

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Office of Postsecondary Education

Washington, DC 20202



**Fiscal Year 2023**

**Application for Grants Under**

**Postsecondary Student Success Program**

**CFDA # 84.116M**

**Form Approved**

**OMB No. 1894-0006, Expiration Date: 02/29/2024**

**CLOSING DATE: 09/25/2023**

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## DEAR APPLICANT LETTER



### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

July 26, 2023

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in applying for a grant under the Postsecondary Student Success Grant (PSSG) Program. This grant competition is administered by the Office of Postsecondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education (Department). The purpose of this program, funded under the authority of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), is to equitably improve postsecondary student outcomes by leveraging data and implementing what works, scaling evidence-based programs, and rigorously evaluating activities to support data-driven decisions and actions.

Please note that the FY 2023 PSSG program competition includes two absolute priorities and one competitive preference priority. Additional information is included in this package and detailed in the Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards (Notice).

The Notice published in the Federal Register is the official document describing the requirements for submitting a grant application. We advise that you carefully review the application guidelines included in this package and the Federal Register notice.

FY 2023 Competition Highlights found in this application package provide important information to help you prepare your application for a timely submission. The deadline for this application is September 25, 2023.

We appreciate your interest in the PSSG competition and look forward to receiving your application. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact the Program co-leads - Mrs. Nemeka Mason-Clerc and Ms. Nalini Lamba-Nieves - at [pssg@ed.gov](mailto:pssg@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

/s/

Nasser H. Paydar, Ph.D.  
Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education

## COMPETITION HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Postsecondary Student Success Grant (PSSG) Program FY 2023 applications must be submitted electronically using Grants.gov.** You are urged to acquaint yourself with the requirements of Grants.gov early as the registration procedures may require 5 or more days to complete. A more thorough discussion is included later in this application package. Grants.gov is accessible through its portal page at: <http://Grants.gov>. The requirements for obtaining an exception to the electronic submission requirement are included in the Notice for FY 2023. If you think you may need an exception, you are urged to review the requirements promptly.
2. It is important to know that the Grants.gov site is its own system separate from the Department's G5 system. Grants.gov does not allow applicants to "un-submit" applications. Therefore, if you discover that changes or additions are needed once your application has been accepted and validated by the Department, you must "re-submit" the application. You should know that if the Department receives duplicate applications, we will accept and process the application with the latest "date/time received" validation.
3. Please note that you must submit your application by 11:59:59 p.m. (Eastern Time) on or before the application deadline date. Late applications will not be accepted. **We suggest that you submit your application several days before the deadline.** The Department is required to enforce the established deadline to ensure fairness to all applicants. No changes or additions to an application will be accepted after the deadline date and time.
4. Electronic submission of applications is required; therefore, you must submit an electronic application unless you follow the procedures outlined in the Federal Register Notice for FY 2023 and qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement.

Applicants are strongly recommended to adhere to the page limit specified in the Application Narrative Instructions portion of the application. The Notice for FY 2023, published in the Federal Register, contains specific information governing recommended page limits and formatting instructions. We **strongly** recommend a 30-page limit that includes the applicant's response to the Absolute Priorities, the Competitive Priority (if addressed), and the Selection Criteria.

5. All attachments must be in .PDF format. Other types of files will not be accepted. Please note, once you download an application from Grants.gov, you will be working offline and saving data on your computer. It is important to note where you are saving the Grants.gov file on your computer. You will need to log on to Grants.gov to upload and submit the application (this is different from e-Application, where you may have previously worked online and saved data to the Department's database). You must provide the UEI number that was used when your organization registered with the System for Award Management (SAM).

**For Grants.gov related questions and assistance, please contact:**

Support Desk email: [support@Grants.gov](mailto:support@Grants.gov)

Support Desk Telephone: (800) 518-4726

Contact Telephone Hours: 24 hours, 7 days a week, except Federal holidays

Online Website: <https://www.grants.gov/>

Also, refer to the “Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants” section found in this application package.

You are reminded that the document published in the Federal Register is the official document, and that you should not rely upon any information that is inconsistent with the guidelines contained within the official document.

6. In the FY 2023 competition, the Department has established *two absolute priorities and one competitive preference priority* which are outlined below:

**Absolute Priorities:**

For FY 2023 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are absolute priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet one of these priorities.

These Priorities are:

Absolute Priority 1 (AP1) - 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 Priority 2 (AP2)— Applicants that Demonstrate Moderate Evidence, “Mid-phase” or Strong Evidence, “Expansion”

Under this priority, 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 under this priority must be implemented at a multi-site sample or include at least 2,000 students.

(a) Applicants addressing this priority must:

- (1) identify up to two studies to be reviewed against the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Handbooks (as defined in the Notice) for the purposes of meeting the definition of moderate evidence or strong evidence;

(2) clearly identify the citations and relevant findings for each study in the Evidence form; and

(3) ensure that all cited studies are available to the Department from publicly available sources and provide links or other guidance indicating where each is 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.

(b) In addition to including up to two study citations, an applicant must provide in the Evidence form the following information:

(1) the positive student outcomes the applicant intends to replicate under its Mid-phase/Expansion grant 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 under its Mid-phase/Expansion grant 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 under its Mid-phase/Expansion grant and how the practice(s) correspond with the practice(s) in the cited studies.

Note: If the Department determines that an applicant has provided insufficient information, the applicant will not have an opportunity to provide additional information. However, if the WWC team reviewing evidence determines that a study does not provide enough information on key aspects of the study design, such as sample attrition or equivalence of intervention and comparison groups, the WWC may submit a query to the study author(s) to gather information for use in determining a study rating. Authors would be asked to respond to queries within 10 business days. Should the author query remain incomplete within 14 days of the initial contact to the study author(s), the study may be deemed ineligible under the grant competition. After the grant competition closes, the WWC will, for purposes of its own curation of studies, continue to include responses to author queries and make updates to study reviews as necessary. However, no additional information will be considered after the competition closes and the initial timeline established for response to an author query passes.

### **Competitive Preference Priority:**

For FY 2023, and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is a competitive preference priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), we award up to an additional 6 points to an application, depending on how well the application meets the competitive preference priority.

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).

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).

7. As you develop your proposal, we ask you to carefully consider the specific content that you will provide in the Project Narrative in the application. This part of the application must address the selection criteria as listed in this application package and the Federal Register.

8. The grant duration is up to 48 months.

9. All applicants must provide a one-page abstract. Upload a one-page abstract as a PDF document. The abstract provides a concise description of the proposed project objectives, activities, and intended outcomes. The abstract should also indicate whether you are addressing the absolute priority and/or the competitive priority. Complete instructions for submitting the abstract are included in the "Instructions for Completing the Application Package" section of this application. The abstract must be uploaded into the **ED Abstract Form** in Grants.gov.

10. Information on the PSSG Program is accessible at the Department's website at: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/fipse/index.html>.

**1. Estimated Funding**

- AP1--Early-Phase
  - Estimated Available Funds: \$22,275,000
  - Estimated Range of Awards: \$2,000,000 to \$4,000,000
  - Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$3,000,000
  - Maximum Amount of Award: \$4,000,000
  - Estimated Number of New Awards: 5-8
  - Project Period for Award: 48 months
  
- AP2--Mid-Phase
  - Estimated Available Funds: \$22,275,000
  - Estimated Range of Awards: \$6,000,000 to \$8,000,000
  - Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$7,000,000
  - Maximum Amount of Award: \$8,000,000
  - Estimated Number of New Awards: 3-4
  - Project Period for Award: 48 months

The Department is not bound by these estimates.

**2. Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs**

Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs was issued to foster an intergovernmental partnership and to strengthen federalism by relying on state and local processes for the coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

**3. Length of New Award**

Applicants may apply for up to four years (48 months) of funding.

**4. PSSG Program Assurances**

All applications must comply with statutory and regulatory requirements. The assurances are included in the application package and must be signed by a certifying official in Grants.gov. By submitting a Postsecondary Student Success Grant program application, an applicant certifies that it has read the assurances and will fully comply with the requirements.

**5. Evaluation of Applications for Awards**

A panel of two or three non-federal reviewers will review each application in accordance with the priorities and selection criteria published in the Federal Register. Each reviewer will complete a technical review form, which includes the score awarded and feedback pertaining to the application.



Applications that do not meet eligibility, are submitted late, or do not address the absolute priorities will not be reviewed.

**6. Selection Criteria**

The selection criteria come from 34 CFR 75.210 and are detailed in the Notice.

**7. Applicant Funding**

Applicants should pay close attention to the “Maximum Award” section of the Notice. The Department will reduce the amount to the maximum allowed of any application that proposes a budget exceeding the maximum amount specified for the specific project type as indicated in the Notice.

**8. Selection of Grantees**

The Secretary will select applications for funding in rank order, according to the average score received from the peer review. If the Secretary has insufficient funding to award multiple applications with the same score, the Department will follow the tie-breaker process published in the Notice for this grant competition.

The Department’s Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs will inform Congress regarding applications approved for new PSSG Program awards. Successful applicants will receive award notices by e-mail shortly after Congress is notified. No funding information will be released before Congress is notified.

**9. Notice to Unsuccessful Applicants**

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing following the notice to successful applicants.

**10. Annual Performance Report Requirements**

If you receive a new grant award in FY 2023, you will be required during the funding cycle to submit annual and final performance reports.

**11. Contact Information**

Nemeka Mason-Clerc  
Education Research Analyst  
Institutional Service  
Office of Postsecondary Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.,  
HQ-LBJ-500  
Washington, D.C. 20202  
Telephone: (202) 987-1340

Or

Nalini Lamba-Nieves  
Program Manager  
Institutional Service  
Office of Postsecondary Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.,  
HQ-LBJ-5C127  
Washington, D.C. 20202  
Telephone: (202) 453-7953

Email: [pssg@ed.gov](mailto:pssg@ed.gov)

**12. For Grants.gov-related questions and assistance, please contact:**

Support Desk: Grants.gov Support Desk

Telephone: (800) 518-4726

Hours: 24 hours, 7 days a week, except Federal holidays

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

# GRANTS.GOV SUBMISSION PROCEDURES AND TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

Revised 12/2022

## IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ FIRST

U.S. Department of Education

### *Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants*

To facilitate your use of Grants.gov, this document includes important submission procedures you need to be aware of to ensure your application is received in a timely manner and accepted by the Department of Education.

#### **Browser Support**

The latest versions of Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE), Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, and Apple Safari are supported for use with Grants.gov. However, these web browsers undergo frequent changes and updates, so we recommend you have the latest version when using Grants.gov. Legacy versions of these web browsers may be functional, but you may experience issues. Grants.gov no longer provides support for Microsoft Internet Explorer 9 or below.

For additional information or updates, please see the Grants.gov Browser information in the Applicant FAQs: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html#browser>

#### **ATTENTION – Workspace, Adobe Forms and PDF Files**

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different web forms within an application. For each funding opportunity announcement (FOA), you can create individual instances of a workspace.

Below is an overview of applying on Grants.gov. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>

- 1) Create a Workspace: Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- 2) Complete a Workspace: Add participants to the workspace to work on the application together, complete all the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the state of your application process as you apply. As you apply using Workspace, you may click the blue question mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page to access context-sensitive help.

a. Adobe Reader: If you decide not to apply by filling out web forms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>

b. Mandatory Fields in Forms: In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.

c. Complete SF-424 Fields First: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant's name, address, and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

- 3) Submit a Workspace: An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.
- 4) Track a Workspace Submission: After successfully submitting a workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html>.

### **Helpful Reminders**

- 1) **REGISTER EARLY** – Grants.gov registration involves many steps including registration on SAM ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)), which usually takes approximately 7 to 10 business days, but can take longer depending on the completeness and accuracy of the data entered into the SAM database by an applicant. You may begin working on your application while completing the registration process, but you cannot submit an application until all of the Registration steps are complete. Please note that once your SAM registration is active, it will take 24-48 hours for the information to be available in Grants.gov, and before you can submit an application through Grants.gov. For detailed information on the Registration Steps, please go to: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>. Please note that your organization will need to update its SAM registration annually.

To register in SAM.gov, click on the “Get Started” link under the “Register Your Entity...” heading in SAM.gov. Grantees, and other entities wanting to do business with the U.S. Department of Education (e.g., entities applying for a grant), that are not already registered in SAM.gov must complete the “Register Entity” registration option and NOT the “Get a Unique Entity ID” option. The “Get a Unique Entity ID” option, which is not a full registration, is only available to entities for reporting purposes. Failing to complete the “Register Entity” option may result in loss of funding, loss of applicant eligibility, and/or delays in receiving a grant award. Information about SAM is available at [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov). To further assist you with registering in SAM or updating your existing SAM registration, see the [Quick Start Guide for Grant Registrations](#) and the Entity Registration Video at <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.

- 2) **SUBMIT EARLY – We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the last day to submit your application. Grants.gov will put a date/time stamp on your application and then process it after it is fully uploaded.** The time it takes to upload an application will vary depending on a number of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection, and the time it takes Grants.gov to process the application will vary as well. If Grants.gov rejects your application (see step three below), you will need to resubmit successfully to Grants.gov before 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the deadline date.

You must provide the UEI on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov. This UEI is assigned to your organization in SAM at the time your organization registers in SAM. If you do not enter the UEI assigned by SAM on your application, Grants.gov will reject your application.

- 3) **VERIFY SUBMISSION IS OK –** 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. Eastern Time, on the deadline date, 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 Grants.gov Track My Application link.

If the date/time received is later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on the deadline date, your application is late. If your application has a status of “Received” it is still awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will either change to “Validated” or “Rejected with Errors.” If the status is “Rejected with Errors,” your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found on the Grants.gov site:

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/encountering-error-messages.html>. For more detailed information on troubleshooting Adobe errors, you can review the Adobe Reader Software Tip Sheet at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe->

[software-compatibility.html](#). If you discover your application is late or has been rejected, please see the instructions below. Note: You will receive a series of confirmations both online and via e-mail about the status of your application. Please do not rely solely on e-mail to confirm whether your application has been received timely and validated successfully.

### **Submission Problems – What should you do?**

If you have problems submitting to Grants.gov before the closing date, please contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or email at: <mailto:support@grants.gov> or access the Grants.gov Self-Service Knowledge Base web portal at: <https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants>

We discourage paper applications, but if electronic submission is not possible (e.g., you do not have access to the internet), (1) you must provide a prior written notification that you intend to submit a paper application and (2) your paper application must be postmarked by the application deadline date. If you submit your prior written notification by email, it must be received by the Department no later than 14 calendar days before the application deadline date. If you mail your notification to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than 14 calendar days before the application deadline date (See the [2022 Common Instructions](#) for detailed instructions regarding this procedure).

### **Helpful Hints When Working with Grants.gov**

Please go to <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html> for help with Grants.gov. For additional tips related to submitting grant applications, please refer to the Grants.gov Applicant FAQs found at this Grants.gov link: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html> as well as additional information on Workspace at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html#workspace>.

### **Slow Internet Connections**

When using a slow internet connection, such as a dial-up connection, to upload and submit your application, it can take significantly longer than when you are connected to the Internet with a high-speed connection, e.g., cable modem/DSL/T1. While times will vary depending upon the size of your application, it can take a few minutes to a few hours to complete your grant submission using a dial up connection. Failure to fully upload an application by the deadline date and time will result in your application being marked late in the G5 system. **If you do not have access to a high-speed internet connection, you may want to consider following the instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than 14 calendar days before the application deadline date.** (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions and the [2022 Common Instructions](#).)

### **Attaching Files – Additional Tips**

Please note the following tips related to attaching files to your application:

- When you submit your application electronically, you must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in either Portable

Document Format (PDF) or Microsoft Word. Although applicants have the option of uploading any narrative sections and all other attachments to their application in either PDF or Microsoft Word, we **recommend** applicants submit all documents as read-only flattened PDFs, meaning any fillable PDF files must be saved and submitted as non-fillable PDF files and not as interactive or fillable PDF files, to better ensure applications are processed in a more timely, accurate, and efficient manner.

- Grants.gov cannot process an application that includes two or more files that have the same name within a grant submission. Therefore, each file uploaded to your application package should have a unique file name.
- When attaching files, applicants should follow the guidelines established by Grants.gov on the size and content of file names. Uploaded file names must be fewer than 50 characters, and, in general, applicants should not use any special characters. However, Grants.gov does allow for the following UTF-8 characters when naming your attachments: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore, hyphen, space, period, parenthesis, curly braces, square brackets, ampersand, tilde, exclamation point, comma, semi colon, apostrophe, at sign, number sign, dollar sign, percent sign, plus sign, and equal sign. Applications submitted that do not comply with the Grants.gov guidelines will be rejected at Grants.gov and not forwarded to the Department.
- Applicants should limit the size of their file attachments. Documents submitted that contain graphics and/or scanned material often greatly increase the size of the file attachments and can result in difficulties opening the files. For reference, the average discretionary grant application package with all attachments is less than 5 MB. Therefore, you may want to check the total size of your package before submission.

## **APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS**

This program requires the electronic submission of applications; specific requirements and waiver instructions can be found in the Federal Register Notice.

### **Applications Submitted Electronically**

You must submit your grant application through the Internet using the software provided on the Grants.gov website (<http://www.grants.gov>) by 11:59:59 p.m. (Eastern Time) on or before the closing date.

If you submit your application through the Internet via the Grants.gov website, you will receive an automatic acknowledgement when we receive your application.

For more information on using Grants.gov, please refer to the Federal Register notice or visit <http://www.grants.gov>.

### **Other Submission Instructions**

For detailed instructions on applications sent by mail or delivery, please review the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs Notice, published in the Federal Register on December 7, 2022 (87 FR 75045), and available at: [www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-26554](http://www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-26554).

### **Late Applications**

If your application is late, we will notify you that we will not consider the application.



## NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR NEW AWARDS

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Postsecondary Student Success Grant Program (PSSG)

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is issuing a notice inviting applications (NIA) for fiscal year (FY) 2023 for the Postsecondary Student Success Grant Program (PSSG), Assistance Listing Number 84.116M. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1894-0006.

DATES:

Applications Available: July 26, 2023.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: September 25, 2023.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: November 24, 2023.

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on December 7, 2022 (87 FR 75045), and available at [www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-](http://www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-)

[26554](#). Please note that these Common Instructions supersede the version published on December 27, 2021.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nemeka Mason-Clercin, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, 5th floor, Washington, DC 20202-4260. Telephone: (202) 987-1340. Nalini Lamba-Nieves, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, room 5C127, Washington, DC 20202-4260. Telephone: (202) 453-7953. Email: [PSSG@ed.gov](mailto:PSSG@ed.gov).

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability and wish to access telecommunications relay services, please dial 7-1-1.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of this program is 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.

Background: In today's economy, more than 60 percent of U.S. jobs require a postsecondary credential.<sup>1</sup> Data show that as

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<sup>1</sup> [https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.FR\\_.Web\\_.pdf](https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.FR_.Web_.pdf)

educational attainment increases, median earnings steadily increase.<sup>2</sup> It is critical for institutions of higher education (IHEs) to provide support systems to improve retention, progression, and completion rates to decrease economic and social equity gaps for students of color and low-income students.

Students of color and low-income students still face barriers to successfully enrolling in and completing college. Between 2019 and 2021, there have been decreases in undergraduate enrollment for Native American students (7.9 percent decrease), Black students (7.3 percent decrease), and Hispanic students (5 percent decrease).<sup>3</sup> From 2019 to 2022, there has been a decrease in enrollment for Pell grant recipients (9.9 percent).<sup>4</sup> In addition, while graduation rates have increased in four-year institutions overall by 4.6 percentage points since 2015, double-digit graduation rate gaps between underrepresented students of color and white students remain, and there is a 9-percentage point gap in graduation rates between Pell and non-Pell students.<sup>5</sup> The same is occurring in two-year institutions, with an overall graduation rate increase of 2.8 percentage points since 2012, but a declining

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/emp/chart-unemployment-earnings-education.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22\\_306.10.asp?current=yes](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22_306.10.asp?current=yes)

<sup>4</sup> <https://research.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/trends-in-student-aid-presentation-2022.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>

[https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/Search?query=&query2=&resultType=all&page=1&sortBy=date\\_desc&overlayTableId=32473](https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/Search?query=&query2=&resultType=all&page=1&sortBy=date_desc&overlayTableId=32473)

rate for Hispanic and Black students, leading to increasing gaps between white students and underrepresented students of color.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, as more “non-traditional” students attend college, additional and different supports are required to enable them to successfully complete their credentials. Today, 25 percent of postsecondary students are age 25 or older,<sup>7</sup> about 70 percent of students work while enrolled,<sup>8</sup> and 22 percent of students are parents.<sup>9</sup> At community colleges, 31 percent of students enrolled are age 25 or older,<sup>10</sup> and 42 percent of all student parents attend community colleges.<sup>11</sup> Research has found that IHEs should employ a multifaceted and integrated approach in mitigating barriers that hinder students in their educational trajectories, addressing academic, financial and other barriers.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, IHEs that have improved completion rates use timely, disaggregated, actionable data to identify institutional barriers to student success, implement interventions, and evaluate impact on an on-going basis.<sup>13</sup> Institutional leadership has been found to be critical to

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<sup>6</sup> [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21\\_326.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_326.10.asp), [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21\\_326.20.asp?current=yes](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_326.20.asp?current=yes), [https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/Search?query=&query2=&resultType=all&page=1&sortBy=date\\_desc&overlayTableId=32473](https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/Search?query=&query2=&resultType=all&page=1&sortBy=date_desc&overlayTableId=32473)

<sup>7</sup> [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22\\_303.50.asp?current=yes](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22_303.50.asp?current=yes).

<sup>8</sup> <https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Working-Learners-Report.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED612580.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22\\_303.50.asp?current=yes](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d22/tables/dt22_303.50.asp?current=yes).

<sup>11</sup> <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED612580.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/doubling\\_graduation\\_rates\\_fr.pdf](https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/doubling_graduation_rates_fr.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Phillips, B. C., & Horowitz, J. E. (2013). Maximizing data use: A focus on the completion agenda. In *Special Issue: The College Completion Agenda- Practical Approaches for Reaching the Big Goal*. New Directions for Community Colleges, 2013(164), 17-25.

ensuring that the student experience is intentionally designed to increase student retention, persistence, and completion rates.<sup>14</sup>

This grant program seeks to fund evidence-based (as defined in this notice) strategies that result in improved student outcomes for underserved students (as defined in this notice). The program has two absolute priorities that correspond to varying evidence standards. This multi-tiered competition invites applicants that are in the “early phase” or “mid-phase/expansion” of their evidence-based work to support students through degree completion. This grant also supports the evaluation, dissemination, scaling, and sustainability efforts of the activities funded under this grant.

In this competition, eligibility is limited to institutions that are designated as eligible under the HEA titles III and V programs, nonprofits that are not IHEs or associated with an IHE in partnership with institutions that are designated as eligible under the HEA titles III and V programs, States in partnerships with institutions that are designated as eligible under the HEA titles III and V programs, and public systems of institutions. Institutions designated as eligible under titles III and V include Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCUs), Tribally Controlled Colleges or Universities (TCCUs), Minority-

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<sup>14</sup> McNair, T. B., Albertine, S., McDonald, N., Major Jr, T., & Cooper, M. A. (2022). *Becoming a student-ready college: A new culture of leadership for student success*. John Wiley & Sons.

Serving Institutions (MSIs) and other institutions with high enrollment of needy students and below average full-time equivalent (FTE) expenditures - including community colleges. The Department believes that targeting funding to these IHEs is the best use of the available funding because these institutions disproportionately enroll students from groups who are underrepresented among college completers, such as low-income students. Supporting retention and completion strategies at these institutions offers the greatest potential to close gaps in postsecondary outcomes. Additionally, these under resourced institutions are most in need of Federal assistance to implement and evaluate evidence-based postsecondary college retention and completion interventions.

### **Early-Phase**

Early-phase grants provide funding to IHEs to develop, implement, and test the feasibility of a program that prior research suggests is likely to improve relevant outcomes, for the purpose of determining whether an initiative improves student retention and completion of postsecondary students. Early-phase grants must "demonstrate a rationale" (as defined in this notice) and include a logic model (as defined in this notice), theory of action, or another conceptual framework that includes the goals, objectives, outcomes, and key project components (as defined in this notice) of the project, and that

demonstrates the relationship between such proposed activities and the relevant outcomes the project is designed to achieve. The evaluation design will be assessed on the extent to which it would meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Evidence Standards with or without reservations. The evaluation of an Early-phase project should be an experimental or quasi-experimental design study (both as defined in this notice) that can determine whether the program can successfully improve postsecondary student success outcomes for underserved students.

Early-phase grantees during their grant period are encouraged to make continuous and iterative improvements in project design and implementation before conducting a full-scale evaluation of effectiveness. Grantees should consider how easily others could implement the proposed practice, and how its implementation could potentially be improved. Additionally, grantees should consider using data from early indicators to gauge initial impact and to consider possible changes in implementation that could increase student outcomes.

### **Mid-phase/Expansion**

Mid-phase/Expansion grants are supported by moderate evidence (as defined in this notice) or strong evidence (as defined in this notice), respectively. These grants provide funding to IHEs to improve and/or expand initiatives and practices that have been proven to be effective in increasing postsecondary student retention and completion. Mid-

phase/Expansion projects should provide vital insight about an intervention's effectiveness, such as for whom and in which contexts a practice/intervention is most effective. Mid-phase grantees should also measure the cost-effectiveness of their practices using administrative or other readily available data.

Mid-phase/Expansion grant projects are distinctly situated to provide insight on scaling an initiative to a larger population of students or across multiple campuses.

These grants must be implemented at a multi-site sample (as defined in this notice) with more than one campus or in one campus that includes at least 2,000 students. Project evaluations must evaluate the effectiveness of the project at each site.

Mid-phase/Expansion grants must meet the "moderate evidence" threshold or "strong evidence" standard and include a logic model that demonstrates the relationship between the key project components and the relevant outcomes the project is designed to achieve. Mid-phase/Expansion grants are also required to submit an evaluation design that will be assessed on the extent to which it would meet WWC Evidence Standards without reservations.

Note that all research that meets the strong evidence standard also meets the moderate evidence standard. As such, the effective evidence standard for Absolute Priority 2 is moderate evidence. However, we encourage applicants to propose



projects based on strong evidence and to expand services even beyond the scale requirements under Absolute Priority 2. We have combined the two types of grants into a single tier given funding limitations and the fact that this is the first year of implementing a tiered evidence structure in this program.

### **All Grant Tiers**

PSSG applicants should consider how these evidence-based practices are implemented and the impact these practices have on their student population given their context. PSSG applicants seek to explore the effectiveness of practices/strategies that can improve student persistence and retention, leading to degree completion.

The evaluation of a PSSG project should be designed to determine whether the program can successfully improve postsecondary student persistence, retention, and completion. As previously stated, the evaluation design for early phase applications will be assessed on the extent to which it could meet WWC Evidence Standards with or without reservations while the evaluation design for mid phase/expansion applications will be assessed on the extent to which it could meet WWC Evidence Standards without reservations.

The Department intends to provide grantees and their independent evaluators with technical assistance in their evaluation, dissemination, scaling, and sustainability efforts. This could include grantees and their evaluators providing to

the Department or its contractor updated comprehensive evaluation plans in a format as requested by the technical assistance provider and using such tools as the Department may request. Grantees will be encouraged to update this evaluation plan at least annually to reflect any changes to the evaluation. Updates must be consistent with the scope and objectives of the approved application.

PSSG applicants should consider their organizational capacity and the funding needed to sustain their projects and continue implementation and adaptation after Federal funding ends.

Priorities: This notice contains two absolute priorities and one competitive preference priority. We are establishing the absolute priorities and competitive preference priority for the FY 2023 grant competition and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, in accordance with section 437(d)(1) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232(d)(1).

Applicants have the option of addressing the competitive preference priority and may opt to do so regardless of the absolute priority they select.

Absolute Priorities: For FY 2023 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are absolute

priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet one of these priorities.

These Priorities are:

Absolute Priority 1 (AP1) - 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 Priority 2 (AP2)- Applicants that Demonstrate Moderate Evidence, "Mid-phase" or Strong Evidence, "Expansion".

Under this priority, 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 . Projects under this priority must be implemented at a multi-site sample or include at least 2,000 students.

(a) Applicants addressing this priority must:

(1) identify up to two studies to be reviewed against the WWC Handbooks (as defined in this notice) for the purposes of meeting the definition of moderate evidence or strong evidence;

(2) clearly identify the citations and relevant findings for each study in the Evidence form; and

(3) ensure that all cited studies are available to the Department from publicly available sources and provide links or other guidance indicating where each is 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.

(b) In addition to including up to two study citations, an applicant must provide in the Evidence form the following information:

(1) the positive student outcomes the applicant intends to replicate under its Mid-phase/Expansion grant 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 under its Mid-phase/Expansion grant 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 under its Mid-phase/Expansion grant and how the practice(s) correspond with the practice(s) in the cited studies.

Note: If the Department determines that an applicant has provided insufficient information, the applicant will not have an opportunity to provide additional information. However, if the WWC team reviewing evidence determines that a study does not provide enough information on key aspects of the study design,

such as sample attrition or equivalence of intervention and comparison groups, the WWC may submit a query to the study author(s) to gather information for use in determining a study rating. Authors would be asked to respond to queries within 10 business days. Should the author query remain incomplete within 14 days of the initial contact to the study author(s), the study may be deemed ineligible under the grant competition. After the grant competition closes, the WWC will, for purposes of its own curation of studies, continue to include responses to author queries and make updates to study reviews as necessary. However, no additional information will be considered after the competition closes and the initial timeline established for response to an author query passes.

Competitive Preference Priority: For FY 2023, and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is a competitive preference priority. Under [34 CFR 75.105\(c\)\(2\)\(i\)](#), we award up to an additional 6 points to an application, depending on how well the application meets the competitive preference priority.

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).

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).

Definitions: In accordance with section 437(d)(1) of GEPA, we are establishing definitions for "Students with disabilities," "English learner," "Minority-serving institution," "multi-site sample" and "underserved student"<sup>15</sup> for

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<sup>15</sup> The definitions of "Students with disabilities," "English learner," and "underserved student," for the purposes of this competition, align with the definitions of these terms in the Secretary's Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on December 10, 2021 ([86 FR 70612](#)) (Supplemental Priorities).

the FY 2023 grant competition and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition. The remaining definitions are from 34 CFR 77.1.

Baseline means the starting point from which performance is measured and targets are set.

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.

English learner means an individual who is an English learner as defined in Section 8101(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, or an individual who is an English language learner as defined in section 203(7) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Evidence-based means the proposed project component is supported by one or more of strong evidence, moderate evidence, promising evidence,<sup>16</sup> or evidence that demonstrates a rationale.

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

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<sup>16</sup>The definition of "promising evidence" is from 34 CFR 77.1.

experimental studies that, depending on their design and implementation (e.g., sample attrition in randomized controlled trials and regression discontinuity design studies), can meet 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.

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.

Note: In developing logic models, applicants may want to use resources such as the Regional Educational Laboratory Program's (REL Pacific) Education Logic Model Application, available at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/pacific/pdf/ELMUserGuideJune2014.pdf>. Other sources include: [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL\\_2014025.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014025.pdf), and [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL\\_2015057.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2015057.pdf).

Minority-serving institution means an institution that is eligible to receive assistance under sections 316 through 320 of part A of title III, under part B of title III, or under title V of the HEA.

Moderate Evidence means that there is evidence of effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome for a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to receive that component, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

(i) A practice guide prepared by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks reporting a "strong evidence base" or "moderate evidence base" for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;

(ii) An intervention report prepared by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks 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; or

(iii) A single experimental study or quasi-experimental design study reviewed and reported by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks, or otherwise assessed by the Department using version 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks, as appropriate, and that - (A) Meets WWC standards with or without reservations; (B) Includes at least one statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect on a relevant outcome; (C) Includes no overriding statistically significant and negative effects on relevant outcomes reported in the study or in a corresponding WWC intervention report prepared under version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks; and (D) Is based on a sample from more than one site (e.g., State, county, city, school district, or postsecondary campus) and includes at least 350 students or other individuals across sites. Multiple studies of the same project component that each meet requirements in paragraphs (iii) (A), (B), and (C) of this definition may together satisfy the requirement in this paragraph (iii) (D).

Multi-site sample means at least two campuses of a single institution or multiple IHEs, including multiple IHEs within one public system of higher education.

Nonprofit, as applied to an agency, organization, or institution, means that it is owned and operated by one or more corporations or associations whose net earnings do not benefit, and cannot lawfully benefit, any private shareholder or entity.

Note: For purposes of this competition, this definition of Nonprofit does not apply to institutions of higher education or nonprofits that are a part of an IHE.

Performance measure means any quantitative indicator, statistic, or metric used to gauge program or project performance.

Performance target means a level of performance that an applicant would seek to meet during the course of a project or as a result of a project.

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).

Quasi-experimental design study means a study using a design that attempts to approximate an experimental study by identifying a comparison group that is similar to the treatment

group in important respects. This type of study, depending on design and implementation (e.g., establishment of baseline equivalence of the groups being compared), can meet WWC standards with reservations, but cannot meet WWC standards without reservations, as described in the WWC Handbooks.

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.

Strong Evidence means that there is evidence of the effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome for a sample that overlaps with the populations and settings proposed to receive that component, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

(i) A practice guide prepared by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks reporting a "strong evidence base" for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;

(ii) An intervention report prepared by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks reporting a "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;  
or

(iii) A single experimental study reviewed and reported by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC

Handbooks, or otherwise assessed by the Department using version 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks, as appropriate, and that

(A) Meets WWC standards without reservations;

(B) Includes at least one statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect on a relevant outcome;

(C) Includes no overriding statistically significant and negative effects on relevant outcomes reported in the study or in a corresponding WWC intervention report prepared under version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks; and

(D) Is based on a sample from more than one site (e.g., State, county, city, school district, or postsecondary campus) and includes at least 350 students or other individuals across sites. Multiple studies of the same project component that each meet requirements in paragraphs (iii) (A), (B), and (C) of this definition may together satisfy the requirement in this paragraph (iii) (D).

Students with disabilities means students with disabilities as defined in section 602(3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. 1401(3) and 34 CFR 300.8, or students with disabilities, as defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 705(37), 705(202) (B)).

Underserved student means a student in one or more of the following subgroups:

(a) A student who is living in poverty or is served by schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty.

(b) A student of color.

(c) A student who is a member of a federally recognized Indian Tribe.

(d) An English learner.

(e) A student with a disability.

(f) A lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, or intersex (LGBTQI+) student.

(g) A pregnant, parenting, or caregiving student.

(h) A student who is the first in their family to attend postsecondary education.

(i) A student enrolling in or seeking to enroll in postsecondary education for the first time at the age of 20 or older.

(j) A student who is working full-time while enrolled in postsecondary education.

(k) A student who is enrolled in, or is seeking to enroll in, postsecondary education who is eligible for a Pell Grant.

(l) An adult student in need of improving their basic skills or an adult student with limited English proficiency.

WWC Handbooks means the standards and procedures set forth in the WWC Standards Handbook, Versions 4.0 or 4.1, and WWC Procedures Handbook, Versions 4.0 or 4.1, or in the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Version 3.0 or Version 2.1 (all incorporated by reference, see §77.2). Study findings eligible for review under WWC standards can meet WWC standards

without reservations, meet WWC standards with reservations, or not meet WWC standards. WWC practice guides and intervention reports include findings from systematic reviews of evidence as described in the WWC Handbooks documentation.

Note: The WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 4.1), as well as the more recent WWC Handbooks released in August 2022 (Version 5.0), are available at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks>.

Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking: Under the Administrative Procedure Act ([5 U.S.C. 553](#)), the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed priorities, definitions, and requirements. Section 437(d)(1) of GEPA, however, allows the Secretary to exempt from rulemaking requirements regulations governing the first grant competition under a new or substantially revised program authority. This program, as a substantially revised program, qualifies for this exemption. To ensure timely grant awards, the Secretary has decided to forgo public comment on the priorities, definitions, and requirements under section 437(d)(1) of GEPA. These priorities, definitions, and requirements will apply to the FY 2023 grant competition and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1138-1138d; House Report 117-403 and the Explanatory Statement accompanying Division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Pub. L. 117-328).

Note: Projects will be awarded and must be operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in the Federal civil rights laws.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

## II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grant.

Estimated Available Funds: \$44,550,000.

These estimated available funds are the total available for new awards for both types of grants under PSSG (Early-phase and Mid-phase/Expansion grants).

Early-phase - \$22,275,000 for AP1.



Mid-phase/Expansion - \$22,275,000 for AP2.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in subsequent years from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards:

Early-phase (AP1) - \$2,000,000 - \$4,000,000 for 48 months.

Mid-phase/Expansion (AP2) - \$6,000,000 - \$8,000,000 for 48 months.

Estimated Average Size of Awards:

Early-phase (AP1) - \$3,000,000 for 48 months.

Mid-phase/Expansion (AP2) - \$7,000,000 for 48 months.

Maximum Awards: We will not make awards exceeding the following amounts for a 48-month budget period.

Early-phase (AP1) - \$4,000,000.

Mid-phase/Expansion (AP2) - \$8,000,000.

Estimated Number of Awards:

Early-phase (AP1) - 5-8.

Mid-phase/Expansion (AP2) - 3-4.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 48 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: Institutions designated as eligible to apply under Title III/V (which includes HBCUs,

TCCUs, MSIs and SIP); nonprofits that are not an IHE or part of an IHE, in partnership with at least one eligible Title III/V IHE; a State, in partnership with at least one eligible Title III/V IHE; or a public system of higher education institutions.

Note: The notice announcing the FY 2023 process for designation of eligible institutions, and inviting applications for waiver of eligibility requirements, was published in the *Federal Register* on January 17, 2023 (88 FR 2611). Only institutions that the Department determines are eligible, or which are granted a waiver under the process described in the January 17, 2023, notice, and that meet the other eligibility requirements described in this notice, may apply for a grant under this program. To determine if your institution is eligible for this grant program please visit, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/idades/eligibility.html>.

Institutions must include their FY 2023 Eligibility Letter in their application packet under other attachments. To retrieve the letter, please visit <https://hepis.ed.gov/main>.

Note: If you are a nonprofit organization, under 34 CFR 75.51, you may demonstrate your nonprofit status by providing: (1) proof that the Internal Revenue Service currently recognizes the applicant as an organization to which contributions are tax deductible under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; (2) a statement from a State taxing body or the State attorney

general certifying that the organization is a nonprofit organization operating within the State and that no part of its net earnings may lawfully benefit any private shareholder or individual; (3) a certified copy of the applicant's certificate of incorporation or similar document if it clearly establishes the nonprofit status of the applicant; or (4) any item described above if that item applies to a State or national parent organization, together with a statement by the State or parent organization that the applicant is a local nonprofit affiliate.

2. a. Cost Sharing or Matching: Each grant recipient must provide, from Federal, State, local, or private sources, an amount equal to or exceeding 10 percent of funds requested under the grant, which may be provided in cash or through in-kind contributions, to carry out activities supported by the grant. Applicants must include a budget showing their matching contributions to the budget amount requested of PSSG funds.

The Secretary may waive the matching requirement on a case-by-case basis, upon a showing of exceptional circumstances, such as:

(i) The 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;

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

(iii) 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.

Note: Institutions seeking to waive the matching requirement must provide the outlined waiver request information within their application.

b. Supplement-Not-Supplant: This competition involves supplement-not-supplant funding requirements. This program uses the waiver authority of section 437(d)(1) of GEPA to establish this as a supplement-not-supplant program. Grant funds must be used so that they supplement and, to the extent practical, increase the funds that would otherwise be available for the activities to be carried out under the grant and in no case supplant those funds.

c. Indirect Cost Rate Information: This program limits a grantee's indirect cost reimbursement to eight percent of a modified total direct cost base. We are establishing this indirect cost limit for the FY 2023 grant competition and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition in accordance with section 437(d)(1) of GEPA. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html).

d. Administrative Cost Limitation: This program does not include any program-specific limitation on administrative expenses. All administrative expenses must be reasonable and necessary and conform to Cost Principles described in 2 CFR part 200 subpart E of the Uniform Guidance.

3. Subgrantees: A grantee under this competition may award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application. The grantee may award subgrants to entities it has identified in an approved application.

4. 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.

5. Other Requirements: Applicants may only apply to one absolute priority "tier". One application per applicant.

#### IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission Instructions: Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on December 7, 2022 (87 FR 75045), and available at [www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-26554](http://www.federalregister.gov/d/2022-26554), which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application. Please note that these Common Instructions supersede the version published on December 27, 2021.

2. Intergovernmental Review: This program 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 program.

3. Funding Restrictions: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

4. Recommended Page Limit: The application narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative to no more than 30 pages and (2) use the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double-space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles,

headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.

- 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.

The recommended 30-page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative.

Note: The Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs Form (ED 524) Sections A-C are not the same as the narrative response to the Budget section of the selection criteria.

#### V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from [34 CFR 75.210](#). The points assigned to each criterion are indicated in the parentheses next to the criterion. An applicant may earn up to a total of 100 points based on the selection criteria for the application. An applicant that also chooses to address the competitive preference priority can earn up to 106 total points.

##### 1.1 Absolute Priority One - Early-Phase Selection Criteria

- (a) Significance. (up to 20 points)

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

(2) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers 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)*

(b) Quality of the Project Design. *(up to 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:

(i) 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)*

(ii) 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)*

(iii) 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)*

(c) Quality of Project Personnel. *(up to 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)

(d) Quality of the Management Plan. (up to 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)

(e) Quality of the Project Evaluation. (up to 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:

(i) 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)

(ii) 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)

(iii) 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)

## 1.2 Absolute Priority Two - Mid-phase/Expansion Selection

### Criteria

(a) Significance. (up to 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:

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

(ii) 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)

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

(b) Strategy to Scale. (up to 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:

(i) 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)

(ii) 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)

(iii) 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)

(c) Quality of the Project Design. (up to 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:

(i) 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)

(ii) 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)

(iii) 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)

(d) Quality of the Project Evaluation. (up to 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:

(i) 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)

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

(iii) 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)

(iv) 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)

Note: Applicants may wish to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation: (1) WWC Procedures and Standards Handbooks: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks>; (2) "Technical Assistance Materials for Conducting Rigorous Impact Evaluations": <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/projects/evaluationTA.asp>; and (3) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers: [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech\\_methods/](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/). In addition, applicants may view an optional webinar recording that was hosted by the Institute of Education Sciences. The webinar focused on more rigorous evaluation designs, discussing strategies for designing and executing experimental studies that meet WWC evidence standards without reservations. This webinar is available at: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Multimedia/18>.

2. Review and Selection Process: Potential applicants are reminded that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d) (3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary requires various assurances, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

A panel of non-Federal reviewers will review and score each application in accordance with the selection criteria. The Department will prepare a rank order of applications for each Absolute Priority based solely on the evaluation of their quality according to the selection criteria and competitive preference priority points. Awards will be made in rank order according to the average score received from the peer review. The rank order of applications for each Absolute Priority will be used to create two slates.

Before making awards, we will screen applications submitted in accordance with the requirements in this notice to determine whether applications have met eligibility and other requirements. This screening process may occur at various stages of the process; applicants that are determined to be ineligible will not receive a grant, regardless of peer reviewer scores or comments.

Tiebreaker: Within each slate, if there is more than one application with the same score and insufficient funds to fund all the applications with the same ranking, the Department will

apply the following procedure to determine which application or applications will receive an award:

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.

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

3. Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions:

Consistent with 2 CFR 200.206, before awarding grants under this competition the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 200.208, the Secretary may impose specific conditions and, under 2 CFR 3474.10, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

4. Integrity and Performance System: If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), under 2 CFR 200.206(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and

record of performance under Federal awards--that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant--before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through the System for Award Management. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

Please note that, if the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from the Federal Government exceeds \$10,000,000, the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, require you to report certain integrity information to FAPIIS semiannually. Please review the requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, if this grant plus all the other Federal funds you receive exceed \$10,000,000.

5. In General: In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department will review and consider applications for funding pursuant to this notice inviting applications in accordance with:

(a) Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an



objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR 200.205);

(b) Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. 115-232) (2 CFR 200.216);

(c) Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR 200.322); and

(d) Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR 200.340).

## VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your GAN. We also may notify you informally.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other

requirements in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. Open Licensing Requirements: Unless an exception applies, if you are awarded a grant under this competition, you will be required to openly license to the public grant deliverables created in whole, or in part, with Department grant funds. When the deliverable consists of modifications to pre-existing works, the license extends only to those modifications that can be separately identified and only to the extent that open licensing is permitted under the terms of any licenses or other legal restrictions on the use of pre-existing works. Additionally, a grantee or subgrantee that is awarded competitive grant funds must have a plan to disseminate these public grant deliverables. This dissemination plan can be developed and submitted after your application has been reviewed and selected for funding. For additional information on the open licensing requirements, please refer to 2 CFR 3474.20.

4. Reporting: (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting

requirements in [2 CFR part 170](#) should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multiyear award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to [www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html](http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).

5. Performance Measures: For the purpose of Department reporting under 34 CFR 75.110, the Department has established a set of required performance measures (as defined in this notice):

(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.)

**Project-Specific Performance Measures:** Applicants must propose project-specific performance measures and performance targets (both as defined in this notice) consistent with the objectives of the proposed project.

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

(1) Performance measures. 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 this notice) 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. 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).

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

(1) Data collection and reporting. (i) 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 (ii) 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.

Depending on the nature of the intervention proposed in the application, common metrics may include the following: college-level math and English course completion in the first year (developmental education); unmet financial need (financial aid); program of study selection in the first year (advising); post-transfer completion (transfer); and re-enrollment (degree reclamation).

These measures constitute the Department's indicators of success for this program. Consequently, we advise an applicant for an award under this program to consider the operationalization of the measures in conceptualizing the approach and evaluation for its proposed project.

If funded, you will be required to collect and report data in your project's annual performance report (34 CFR 75.590).

VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: On request to the program contact person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT, individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format. The Department will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may include Rich Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, braille, large print, audiotape, compact disc, or other accessible format.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the *Federal Register*. You may access the official edition of the *Federal Register* and the Code of Federal Regulations at [www.govinfo.gov](http://www.govinfo.gov). At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the *Federal Register*, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the *Federal Register* by using the article search feature at [www.federalregister.gov](http://www.federalregister.gov). Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Dated:

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Nasser H. Paydar,  
Assistant Secretary

*for Postsecondary Education.*

## AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

**Program Authority:** 20 U.S.C. 1138-1138d; House Report 117-403 and the Explanatory Statement accompanying Division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Pub. L. 117-328).

**Note:** Projects will be awarded and must be operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in the Federal civil rights laws.

**Applicable Regulations:**

- (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99.
- (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485.
- (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

**Note:** The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

**PURPOSE.** The purpose of this program is 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.



## SUPPLEMENTAL DEFINITIONS

Definitions: In accordance with section 437(d)(1) of GEPA, we are establishing definitions for “Students with disabilities,” “English learner,” “Minority-serving institution,” “multi-site sample” and “underserved student”<sup>17</sup> for the FY 2023 grant competition and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition. The remaining definitions are from 34 CFR 77.1.

Baseline means the starting point from which performance is measured and targets are set.

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.

English learner means an individual who is an English learner as defined in Section 8101(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, or an individual who is an English language learner as defined in section 203(7) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Evidence-based means the proposed project component is supported by one or more of strong evidence, moderate evidence, promising evidence,<sup>18</sup> or evidence that demonstrates a rationale.

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 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

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<sup>17</sup> The definitions of “Students with disabilities,” “English learner,” and “underserved student,” for the purposes of this competition, align with the definitions of these terms in the Secretary's Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on December 10, 2021 ([86 FR 70612](#)) (Supplemental Priorities).

<sup>18</sup> The definition of “promising evidence” is from 34 CFR 77.1.

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.

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.

Note: In developing logic models, applicants may want to use resources such as the Regional Educational Laboratory Program’s (REL Pacific) Education Logic Model Application, available at

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/pacific/pdf/ELMUserGuideJune2014.pdf>. Other sources include: [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL\\_2014025.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014025.pdf), and [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL\\_2015057.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2015057.pdf).

Minority-serving institution means an institution that is eligible to receive assistance under sections 316 through 320 of part A of title III, under part B of title III, or under title V of the HEA.

Moderate Evidence means that there is evidence of effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome for a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to receive that component, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

- (i) A practice guide prepared by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks reporting a “strong evidence base” or “moderate evidence base” for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;
- (ii) An intervention report prepared by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks 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; or
- (iii) A single experimental study or quasi-experimental design study reviewed and reported by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks, or otherwise assessed by the Department using version 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks, as appropriate, and that –
  - (A) Meets WWC standards with or without reservations;
  - (B) Includes at least one statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect on a relevant outcome;
  - (C) Includes no overriding statistically significant and negative effects on relevant outcomes reported in the study or in a corresponding WWC intervention report prepared under version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks; and

(D) Is based on a sample from more than one site (e.g., State, county, city, school district, or postsecondary campus) and includes at least 350 students or other individuals across sites.

Multiple studies of the same project component that each meet requirements in paragraphs (iii) (A), (B), and (C) of this definition may together satisfy the requirement in this paragraph (iii)(D).

Multi-site sample means at least two campuses of a single institution or multiple IHEs, including multiple IHEs within one public system of higher education.

Nonprofit, as applied to an agency, organization, or institution, means that it is owned and operated by one or more corporations or associations whose net earnings do not benefit, and cannot lawfully benefit, any private shareholder or entity.

Note: For purposes of this competition, this definition of Nonprofit does not apply to institutions of higher education or nonprofits that are a part of an IHE.

Performance measure means any quantitative indicator, statistic, or metric used to gauge program or project performance.

Performance target means a level of performance that an applicant would seek to meet during the course of a project or as a result of a project.

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).

Quasi-experimental design study means a study using a design that attempts to approximate an experimental study by identifying a comparison group that is similar to the treatment group in important respects. This type of study, depending on design and implementation (e.g., establishment of baseline equivalence of the groups being compared), can meet WWC standards with reservations, but cannot meet WWC standards without reservations, as described in the WWC Handbooks.

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.

Strong Evidence means that there is evidence of the effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome for a sample that overlaps with the populations and settings proposed to receive that component, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

- (i) A practice guide prepared by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks reporting a “strong evidence base” for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;

- (ii) An intervention report prepared by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks reporting a “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; or
- (iii) A single experimental study reviewed and reported by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks, or otherwise assessed by the Department using version 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks, as appropriate, and that
  - (A) Meets WWC standards without reservations;
  - (B) Includes at least one statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect on a relevant outcome;
  - (C) Includes no overriding statistically significant and negative effects on relevant outcomes reported in the study or in a corresponding WWC intervention report prepared under version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks; and
  - (D) Is based on a sample from more than one site (e.g., State, county, city, school district, or postsecondary campus) and includes at least 350 students or other individuals across sites.

Multiple studies of the same project component that each meet requirements in paragraphs (iii)(A), (B), and (C) of this definition may together satisfy the requirement in this paragraph (iii)(D).

Students with disabilities means students with disabilities as defined in section 602(3) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. 1401(3) and 34 CFR 300.8, or students with disabilities, as defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 705(37), 705(202)(B)).

Underserved student means a student in one or more of the following subgroups:

- (a) A student who is living in poverty or is served by schools with high concentrations of students living in poverty.
- (b) A student of color.
- (c) A student who is a member of a federally recognized Indian Tribe.
- (d) An English learner.
- (e) A student with a disability.
- (f) A lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, or intersex (LGBTQI+) student.
- (g) A pregnant, parenting, or caregiving student.
- (h) A student who is the first in their family to attend postsecondary education.
- (i) A student enrolling in or seeking to enroll in postsecondary education for the first time at the age of 20 or older.
- (j) A student who is working full-time while enrolled in postsecondary education.
- (k) A student who is enrolled in, or is seeking to enroll in, postsecondary education who is eligible for a Pell Grant.
- (l) An adult student in need of improving their basic skills or an adult student with limited English proficiency.

WWC Handbooks means the standards and procedures set forth in the WWC Standards Handbook, Versions 4.0 or 4.1, and WWC Procedures Handbook, Versions 4.0 or 4.1, or in the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Version 3.0 or Version 2.1 (all incorporated by reference, see § 77.2). Study findings eligible for review under WWC standards can meet WWC standards without reservations, meet WWC standards with reservations, or not meet WWC standards. WWC practice guides and intervention reports include findings from systematic reviews of evidence as described in the WWC Handbooks documentation.

Note: The What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 4.1), as well as the more recent What Works Clearinghouse Handbooks released in August 2022 (Version 5.0), are available at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks>.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS: EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372

This program falls under the rubric of Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs) and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive order is to strengthen federalism—or the distribution of responsibility between localities, States, and the Federal government—by fostering intergovernmental partnerships. This idea includes supporting processes that State or local governments have devised for coordinating and reviewing proposed Federal financial grant applications.

The process for doing this requires grant applicants to contact State Single Points of Contact for information on how this works. Multi-state applicants should follow procedures specific to each state. Further information about the State Single Point of Contact process and a list of names by State can be found at:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/SPOC-4-13-20.pdf>.

Absent specific State review programs, applicants may submit comments directly to the Department. All recommendations and comments must be mailed or hand-delivered by the date indicated in the actual application notice to the following address: The Secretary, EO 12372—CFDA# 84.116M, U.S. Department of Education, room 7E200, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202.

Proof of mailing will be determined on the same basis as applications (see 34 CFR 75.102). Recommendations or comments may be hand-delivered until 11:59:59 p.m. (Eastern Time) on the closing date indicated in this notice.

**Important note:** The above address is not the same address as the one to which the applicant submits its completed applications. **Do not send applications to the above address.**

## GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA) SECTION 427

Section 427 of GEPA requires all applicants for new awards to include in their applications a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its federally assisted programs for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. The provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: *gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age*.

A general statement of an applicant's nondiscriminatory hiring policy is not sufficient to meet this requirement. Applicants must identify potential barriers and explain steps they will take to overcome these barriers.

**NOTE: Applicants for new awards must include information in their applications to address this provision in order to receive funding under this program.**

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION PACKAGE

The Postsecondary Student Success Grant application consists of the following sections. These sections are organized in the same manner that the submitted application should be organized. Remember to upload all forms and sections and follow carefully the Grants.gov application instructions. The sections are as follows:

It is recommended that your electronic application be organized in the following manner and include the following parts to expedite the review process. Instructions for all parts and forms of the application are found either on the following pages of the application package or individually for each form on Grants.gov.

*Review your electronic application to ensure you have completed the following [forms](#) and sections:*

### **Part 1: Standard Documents**

- Application for Federal Assistance (Form SF 424)
- ED Supplemental Information for SF 424
- Evidence Form

Note:

- Applicants must complete the Standard Form (SF) 424 first because some of the information provided here is automatically inserted into other sections of the Grants.gov application package.
- Do not attach any narratives, supporting files, or application components to the SF 424. Although the form accepts attachments, the Department of Education will only review materials/files attached to the forms listed below.

### **Part 2: Budget Information**

- ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524) Sections A & B

Note:

- The non-federal funds that will be supplied by the institution should be included in Section B.
- The use of non-federal funds is required for this program.
- This program requires cost sharing or matching.
- The detailed Budget Narrative will be included in the “Budget Narrative Attachment Form.”
- The detailed Budget Narrative is for each year of the budget period.
- Refer to “Instructions for ED 524 Budget Summary Form, Section C” for additional instructions on the Budget Narrative.
- Applicants are required to prepare a detailed and comprehensive Budget Narrative for all proposed line items listed in ED Form 524 (Sections A and B). This narrative should



be attached as the “Budget Narrative Attachment Form.”

### **Part 3: ED Abstract Form**

Project Abstract

Note:

- Attach your one-page project abstract that will provide an overview of the proposed project. You should also include the OPEID of the institutions included in the grant proposal.

### **Part 4: Project Narrative Attachment Form**

Application Narrative

Note:

- You should include a Table of Contents as the first page of the Project Narrative.
- Refer to the Notice for recommendations on the page limit and format for the project narrative.
- Pages should be numbered consecutively in the lower right corner of page.
- This section addresses the program selection criteria that will be used to evaluate applications submitted for this competition.
- Responses to the Absolute Priority should be included in this section. Additionally, for those responding to the Competitive Preference Priority, the response should be clearly marked as “Competitive Preference Priority.”
- You should refer to the [Completed Examples](#) for guidance on the structure of your project evaluation.

### **Part 5: Budget Narrative Attachment Form**

Budget Narrative

Note:

- The budget narrative should include a detailed line-item budget to justify costs are reasonable and necessary to accomplish the proposed project objectives.

### **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

NOTE:

- Eligible applicants should attach all appendices to the Other Attachments Form. The Grants.gov system will allow applicants to attach as many as ten separate appendices in this section; however, applicants are encouraged to limit the number of appendix entries to a reasonable number for a reviewer to read. The entire application package should be no larger than 8MB. Therefore, you may want to check the total size of your package before submission.
- It is recommended that each Curriculum Vitae (CV) be no more than three (3) pages. Attach all CVs as a single document.

**Part 7: Assurances and Certifications**

- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Standard Form LLL)
- Grants.Gov Lobbying Form – “Certification Regarding Lobbying” (ED 80-013 Form)
- General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427 (ED GEPA 427 form)

## SELECTION CRITERIA INSTRUCTIONS

Applicants will attach the project narrative to the **Project Narrative Attachment Form** as described in the instructions for completing the application package.

**Page Limits:** The project narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We have established recommended page limits for grant applications. **It is recommended to limit the section of the narrative that addresses the selection criteria to no more than 30 pages.**

**Note:** Please include separate heading when responding to the Absolute and Competitive Priorities.

The page limit does not apply to the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); the Department of Education Supplemental Information form (SF 424); Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524); the assurances and certifications; or the one-page project abstract, program activity budget detail form and supporting narrative. However, the page limit does apply to all of the project narrative section, including responses to the priorities. You must include your complete response to the selection criteria in the project narrative.

**Formatting Requirements:** A “page” is 8.5” x 11”, on one side only, with 1-inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, **including** titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, captions and all text in charts, tables, and graphs. Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial. Use font size 12 or larger and no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).

### SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria for this competition are from [34 CFR 75.210](#). The points assigned to each criterion are indicated in the parentheses next to the criterion. An applicant may earn up to a total of 100 points based on the selection criteria for the application. An applicant that also chooses to address the competitive preference priority can earn up to 106 total points. Please note that there are specific selection criteria for each Absolute Priority. Be sure to respond to the correct selection criteria.

#### **1.1 Absolute Priority One - Early-Phase Selection Criteria**

(a) *Significance. (up to 20 points)*

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

(2) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers 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)

(b) Quality of the Project Design. (up to 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:

(i) 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)

(ii) 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)

(iii) 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)

(c) Quality of Project Personnel. (up to 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)

(d) Quality of the Management Plan. (up to 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)

(e) Quality of the Project Evaluation. (up to 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:

- (i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in this notice). (up to 20 points)
- (ii) 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)
- (iii) 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)

## **1.2 Absolute Priority Two - Mid-phase/Expansion Selection Criteria**

### **(a) Significance. (up to 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:
  - (i) The national significance of the proposed project. (up to 5 points)
  - (ii) 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)
  - (iii) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies. (up to 5 points)

### **(b) Strategy to Scale. (up to 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:
  - (i) 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)
  - (ii) 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)
  - (iii) 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)

### **(c) Quality of the Project Design. (up to 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:
  - (i) 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)
  - (ii) 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)
  - (iii) 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)

(d) *Quality of the Project Evaluation. (up to 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:
  - (i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (as defined in [34 CFR 77.1\(c\)](#)). (up to 20 points)
  - (ii) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings. (up to 5 points)
  - (iii) 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)
  - (iv) 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)

*Note:* Applicants may wish to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation: (1) WWC Procedures and Standards Handbooks: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks>; (2) “Technical Assistance Materials for Conducting Rigorous Impact Evaluations”: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/projects/evaluationTA.asp>; and (3) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers: [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech\\_methods/](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/). In addition, applicants may view an optional webinar recording that was hosted by the Institute of Education Sciences. The webinar focused on more rigorous evaluation designs, discussing strategies for designing and executing experimental studies that meet WWC evidence standards without reservations. This webinar is available at: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Multimedia/18>.

## **Performance Indicator – Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)**

Under 34 CFR 75.110, the Secretary has established the following Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) performance measures for the PSSG:

**Performance Measures:** 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 Notice):

- (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.)

**Project-Specific Performance Measures:** Applicants must propose project-specific performance measures and performance targets (both as defined in this notice) consistent with the objectives of the proposed project.

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

- (1) Performance measures. 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 Notice) 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. 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).

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

- (1) Data collection and reporting. (i) 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 (ii) 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.

Depending on the nature of the intervention proposed in the application, common metrics may include the following: college-level math and English course completion in the first year (developmental education); unmet financial need (financial aid); program of study selection in the first year (advising); post-transfer completion (transfer); and re-enrollment (degree reclamation).

These measures constitute the Department's indicators of success for this program. Consequently, we advise an applicant for an award under this program to consider the operationalization of the measures in conceptualizing the approach and evaluation for its proposed project.

If funded, you will be required to collect and report data in your project's annual performance report (34 CFR 75.590).

### **Other Attachments**

The Other Attachments Form is used to upload the application Appendix. The Appendix supports and supplements information in other parts of the application package. Several types of information may be included.

Examples of Attachments:

- Narrative summaries of the qualifications of key personnel (maximum 1-page each)
- Short position descriptions for staff to be hired or determined
- References cited in the proposal narrative (if applicable)
- Documentation regarding the request for match waiver (if applicable)



## INSTRUCTIONS FOR STANDARD FORMS

To obtain instructions for standard forms included in this application package, please visit <https://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BUDGET SUMMARY AND ITEMIZED LINE ITEM BUDGET

**NOTE:** Applicants must submit: (1) budget information that categorizes the requested funds (ED Form 524), **AND** (2) a detailed budget narrative for the 48-month budget period.

**The budget summary** is to be included on the Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524).

**The budget narrative** A separate budget narrative attachment should include an itemized budget for your 48-month project period (which does not count toward the 30-page limit).

This section requests information on the applicant’s financial plan for carrying out the project.

The federal and any non-federal shares are to be included on the Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524).

The Budget Information-Section A – Budget Summary – Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524) and the Budget Narrative must include all costs that are allowable, reasonable, and necessary for carrying out the objectives of the Postsecondary Student Success Program. Among the costs that may be supported with grant funds are:

1. **Personnel:** On line 1 (ED Form 524), enter only the project personnel salaries and wages. [Fees and expenses for consultants should be included on line 8.] The budget should include the total commitment of time and the total salary to be charged to the project for each key staff member. You should provide a breakdown of project personnel that includes: the position titles; the percent of time and number of months committed to the project for each key staff member; the salary for each key staff member; and the total salary costs to be charged to the grant.
2. **Fringe Benefits:** On line 2 (ED Form 524), enter the amount of fringe benefits. The institution or agency’s normal fringe benefit contribution may be charged to the program. Leave this blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of the indirect costs. In the budget, include an explanation and appropriate justification if the institution or agency’s normal fringe benefit contribution exceeds 20 percent of salaries.
3. **Travel:** On line 3 (ED Form 524), provide the costs for project personnel. [Consultants’ travel should be included on line 8.] In the budget, you should detail the proposed travel costs: for each trip explain the purpose and objective of the travel and provide the number of persons traveling. Transportation costs should not exceed tourist class airfare. For automobile mileage, the established institution or agency rate should be used. Reimbursement is allowed for taxicab, bus, train, or limousine transportation. Per diem at the established institution or agency rate is permitted when an individual is away from home

overnight on official project business (see OMB Circular A-21, J.48.c - Commercial Air Travel).

All travel must be related to the project's overall purpose and proposed activities.

4. Equipment: On line 4 (ED Form 524), indicate the cost of equipment -- non-expendable personal property, which has a usefulness of greater than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. [Consistent with an applicant's policy, a lower dollar amount may be used to define equipment.] In the budget, explain why the requested equipment is necessary to carry out project activities, and include a list of all equipment in the following format: item, quantity, cost per unit, and total cost.
5. Supplies: On line 5 (ED Form 524), include the costs of all tangible personal property that was not included as "equipment" on line 4. In the budget, provide an itemized list of the supplies.
6. Contractual: Include costs for contractual services.
7. Construction: Not applicable. Leave blank.
8. Other: On line 8 (ED Form 524). Examples of "other" costs are: equipment rental, required fees, communication costs, rental of space, utilities, custodial services, and printing costs. In the budget, provide a breakdown of all direct costs not clearly covered by other budget categories.

Consultants: If the project proposes to use consultants, identify the consultants who will work on the project, the scope of work to be performed by each consultant, and justify why project personnel cannot perform this work. Also, provide a detailed breakdown of the costs (daily fees to be paid, estimated number of days of services, and all travel expenses, including per diem). Cost allowances for consultant fees, honoraria, per diem, and travel should not exceed amounts permitted by comparable institutional or agency policies.

9. Total Direct Costs: On line 9 (ED Form 524), provide the total direct costs requested – the sum of lines 1 through 8.
10. Indirect Costs: On line 10 (ED Form 524). This program limits a grantee's indirect cost reimbursement to eight percent of a modified total direct cost base. We are establishing this indirect cost limit for the FY 2023 grant competition and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition in accordance with section 437(d)(1) of GEPA. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html).
11. A **modified total direct cost base** is defined as total direct costs, less stipends, tuition and related fees, and capital expenditures of \$5,000 or more per unit. Therefore, calculations of indirect costs may not include cost of equipment, stipends, tuition and related fees, room and

board and summer non-residential meals associated with the Postsecondary Student Success Grant Program.

Grantees charging indirect costs to a Department grant are required to have a negotiated rate with their *cognizant agency* (i.e., either the Federal agency from which it has received the most direct funding that is subject to indirect cost support, or a particular agency specifically assigned cognizance by the Office of Management and Budget). Although applicants are not required to submit with their application a copy of their indirect cost agreement to claim the 8 percent rate for funding received in this program, they are required to have documentation available for audit that shows that their negotiated indirect cost rate is at least 8 percent [§75.563(d)]. In the event that they receive an award under this program, applicants without a negotiated indirect cost rate with its cognizant agency should seek to identify that agency and contact it to obtain an approved rate as soon as possible after award notification.

Applicants should be aware that amounts representing the difference between the 8 percent rate and a greater indirect cost rate negotiated with a cognizant agency may **not** be charged to direct cost categories, used to satisfy matching or cost-sharing requirements, or charged to another Federal award. [§75.563(c) (3)]

12. Training Stipends: This may include training stipends to eligible program participants.
13. Total Costs: On line 12 (ED Form 524), provide the total amount that you are requesting – the sum of lines 9 and 10. Note: This amount should also be the same as that shown in 18g on the application face sheet (SF 424) and on the detailed budget narrative.

## GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS ACT (GPRA)

### What is GPRA?

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) is a straightforward statute that requires all federal agencies to manage their activities with attention to the consequences of those activities. Each agency is to clearly state what it intends to accomplish, identify the resources required, and periodically report their progress to the Congress. In so doing, it is expected that the GPRA will contribute to improvements in accountability for the expenditures of public funds, improve Congressional decision-making through more objective information on the effectiveness of federal programs, and promote a new government focus on results, service delivery, and customer satisfaction.

The Department has established a set of required performance measures:

- (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.)

**Project-Specific Performance Measures:** Applicants must propose project-specific performance measures and performance targets (both as defined in this notice) consistent with the objectives of the proposed project.

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

- (1) Performance measures.** 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 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.** 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).

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

**(1) Data collection and reporting.** (i) 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 (ii) 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.

Depending on the nature of the intervention proposed in the application, common metrics may include the following: college-level math and English course completion in the first year (developmental education); unmet financial need (financial aid); program of study selection in the first year (advising); post-transfer completion (transfer); and re-enrollment (degree reclamation).

These measures constitute the Department's indicators of success for this program. Consequently, we advise an applicant for an award under this program to consider the operationalization of the measures in conceptualizing the approach and evaluation for its proposed project.

If funded, you will be required to collect and report data in your project's annual performance report (34 CFR 75.590).

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Use This Checklist While Preparing Your Application Package. All items listed on this checklist are required except as noted.

- SApplication for Federal Assistance (SF 424)
- Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424
- Department of Education Budget Information Non-Construction Programs Form (ED 524)
- One-page Program Abstract (Use “ED Abstract Form”)
- Project Narrative for the proposed grant (Use “Project Narrative Attachment Form”)
- Budget Narrative (Use “Budget Narrative Attachment Form”)
- Evidence Form (Use “Evidence of Effectiveness Form”)
- Other Attachments (Use “Other Attachments Form”)
  - FY 2023 Eligibility Letter (available at [HEPIS Web Portal](#))
  - Nonprofit 501(c)(3) status verification (only applicable if lead submitter is not an IHE)
  - Letters of Support and Memoranda of Understanding, if applicable
  - Resumes of Key Personnel
  - Waiver Request of 10% Match Requirement, if applicable
  - Demonstration of Match Contributions
  - Copy of Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
  - References
- Assurances and Certifications
  - Grants.gov Lobbying Form (ED 80-0013)
  - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)
  - ED GEPA 427 Form (**Mandatory for this Competition**)

## PAPERWORK BURDEN STATEMENT

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1894-0006. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 40 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Section 873 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended). If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this application, please contact the Postsecondary Student Success Program, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20202 directly. [Note: Please do not return the completed application to this address.]