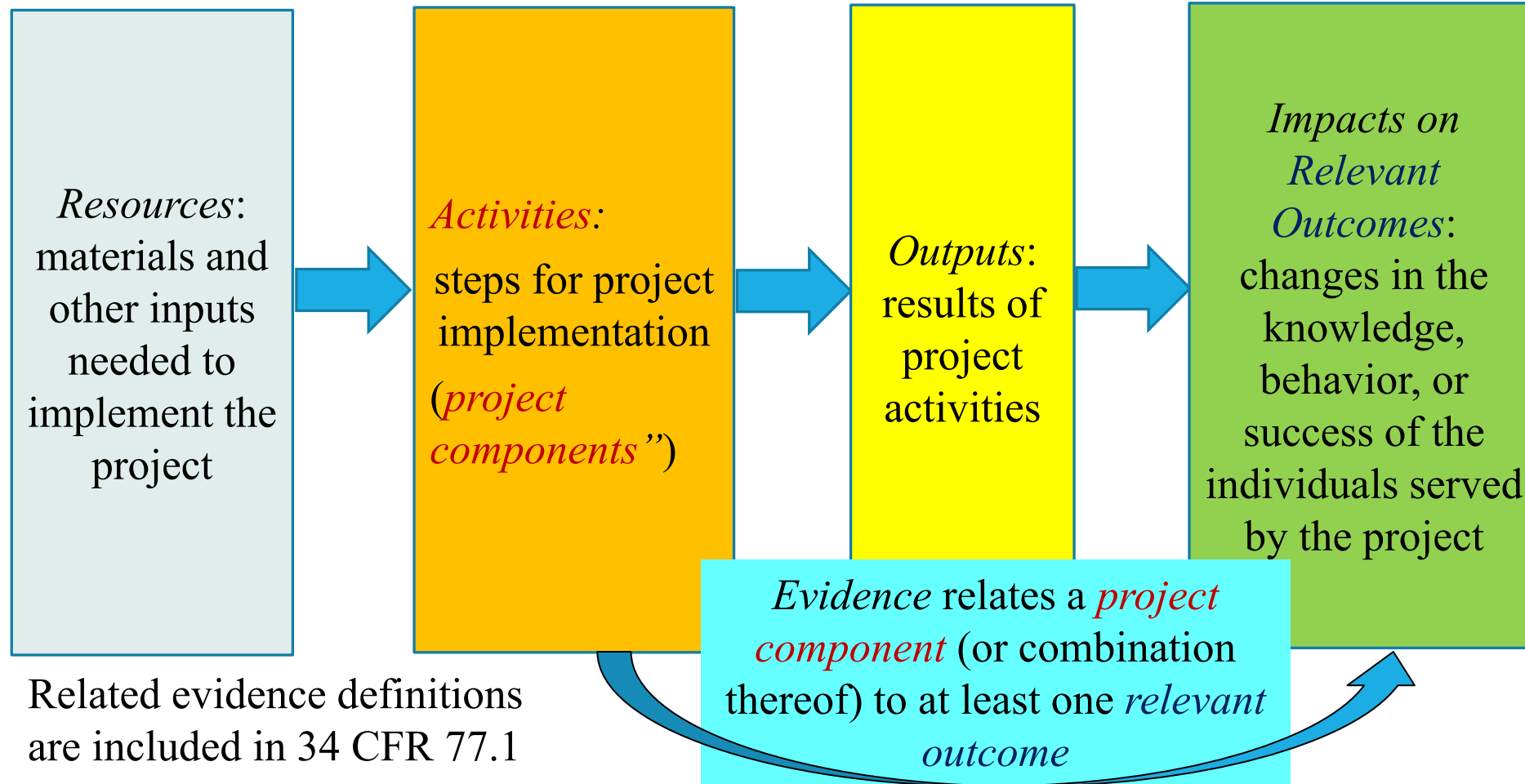**Source: EDGAR, 34 CFR 77.1**

IES Institute of Education Sciences

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**.

A **logic model**—also referred to as a theory of action—means a framework that identifies key **project components** of the proposed project—that is, 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**.

A *Logic Model* Relates to *Project Activities* to *Relevant Outcomes*

Logic model [theory of action] framework from "Logic Models: A Tool for Effective Program Planning, Collaboration, and Monitoring," https://ies.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=REL2014025

Resources: materials and other inputs needed to implement the project

Activities: steps for project implementation (*project components"*)

Outputs: results of project activities

Impacts on Relevant Outcomes: changes in the knowledge, behavior, or success of the individuals served by the project

Evidence relates a *project component* (or combination thereof) to at least one *relevant outcome*

Related evidence definitions are included in 34 CFR 77.1

Logic Models for Project Design and Evaluation

Project component means an activity, strategy, intervention, process, product, practice, or policy included in a project.

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.

In developing ***logic models*** for project design and evaluation, applicants may want to use logic model resources available from the Regional Educational Laboratories: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/Products.

For planning evaluation designs to meet WWC standards, see the resources at https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/projects/evaluationTA.asp

Requirements for a WWC Practice Guide at *whatworks.ed.gov*
Providing *Strong Evidence* or *Moderate Evidence*

Characteristic	Strong Evidence	Moderate Evidence
Evidence base (under version 2.1 or higher of the *WWC Handbook*) for practice recommendation cited to show the effectiveness of a **proposed project component** on a **relevant outcome**	*"Strong evidence"* base	*"Strong evidence"* base <u>or</u> *"moderate evidence"* base
Overlap with proposed populations/settings	Overlap with **both** required	Overlap with **either** required

Source: EDGAR, 34 CFR 77.1

Requirements for a WWC Intervention Report at *whatworks.ed.gov*
Providing *Strong Evidence* or *Moderate Evidence*

Characteristic	Strong Evidence	Moderate Evidence
Intervention report **effectiveness rating** (under version 2.1 or higher of the *WWC Handbook*) for the effect of a **proposed project component** on a **relevant outcome**	*"Positive effect,"* with no reporting of a *"negative effect"* or *"potentially negative effect"*	*"Positive effect"* <u>or</u> *"potentially positive effect,"* with no reporting of a *"negative effect"* or *"potentially negative effect"*
Extent of evidence	*Medium to large:* 2 or more studies with a combined sample of at least 350 individuals	
Overlap with proposed populations/settings	Overlap with **<u>both</u>** required	Overlap with **<u>either</u>** required

Source: EDGAR, 34 CFR 77.1

Requirements for <u>Individual Studies</u> Reviewed by the WWC Providing *Strong Evidence* or *Moderate Evidence*

Characteristic	Strong Evidence	Moderate Evidence
WWC **study rating** (under version 2.1 or higher of the *WWC Handbook*)	***Meets standards without reservations***	***Meets standards with reservations*** <u>or</u> ***Meets standards without reservations***
Study findings for the effect of a **proposed project component** on a *relevant outcome*	***Statistically significant*** <u>and</u> ***positive*** (favorable) for at least one *relevant outcome*, with no *overriding* statistically significant and *negative* effects on *relevant outcomes* reported in the study or in a corresponding *WWC* intervention report (under version 2.1 or higher of the *WWC Handbook*)	
Study sample (alone or in a combination of studies)	***Large sample*** (350+ individuals) <u>and</u> ***multi-site sample*** (e.g., >1 State, county, city, district, or campus)	
Overlap **with proposed populations/settings**	Overlap with <u>**both**</u> required	Overlap with <u>**either**</u> required

Source: EDGAR, 34 CFR 77.1

Evidence Tier	TIER 1 STRONG	TIER 2 MODERATE	TIER 3 PROMISING	TIER 4 DEMONSTRATES RATIONALE
Study design	Well-designed and well-implemented experimental design	Well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental design	Well-designed and well-implemented correlational design with statistical controls for selection bias	A logic model informed by research or evaluation
Positive, statistically significant effect on the outcome	★	★	★	Related research or evaluation is planned or underway
No overriding negative effects	★	★		
Large, multisite sample	350+ students across multiple sites	350+ students across multiple sites		
Relevance to proposed context	Population **and** setting	Population **or** setting		

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Evidence Form

1. Level of Evidence

Select the level of evidence of effectiveness for which you are applying. See the Notice Inviting Applications for the relevant definitions and requirements.

☐ Demonstrates a Rationale   ☐ Promising Evidence   ☐ Moderate Evidence   ☐ Strong Evidence

2. Citation and Relevance

Fill in the chart below with the appropriate information about the studies that support your application.

A. Research/Citation	B. Relevant Outcome(s)/Relevant Finding(s)	C. Project Component(s)/Overlap of Populations and/or Settings

EXAMPLE: For Demonstration Purposes Only

A. Citation	B. Relevant Finding(s)	C. Overlap of Population and Settings
Bettinger, E.P., & Baker, R. (2011). The effects of student coaching in college: An evaluation of a randomized experiment in student mentoring. Stanford, CA: Stanford University School of Education. Available at https://ed.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/betti nger_baker_030711.pdf Meets WWC Group Design Standards without Reservations under review standards 2.1 (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/72030).	The intervention in the study is a form of college mentoring called student coaching. Coaches helped with a number of issues, including prioritizing studies and identifying barriers and ways to overcome them. Coaches were encouraged to contact their assignees by either phone, email, text messaging, or social networking sites (pp. 8-10). The proposed project for Alpha Beta Community College students will train professional staff and faculty coaches on the most effective way(s) to communicate with their mentees, suggest topics for mentors to talk to their mentees, and be aware of signals to prevent withdrawal or academic failure. The relevant outcomes in the study are student persistence and degree completion (Table 3, p. 27), which are also included in the logic model for the proposed project. This study found that students assigned to receive coaching and mentoring were significantly more likely than students in the comparison group to remain enrolled at their institutions (pp. 15-16, and Table 3, p. 27).	The full study sample consisted of "13,555 students across eight different higher education institutions, including two- and four-year schools and public, private not-for-profit, and proprietary colleges." (p. 10) The number of students examined for purposes of retention varied by outcome (Table 3, p. 27). The study sample overlaps with Alpha Beta Community College in terms of both postsecondary students and postsecondary settings.

Q&A on Evidence Requirements

Selection Criteria and Other Application Requirements

Selection Criteria

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY:1
EARLY PHASE

Absolute Priority One:

Early-Phase Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	Maximum Points
Significance	20
Quality of the Project Design	30
Quality of Project Personnel*	10
Quality of Management Plan*	10
Quality of Project Evaluation	30
Total Points without CPP	**100**
Competitive Preference Priority	6
Total Points Including CPP	**106**

* Indicates selection criteria unique to Early-Phase applications

Significance (20 points)

In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.

2. The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (up to 20 points)

Significance – Questions to Consider

- What changes will occur at the institution if the services and project to be supported by this grant are implemented?

- How will students benefit from the services to be provided?

- How will any institutional barriers be mitigated to support improvements in student outcomes?

Quality of the Project Design (30 points)

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.

2. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

   a. The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. (up to 10 points)

   b. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (up to 5 points)

   c. The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs. (up to 15 points)

Quality of the Project Design – Questions to Consider

- What will change as a result of this funding?

- How does the evidence support the framework of the proposed project/activities?

- Are the goals, objectives, and outcomes clearly outlined in the application? Are they specific and measurable? Have you included S.M.A.R.T objectives? (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound)

- Is the alignment between the proposed project and targeted population clearly identified? How does the proposed project address the needs?

Quality of Project Personnel (10 Points)

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

2. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. (up to 5 points)

3. In addition, the Secretary considers the qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (up to 5 points)

Quality of the Project Personnel – Questions to Consider

- What activities and/or strategies will be implemented to ensure a diverse pool of individuals will work on the proposed project?

- What qualifications, experience, and training will you require of personnel that will be assigned/hired to work on the proposed project activities?

Quality of Management Plan (10 Points)

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

2. In determining the quality of the management plan, the Secretary considers the adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (up to 10 points)

Quality of the Management Plan – Questions to Consider

- Are the roles and responsibilities of the individuals responsible for implementing the funded project included in the application?

- How will the project be managed?

- Who will be responsible?

- How is leadership involved?

- Are milestones identified in the application?

Quality of the Project Evaluation (30 Points)

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

2. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

    1. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the WWC standards with or without reservations as described in the WWC Handbook. (up to 20 points)

    2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (up to 5 points)

    3. The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (up to 5 points)

Quality of the Evaluation Plan — Questions to Consider

- Who will be your **project evaluator?**

- *Does your chosen evaluator have **sufficient experience** in the selected **evaluation design method**?*

- Have you identified the **project components** (services) to be evaluated?

- Have you identified **relevant outcomes** for the evaluation?

- Does the **study design** *have the potential to **meet WWC standards without reservations (Mid-phase/Expansion) or at least with reservations (Early-phase).***

- What are your qualitative and quantitative **data sources** to measure project implementation (e.g., fidelity) and relevant outcomes and implement your study design (e.g., baseline measures for a QED)?

- What is the **evaluation timeline**?

Q&A on Early-Phase Grants

Selection Criteria

ABSOLUTE PRIORITY:2

MID-PHASE/EXPANSION

Absolute Priority Two:

Mid-Phase/ Expansion Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	Maximum Points
Significance	15
Strategy to Scale*	35
Quality of the Project Design	15
Quality of Project Evaluation	35
Total Points without CPP	**100**
Competitive Preference Priority	6
Total Points Including CPP	**106**

* Indicates selection criterion unique to Mid-Phase/Expansion applications

Significance (15 points)

1. The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.

2. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

    1. The national significance of the proposed project. (up to 5 points)

    2. The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (up to 5 points)

    3. The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies. (up to 5 points)

Significance – Questions to Consider

- What changes will occur at the institution if the services and project to be supported by this grant are implemented?

- How will students benefit from the services to be provided?

- How will any institutional barriers be mitigated to support improvements in student outcomes?

Strategy to Scale (35 points)

1. The Secretary considers the applicant's strategy to scale the proposed project.

2. In determining the applicant's capacity to scale the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

    1. The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application. (up to 15 points)

    2. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (up to 5 points)

    3. The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication. (up to 15 points)

Strategy to Scale – Questions to Consider

Does the application adequately outlined how the proposed initiative will be scaled ?

Are there adequate resources that focus on efficiency in all aspects of implementation (students served, staffing, cost, funding).

Does the application clearly outlined all avenues that will be used to disseminate project results?

Are the roles and responsibilities of the individuals responsible for implementing the funded project included in the application?

Are milestones identified in the application?

Quality of Project Design (15 points)

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.

2. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

   1. The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. (up to 5 points)

   2. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (up to 5 points)

   3. The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs. (up to 5 points)

Quality of Project Design – Questions to Consider

How does the evidence support the framework of the proposed project/activities?

Are the goals, objectives, and outcomes clearly outlined in the application? Are they specific and measurable?

Is the alignment between the proposed project and targeted population clearly identified? How does the proposed project address the needs?

Quality of the Project Evaluation (35 Points)

1. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

2. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

    1. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the WWC standards without reservations as described in the WWC Handbook. (up to 20 points)

    2. The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings. (up to 5 points)

    3. The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (up to 5 points)

    4. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (up to 5 points)

Quality of Evaluation Plan – Questions to Consider

- Who will be your *project evaluator?*

- *Does your chosen evaluator have* **sufficient experience** *in the selected* **evaluation design method**?

- Have you identified the *project components* (services) to be evaluated?

- Have you identified *relevant outcomes* for the evaluation?

- Does the *study design have the potential to* **meet WWC standards without reservations (Mid-phase/Expansion) or at least with reservations (Early-phase).**

- What are your qualitative and quantitative *data sources* to measure project implementation (e.g., fidelity) and relevant outcomes and implement your study design (e.g., baseline measures for a QED)?

- What is the *evaluation timeline*?

Q&A on Mid-Phase/ Expansion Grants

Application Logistics

Application Submission

All applications must be submitted in Grants.Gov

Please visit the Grants.gov site (https://www.grants.gov/) for guides and instructions on application submission, under Applicants.

All applicants must have a registered and active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)

Please visit the Sam.gov site for more information

https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration

Application Package

Please refer to the **Application Booklet** for additional guidance

Part 1: Standard Documents
- ☐ Application for Federal Assistance (Form SF 424)
- ☐ ED Supplemental Information for SF 424
- ☐ Evidence Form

Part 2: Budget Information
- ☐ ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524) Sections A & B

Part 3: ED Abstract Form
- ☐ Project Abstract

Part 4: Project Narrative Attachment Form
- ☐ Application Narrative

Part 5: Budget Narrative Attachment Form
- ☐ Budget Narrative

Part 6: Other Attachments Form
- ☐ Appendix A: FY 2023 Eligibility Letter (available at HEPIS Web Portal)
- ☐ Appendix B: Nonprofit 501(c)(3) status verification (only applicable if lead submitter is not an IHE)
- ☐ Appendix C: Letters of Support and Memoranda of Understanding, if applicable
- ☐ Appendix D: Logic Model
- ☐ Appendix E: Resumes of Key Personnel
- ☐ Appendix F: Waiver Request of 10% Match Requirement, if applicable
- ☐ Appendix G: Demonstration of Match Contributions
- ☐ Appendix H: Copy of Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- ☐ Appendix I: References
- ☐ Appendix J: Other, if applicable

Sample FY 2023 Eligibility Letter

U.S. Department of Education

Office of Postsecondary Education

OPEID: 00000000

XYZ Community College

Washington, DC

FY: 2023

Print Date: 08/15/2023

We are pleased to inform you that your recent request for designation as an eligible institution under Title III and/or Title V of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEA), is approved.

Please note, if you have a current Title III or Title V grant that will end during this fiscal year, you may be eligible to apply for additional programs. Please contact the program officer for which you are interested in applying.

Please retain this letter as evidence of your eligibility and for an adequate audit trail.

As a result of receiving this designation your institution is also eligible for a waiver of the non-Federal share matching requirements under the Federal Work Study Program (FWS) the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program (FSEOG) and the TRIO Student Support Services Program under Title IV of the HEA. Your institution is also potentially eligible for a waiver of the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language (UISFL) Program matching requirement, pending a demonstration of your institution's need for such a waiver in your application for new awards under this program.

NOTE: Branch campuses are not eligible for the waiver of the non-Federal share matching requirements. If the main campus is also eligible for Titles III and V programs, and they receive the cost-share waiver, the main campus' waiver can be extended to its eligible branch campus.

The eligibility for a waiver of the non-Federal share matching requirements applies for a one-year period beginning July 1, 2023. The offices within the Department of Education that administer those specific programs will handle the waiver of the cost sharing. You must apply for eligibility designation annually.

If you have questions concerning this designation, please contact Christopher Smith at Christopher.Smith@ed.gov or (202) 453-7946 or Jason Cottrell, Ph.D. at Jason.Cottrell@ed.gov, or (202) 453-7530. If you have questions concerning the waiver of the non-Federal share matching requirements for FWS or FSEOG, please contact the Campus-Based Call Center at CODSupport@ed.gov or (800) 848-0978.

Sincerely,

Beatriz Ceja Williams
Senior Director
Institutional Service Division

Submission Requirements – Application Narrative

The application narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application.

We recommend that you limit the application narrative to no more than 30 pages.

The recommended page limit does not apply to the:
- Cover sheet;
- One-page abstract;
- Budget section, including the narrative budget justification;
- Assurances and certifications;
- Resumes;
- References/bibliography;
- Letters of support; or
- Waiver request for the matching requirement.

Submission Requirements - Application Narrative

Recommended Formatting Standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11"

- Double-spaced

- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger, and no smaller than 10-pitch (characters per inch).

- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

Resources to Help Project Evaluations Meet WWC Standards

WWC Website: whatworks.ed.gov or https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

WWC Handbooks: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks

Online Training: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/OnlineTraining

Resources for Study Authors: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Resources/ResourcesForStudyAuthors

Technical Assistance Materials for Conducting Rigorous Impact Evaluations: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/projects/evaluationTA.asp

Technical Assistance Contractors Funded by the Department

Program Contacts

For answers to the most common questions, please review our FAQs

Email is the best mode of contact: pssg@ed.gov

Competition Manager: **Nemeka Mason-Clercin**

Telephone: (202) 987-1340

Program Co-Lead: **Nalini Lamba-Nieves**

Telephone: (202) 453-7953

Thank You!