

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Innovation and Improvement



READY-TO-LEARN TELEVISION (RTL) PRE-APPLICATION INFORMATION WEBINAR

APRIL 14, 2015

RTL GENERAL INFORMATION

- These slides are intended as guidance. Please refer to the official documents in the Federal Register.
- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is available on the RTL website:
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/rtl/v/faq.html>.
 - The FAQ document addresses many questions that applicants have asked previously. The Department may update it throughout the competition with questions that applicants submit that are of general applicability.
- The Department is unable to address applicant-specific questions at any time during the competition.



AGENDA

- Overview of Ready to Learn (RTL)
- Eligibility
- Priorities
- Review Process/Selection Criteria
- Budget
- RTL Program Performance Measures
- Applying Via Grants.gov



Overview of Ready to Learn

TYPICAL COMPONENTS OF AN RTL PROJECT

- Produce Educational Media for Young Children (and their Parents/Caregivers)
 - Curriculum Planning
 - Educational TV and Digital Media Content Creation
 - Formative Research
- Nationally Broadcast or otherwise Distribute the Media
- Create and Implement Outreach Programs
 - Create programs for local communities
 - Partner with Head Start, museums, libraries, and other
- Evaluation
 - Conduct Studies on the effectiveness of RTL media



STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Develop and distribute programming for pre-K and elementary children and parents

Develop accompanying support materials to promote effective use

Nationwide distribution over public TV stations and the internet

As set forth in section 2431 of the ESEA, to be eligible to receive a cooperative agreement under Ready-to-Learn, an applicant must propose to:

- 1) Develop, produce, and distribute educational and instructional video programming for preschool and elementary school children and their parents in order to facilitate student academic achievement;
- 2) Facilitate the development, directly or through contracts with producers of children and family educational television programming, of educational programming for preschool and elementary school children, and the accompanying support materials and services that promote the effective use of such programming;
- 3) Facilitate the development of programming and digital content containing Ready-to-Learn-based children's programming and resources for parents and caregivers that is specially designed for nationwide distribution over public television stations' digital broadcasting channels and the Internet;



STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS (2)

Disseminate and distribute to widest possible audience and through the use of most appropriate distribution technologies

Promote school readiness; and promote use in a wide variety of settings

- 4) Contract with entities (such as public telecommunications entities) so that programs developed under this program are disseminated and distributed to the widest possible audience appropriate to be served by the programming, and through the use of the most appropriate distribution technologies; and
- 5) Develop and disseminate education and training materials, including interactive programs and programs adaptable to distance learning technologies, that are designed--
 - a) To promote school readiness; and
 - b) To promote the effective use of materials developed under paragraphs (2) and (3) among parents, teachers, Head Start providers, Even Start providers, providers of family literacy services, child care providers, early childhood development personnel, elementary school teachers, public libraries, and after-school program personnel caring for preschool and elementary school children.



FUNDING AVAILABLE

Type of Award: Cooperative agreements (see next slide).

Estimated Available Funds: \$25,621,000 for FY 2015.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$4,000,000-\$12,000,000 for year 1

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$8,000,000 for year 1; \$40,000,000 over five years.

Estimated Number of Awards: 3

Project Period: Up to 5 years

Cost Sharing or Matching: no minimum required cost share or match, but we do encourage you to solicit non-federal contributions.



COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

- If you receive an award, you will be asked to sign a Cooperative Agreement.
 - A cooperative agreement is distinguished from a grant in that it provides for substantial involvement between the Department of Education and the grant recipient in carrying out the activity contemplated by the award.
 - The Cooperative Agreement will establish some additional expectations for reporting, communication, the federal program officer's role, and grants management.



WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR?

- Renewed Focus on **Television** used in new combinations with other forms of digital media
- Focus on **Science or Literacy** (instead of math or literacy)
- New Selection Criterion on “**Strategy to Scale**”
- Encouragement to collaborate with **broadcasters** and other **national distribution partners**
- New invitational priority on **adaptive learning and embedded assessments**



RTL AND INNOVATION

- We want to keep pace with new developments in technology, but not over-reach and get too far out in front of what's readily accessible to low-income children in their homes or in informal learning settings.
- RTL wishes to offer educational quality that exceeds what's otherwise available in the marketplace, while competing with anybody in popularity.
- Our goal is to reach as many end users as possible during the grant period (and beyond).



Eligibility

WHO IS AN ELIGIBLE APPLICANT?

To receive a cooperative agreement under this competition, an entity must be a public telecommunications entity (as defined in the NIA) that is able to demonstrate:

- (A) A capacity to develop and nationally distribute educational and instructional television programming of high quality that is accessible by a large majority of disadvantaged preschool and elementary school children;
- (B) A capacity to contract with the producers of children's television programming for the purpose of developing educational television programming of high quality;
- (C) A capacity, consistent with the entity's mission and nonprofit nature, to negotiate such contracts in a manner that returns to the entity an appropriate share of any ancillary income from sales of any program-related products; and
- (D) A capacity to localize programming and materials to meet specific State and local needs and to provide educational outreach at the local level.



WHAT IS A PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENTITY?

Public telecommunications entity means any enterprise which:

- a) is a public broadcast station or a noncommercial telecommunications entity; and
- b) disseminates public telecommunications services to the public.

See 20 U.S.C. 7801(35), which references 47 U.S.C. 397



WHAT IS A NONCOMMERCIAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENTITY?

Under 47 U.S.C. § 397, a noncommercial telecommunications entity is an enterprise which:

(A) is owned and operated by a State, a political or special purpose subdivision of a State, a public agency, or a nonprofit private foundation, corporation, or association; and

(B) has been organized primarily for the purpose of disseminating audio or video noncommercial educational and cultural programs to the public by means other than a primary television or radio broadcast station, including, but not limited to, coaxial cable, optical fiber, broadcast translators, cassettes, discs, microwave, or laser transmission through the atmosphere.



HOW DOES A PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENTITY DEMONSTRATE ITS ELIGIBILITY?

- Use Optional Form in the Application Package
- Make your best case that...
 - You meet the definition of “public telecommunications entity”; and
 - You meet each of the four “capacities” on the previous slide.



YOU ARE GENERALLY NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY IF...

- You are a school or pre-school provider looking to integrate technology into your offerings
- You are a university or college (unless perhaps you own and operate a public TV station that meets the eligibility criteria)
- You are an independent TV or digital media producer
- You are a for-profit broadcast or media company

Note: non-eligible entities may be able to participate in a Ready to Learn application by partnering with an eligible applicant or by serving as a contractor or vendor.



A RECOMMENDATION ABOUT MEDIA PROPERTY RIGHTS:

Prior to receiving a grant, the legal applicant (an eligible public telecommunications entity) is encouraged:

- To secure all necessary development and distribution rights to the media property; and
- To have appropriate agreements in place (as necessary) for revenue sharing.

These rights should extend the full length of the project period, including any necessary project time extension. The Department will not be party to these agreements.



Questions about the Overview and Eligibility

Priorities

INVITATIONAL PRIORITIES

- There are Two (2) Invitational Priorities
- You are encouraged to address both of these priorities
- Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give an application that meets these invitational priorities a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.
- For the complete text of the invitational priorities, please consult the Notice Inviting Applications that appeared in the Federal Register.



INVITATIONAL PRIORITY 1

- Demonstrated track record in educational media production
- Target Ages 2-8 (or subsets), particularly low-income, for use in home or informal learning settings
- Focus on science (including scientific thinking or skill development) or literacy
- Collaborate with educators, broadcasters, distributors, game companies, researchers, and others
- Use Television and Other Accessible media for new combinations of narrative storytelling and interactive learning
- Make available at no cost whenever possible



INVITATIONAL PRIORITY 2

- Demonstrated track record in educational media production
- New Combinations of Television and other accessible media
- Use Analytics and Embedded Assessments to
 - a. create personalized learning experiences that adapt as users progressively demonstrate competency; or
 - b. provide useful and meaningful learning data to parents, caregivers, or educators.
- Target Ages 2-8 (or subsets), particularly low-income children



PRIVACY

The media produced using Ready-to-Learn funds must comply with 16 CFR 312, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule, which protects children under the age of 13 from unfair or deceptive use of personal information.

This rule can be found at: www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=4939e77c77a1a1a08c1cbf905fc4b409&node=16%3A1.0.1.3.36&rgn=div5.



ACCESSIBILITY

- Products produced by projects funded through this competition must be accessible both for purposes of complying with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and to ensure that the needs of all users, including those with disabilities, are addressed.
- In meeting the requirement to reach the “widest possible audience” set out in section 2431(a)(1)(D) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), applicants are expected to include the accommodations needed to provide accessibility to individuals with disabilities.
- The RTL notice does not create any new regulations or requirements that go beyond existing federal law.
- There are some additional recommendations for designing accessible media on pp. 15-16 in the newly released “Ed Tech Developer’s Guide,” a new report from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Educational Technology: <http://tech.ed.gov>.
 - Included is a recommendation to use principles of Universal Design for Learning (<http://www.cast.org/>) created by the Center for Applied Special Technology.



HOW DOES AN APPLICANT DEMONSTRATE A TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS?

This provision of the invitational priorities is not an eligibility requirement:

“The Secretary invites applications from eligible public telecommunications entities that have a demonstrated track record in high-quality educational television production for preschool or elementary school aged children and demonstrated success in improving reading, math, or science skills for children ages two through eight.”

How you demonstrate this “track record of success” is up to you. It will be evaluated by the peer reviewers when applying the selection criteria.



Application Review Process And Selection Criteria

REVIEW PROCESS KEY DATES

- Closing Date: May 26th
- Peer Review: June – July
- Budget Review: July – August
- Awards Announced: Mid-Late September



REVIEW PROCESS

- Screen applicants for eligibility
- Use panels of independent peer reviewers
 - Experts in science or literacy education, early learning, media production and distribution, educational game development, educational technology, community-based outreach, or educational research and evaluation
 - Use scores to determine ranking
- Consider past performance
- Consider assurances that prohibit discrimination



SELECTION CRITERIA

- A. Significance (10 points)
- B. Project Design (25 points)
- C. Strategy to Scale (25 points)
- D. Management Plan (20 points)
- E. Evaluation (20 points)



A. SIGNIFICANCE (10 POINTS)

i. Does the project target children who are high risk?

(i) The extent to which the proposed project will provide services or otherwise address the needs of students at risk of educational failure.

ii. Is there something promising or new about the proposed educational media, or the strategies for outreach and distribution?

(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.



B. QUALITY OF PROJECT DESIGN (25 POINTS)

i. How well do the proposed activities meet the purposes of the program statute?

(i) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach for meeting statutory purposes and requirements.

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory (as defined in this notice).

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

(iv) The extent to which the proposed development efforts include adequate quality controls and, as appropriate, repeated testing of products.

Note: In responding to the Quality of the Project Design selection criterion, an applicant should include a detailed description of its proposal to develop media and conduct outreach, as described in section 2431 of the ESEA.

ii. Is there a logic model that clearly links resources and planned activities to expected outcomes? (see upcoming slides)

iii. Are the goals, objectives clear and measurable?

iv. Is there a plan to ensure quality control?



STRONG THEORY

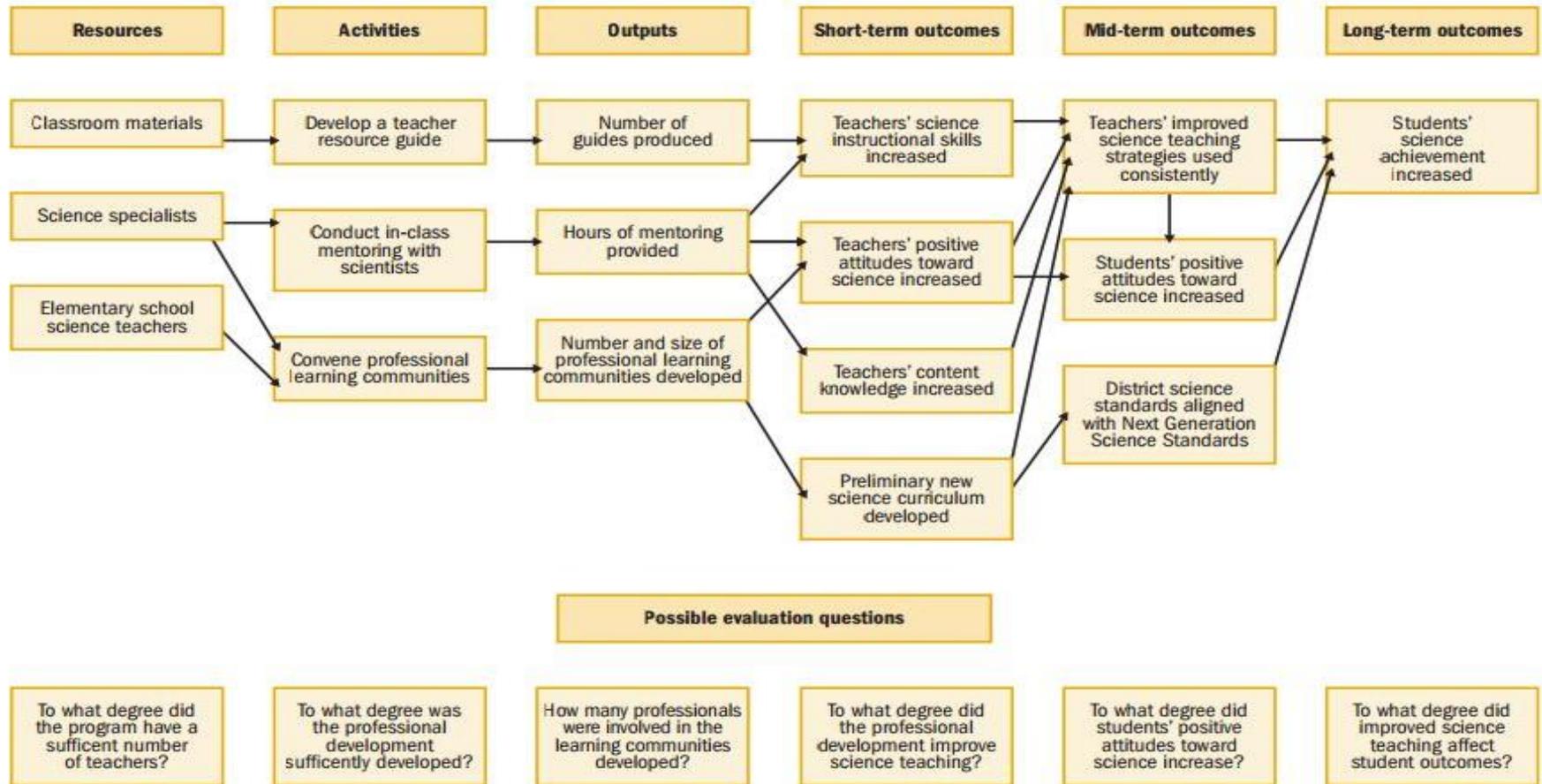
(THE SECOND FACTOR UNDER PROJECT DESIGN)

- Strong theory means a rationale for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice that includes a logic model.
- Logic model (also referred to as theory of action) means a well-specified conceptual framework that identifies key components of the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice (i.e., the active “ingredients” that are hypothesized to be critical to achieving the relevant outcomes) and describes the relationships among the key components and outcomes, theoretically and operationally.
- Note: In developing logic models, applicants may want to use resources such as the Pacific Education Laboratory’s Education Logic Model Application (www.relpacific.mcrel.org/PERR.html or <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED544779.pdf>) to help design their logic models.



Sample Logic Model Format (from Pacific Education Laboratory)

Figure 1. Sample logic model showing components and features of the program and associated evaluation questions



C. STRATEGY TO SCALE (25 POINTS)

i. Does the applicant have the ability to grow the project and a plan to distribute to as many users as possible?

ii. Can the media and outreach materials be used effectively in a wide variety of settings?

(i) The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to further develop and bring to scale the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice, or to work with others to ensure that the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice can be further developed and brought to scale, based on the findings of the proposed project.

(ii) The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.



D. QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN (20 POINTS)

i. Is there a clear timeline with benchmarks detailing when things will be accomplished , and by whom?

ii. Are the key staff qualified to manage the project and successfully complete the project activities? Do they have a track record of success?

iii. Are each of the key partners (individuals or organizations) committed to the success of the project as well?

(i) 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.

(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(iii) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.



E. QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION (20 POINTS)

i. Will the evaluation methods result in useful data about the intended outcomes?

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

ii. Will the evaluation methods support quality control?

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide timely guidance for quality assurance.

iii. Will the effectiveness study(ies) meet WWC standards with reservations?

(iii) 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 Evidence Standards (as defined in this notice) with reservations.



IMPORTANT RESOURCES ON WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE (WWC) STANDARDS

Resources

- (1) WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook:
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/references/idocviewer/doc.aspx?docid=19&tocid=1>
- (2) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers:
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/

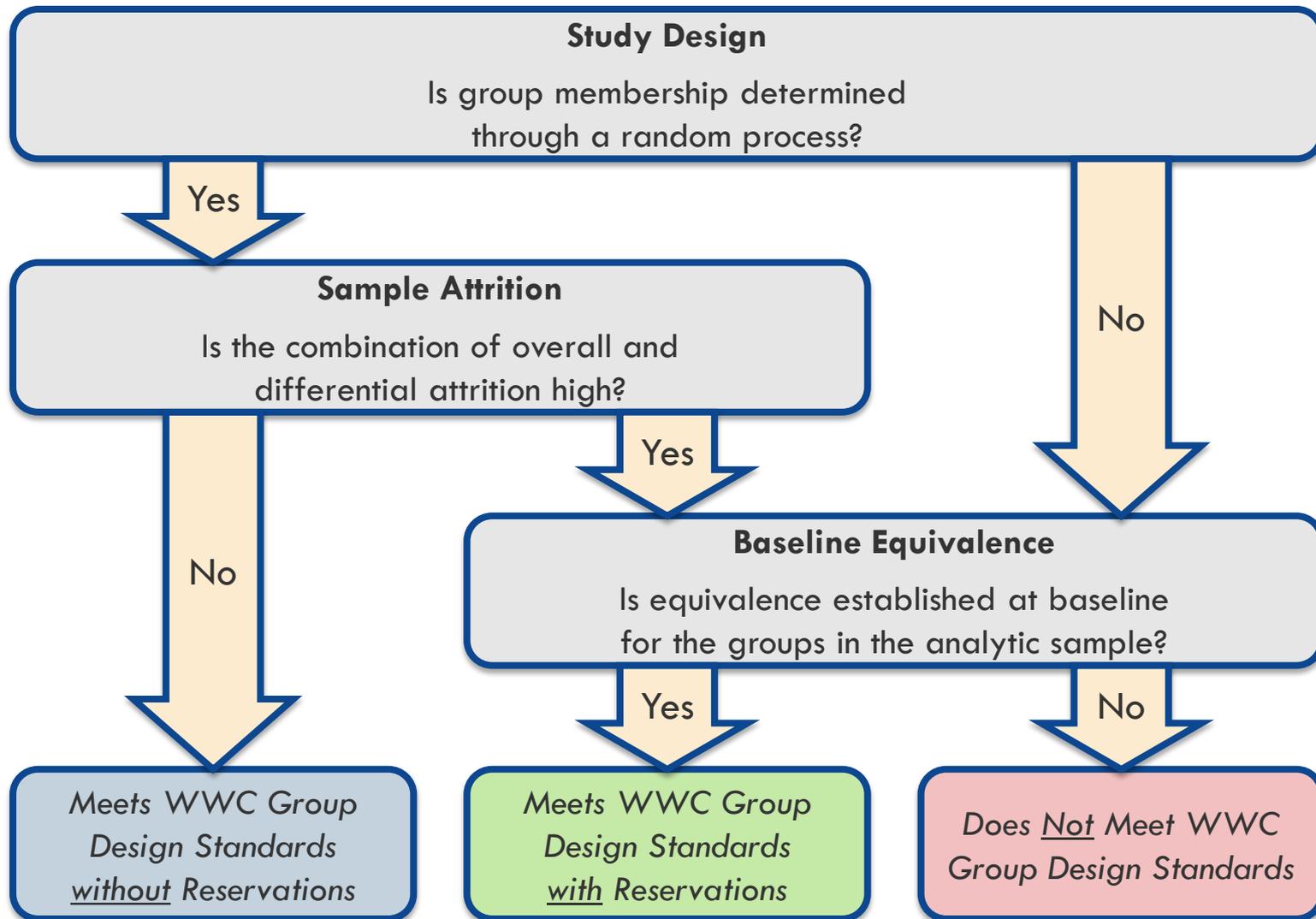
Webinars

- Designing Quasi-Experiments: Meeting What Works Clearinghouse Standards Without Random Assignment
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/news.aspx?sid=23>
- Designing Strong Studies: Developing Studies Consistent with What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/News.aspx?sid=18>



Meeting the What Works Clearinghouse Standards

(chart taken from the WWC Handbook 3.0)



Questions about the Priorities, review process and selection criteria

Budget

COST SHARING

- No minimum required cost share (or match)
- But grantees will be held accountable for the external contributions they have promised in their application.
- Even though there is no minimum cost share requirement, grantees are expected to use their grant funds to leverage external investments and to share the costs of producing and distributing the educational media.
 - Grantees must report on the program efficiency measure which looks at the ratio of federal vs. non-federal funds used to create TV and digital media programming.



5% ADMINISTRATIVE CAP

- As set forth in section 2431(d) of the ESEA, a recipient of a Ready-to-Learn Television cooperative agreement is authorized to use up to five percent of the amount received for the normal and customary expenses of administering the grant.
- Note: Neither RTL nor the Department have a specific definition of what constitutes administrative expenses.



INDIRECT COSTS

- It is acceptable to charge indirect costs based on your indirect cost rate agreement with the federal government.
- The 5% administrative cap is not interpreted to be a cap on indirect costs.
- Contracts may include reasonable overhead as part of the costs of services provided. (Technically, these are not indirect costs.)



BUDGET NARRATIVE

1. Budget narrative should be organized according to the categories used in the ED 524
2. Budget narrative should provide line item detail:
 - a. Rates and quantities and time commitments should be specified
 - b. You should break out the costs of large contracts using the categories from ED 524 and provide line item detail
3. Include Budget and Budget Narrative for Non-Federal cost share
4. Append your Indirect Cost Agreement



UNIFORM GUIDANCE

COST PRINCIPLES AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

1. The Department has streamlined the requirements for receiving and using federal awards. Information on this “Uniform Guidance” can be found in the FAQs and at this website: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/guid/uniform-guidance/index.html>
2. Some important differences from past regulations:
 - a. The Cost Principles that outline allowable costs and were previously found in OMB Circulars A-21, A-122, and A-87 are now found in subpart E of 2 CFR Part 200, which applies to LEAs, IHEs, and NPOs.
 - b. A-133 Audit Requirements now in subpart F of 2 CFR Part 200.



CONTINUATION AWARDS

In making continuation awards, the Secretary considers whether grantees:

1. Made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project;
2. Expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget;
3. Met performance targets in the grantee's approved application.
4. Operated in compliance with the assurances in its approved application



RTL Program Performance Measures

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS ACT

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 requires the Department to create measures to assess the performance of the RTL grant program. You will be required annually to report data from your project on the following performance measures:

1. The percentage of summative **experimental or quasi-experimental research studies** that demonstrate positive and statistically significant gains in science or literacy skills when Ready-to-Learn transmedia properties are compared to similar non-Ready-to-Learn-funded digital properties or to other more traditional educational materials.
2. The **number of children who annually use Ready-to-Learn produced educational media products**, disaggregated by individual product, as determined by appropriate industry standard metrics or, when available, by tracking tools.
3. The percentage of educational “transmedia products,” along with necessary supporting materials, that are deemed to be of **high quality** in promoting learning of science or literacy by an independent panel of expert reviewers.

PROGRAM EFFICIENCY MEASURE

4. Dollars leveraged from non-Federal sources per Federal dollar dedicated to core non-outreach and non-research program activities.

Grants.gov

REGISTERING IN GRANTS.GOV

- Pre- and full applications for grants under this competition must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov site (www.Grants.gov).
- In order to apply for an RTL grant, you must complete the Grants.gov registration process. Go to the “Get Registered” link on the left hand side of the Grants.gov homepage. There will be a tutorial on this page that instructs applicants on how to complete the registration process.
- The registration process can take between three to five business days (or as long as four weeks if all steps are not completed in a timely manner).

Please register early!



APPLYING THROUGH GRANTS.GOV

1. To apply for an RTL grant, go to the “Apply for Grants” link on the left hand side of the Grants.gov homepage.
2. Next, follow the step-by-step application instructions. The CFDA number you will enter for Step 1 is 84.295.
3. If you are experiencing problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1-800-518-4726. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and keep a record of it. You can also contact them via email at support@grants.gov.



REGISTERING FOR SAM.GOV

- In order to submit an application through Grants.gov, applicants must be active in the System for Award Management (SAM).
- The SAM registration process can take approximately seven business days, but may take upwards of several weeks, depending on the completeness and accuracy of the data entered into the SAM database by an entity. Thus, if you are submitting an application under the RTL Pre-Application competition, please allow sufficient time to obtain and register your DUNS number and TIN. We strongly recommend that you register early.
- Once your SAM registration is active, you will need to allow 24 to 48 hours for the information to be available in Grants.gov and before you can submit an application through Grants.gov.
- Information about SAM is available at www.SAM.gov. To further assist you with obtaining and registering your DUNS number and TIN in SAM or updating your existing SAM account, the U.S. Department of Education prepared a SAM.gov Tip Sheet, which you can find at: <http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/sam-faqs.html>.



OTHER IMPORTANT APPLICATION TIPS

1. Don't include any hyperlinks, digital files, or videos – reviewers are only permitted to review what is in the “paper” application
2. Please include resumes of all key staff
3. Please include the optional eligibility form
4. Upload files as PDFs
 - a. All files uploaded into Grants.gov must be in PDF format
 - b. all other file formats may not convert properly
5. Register for SAM and Grants.gov as soon as possible!
6. Submit Early
 - a. Applications submitted after the May 26th (4:30:00 PM Washington, DC time) deadline will be rejected, no exceptions.



**Questions about the
Budget, Performance
Measures, or Applying
via [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov)**

RESOURCES

Ready to Learn Website:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/rtlrv/index.html>

Notice Inviting Applications:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/03/25/2015-06791/applications-for-new-awards-ready-to-learn-television>

FAQs:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/rtlrv/faq.html>

Application Package

On RTL website: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/rtlrv/applicant.html>

On Grants.gov (if you search, use hyphens – i.e. Ready-to-Learn Television):

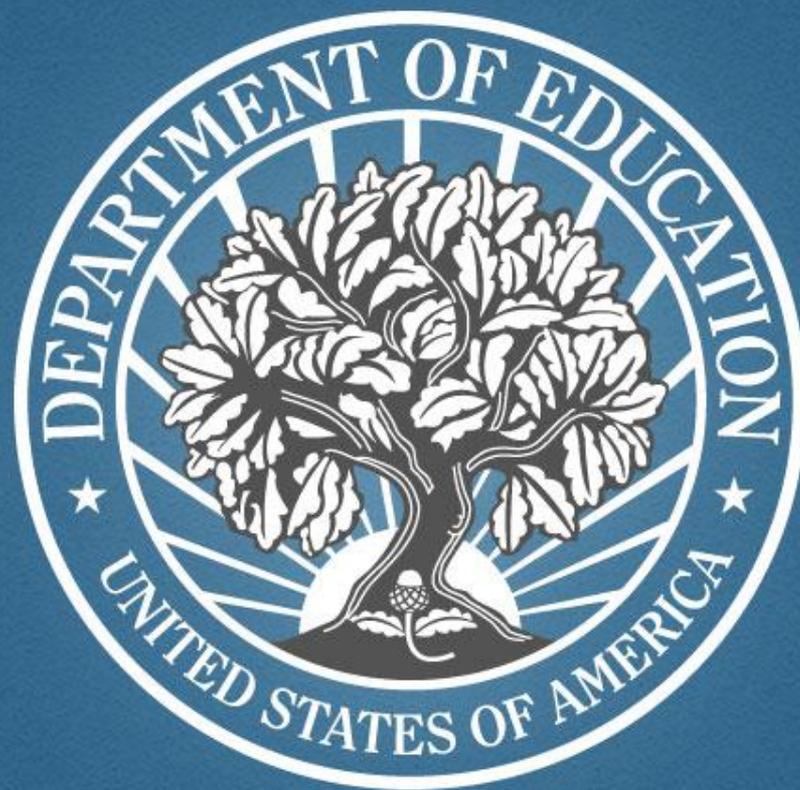
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/search-grants.html?keywords=ready-to-learn>

Email:

readytolearn@ed.gov

Note: These slides are intended as guidance only. Please refer to the official Notice in the Federal Register.





THANK YOU



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