

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Office of Postsecondary Education

Washington, DC 20006-8510



**Fiscal Year 2015**

**APPLICATION FOR GRANTS  
UNDER THE  
STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS  
PROGRAM  
CFDA # 84.031A**

**Form Approved**

**OMB No. 1840 - 0114, Expiration Date: XX/XX/2018**

**CLOSING DATE: XX X, 2015**

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## Dear Applicant Letter

### Draft letter below.

Thank you for your interest in applying for a new grant under the fiscal year (FY) 2015 Title III Part A, Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) grant competition (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance [CFDA] numbers 84.031A & 84.031F). The FY 2015 competition will **not** fund applications under CFDA 84.031F. This letter highlights specific elements in the SIP competition application booklet. As you formulate your application, please review these requirements and carefully and thoroughly review the entire application booklet.

In order to receive a grant under the Title III, Part A program, an institution of higher education (IHE) must have applied for a “determination of eligibility” and must have been deemed an “eligible institution.” The Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) for the Designation as an Eligible Institution was published in the Federal Register on November 3, 2014.

For FY 2015, the Title III, Part A, SIP program will fund both Individual Development Grants and Cooperative Arrangement Development Grants. Cooperative Arrangement Development Grants are where an eligible institution and one or more additional institutions combine the resources of all participating institutions to carry out allowable grant activities, while avoiding costly duplication of effort. The institution that submits the grant application is the lead institution and the fiscal agent for that partnership. The lead institution **must** be an eligible institution.

The FY 2015 Title III, Part A, SIP program, CFDA 84.031A, includes a competitive preference priority. This priority affords applicants the possibility of adding three (3) additional points to an application’s total score. This priority is: *Supporting Strategies for which there is Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness*. Only projects that are supported by moderate evidence (as defined in the Federal Register NIA for New Awards for the FY 2015 SIP) will receive additional points. Applicants demonstrating that one of their proposed process, product, strategy, or practice is based on research that meets the moderate evidence of effectiveness standard will receive the three points. Applicants seeking to address this competitive preference priority should identify a minimum of one study to a maximum of two studies that support their proposed project and meet, individually or together, the definition of moderate evidence of effectiveness. Applicants who do not address the competitive preference or who fail to demonstrate moderate evidence in the submitted studies will not receive any additional points. No partial points will be awarded.

Following a peer review by three non-Federal reviewers, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) will determine whether the submitted evidence meets the moderate evidence standards. Institutions are not required to address the competitive preference priority. For additional information about the competitive preference priority, please refer to the Federal Register NIA for New Awards for the FY 2015 SIP. The NIA is included in this application booklet.

Applications for the FY 2015, Title III, Part A, SIP awards must be submitted electronically using Grants.gov at: <http://www.grants.gov>. An applicant who is unable to submit using

Grants.gov must submit a written request to waive the electronic submission requirement at least two weeks before the deadline date. In order to submit a paper application, an applicant must have received approval for a non-electronic submission. Additional information about Grants.gov submission requirements can be found in the Competition Highlights, the NIA published in the Federal Register, and the transmittal instructions that are included in this application booklet.

Do not rely upon any information that is inconsistent with the guidance contained within this application package and the NIA. The NIA for the FY 2015 Title III, Part A, SIP is the official document and you should not rely upon any information that is inconsistent with the guidance contained within the official document. I urge you to carefully read all the information contained in this application booklet.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Nalini Lamba-Nieves at [nalini.lamba-nieves@ed.gov](mailto:nalini.lamba-nieves@ed.gov) or Pearson Owens at [pearson.owens@ed.gov](mailto:pearson.owens@ed.gov).

For an overview of significant competition elements, we encourage applicants to review the application booklet “Competition Highlights” section.

We appreciate your interest in the Strengthening Institutions Program and look forward to receiving your application.

Sincerely,

Leonard L. Haynes, III, Ph.D.  
Senior Director  
for Institutional Service

## Competition Highlights

### Grants.gov:

1. Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) grant applications for FY 2015 must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov at: <http://www.grants.gov>.
2. Please note that the Grants.gov site is different from the Department's e-Application system used in past competitions. Once you download the application package from Grants.gov, you will be working offline and saving data on your computer. Be sure 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 your application.
3. We urge you to consider the following three important administrative factors when applying for this grant program:
  1. Register at the Grants.gov website early. The registration procedures may require five (5) or more days to complete.
  2. Consider submitting your application 2-3 days prior to the closing date. The time it takes to upload an application will vary depending on your application and the speed of your Internet connection. The application submission process must be complete prior to the deadline for transmittal of applications.
  3. Remember to provide the DUNS number that was used when your organization registered with the System for Award Management (SAM), formerly the Central Contractor Registry (CCR).
4. Grants.gov does not allow applicants to "un-submit" or delete 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. If the Department receives duplicate applications, we will accept and process the application with the latest "date/time received" validation.
5. Please note that you must submit your application by 4:30:00 p.m. (Washington, D.C. 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.

### Eligibility:

6. All grant applicants for SIP must have applied for and received FY 2015 Designation of Eligibility. Applicants failing to apply for eligibility will not have their application entered in the review process. The deadline for applying for basic eligibility was December 22, 2014.

7. Your institution's application for a FY 2015 Title III, SIP grant **MUST** be in the same name provided in the FY 2015 Designation of Eligibility application, or it will be deemed not eligible to be read.

**Allowable Activities & Program Regulations:**

8. Authorized grant activities for the SIP are listed in Title III, Part A, Section 311 of the Higher Education Act, as amended (HEA); however, Section 301 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) modified the authorized grant activities for SIP. Please review these modifications prior to preparing your SIP application.
9. Applicants should also review the program regulations (34 CFR 607.10 and 607.30) for guidance on which activities and costs are allowable. For example, you may not use your grant funds to:
  - Recruit students;
  - Provide scholarships for students;
  - Carry out activities that are operational rather than developmental;
  - Carry out student activities such as entertainment, cultural or social enrichment programs, student publications, social clubs or associations;
  - Pay for organized fund raising and;
  - Cover indirect costs.

**Page Limits:**

10. All applicants are required to adhere to the page limit for the Project Narrative portion of the application. Applications for Individual Development Grants have a 50-page limit and Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant applications have a 70-page limit. Applicants addressing the competitive preference priority have an additional five pages for a total of 55 pages for Individual Development Grants and 75 pages for Cooperative Arrangement Development Grants.

**Competitive Preference Priority:**

11. Applicants addressing the competitive preference priority -- Supporting Strategies for which there is Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness -- must provide information addressing this priority in a separate document, under Part III, Other Attachments in Grants.gov. The document should be titled, "Competitive Preference Priority— Supporting Strategies for which there is Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness." Applicants may use up to five pages to address the competitive preference priority. No portion of these five pages can be used as additional pages to respond to the selection criteria.
12. Applicants addressing the competitive preference priority must provide a minimum of one to a maximum of two evidence studies for one strategy within the grant's proposed activities. The evidence studies referenced must also be attached as a separate PDF titled Evidence Studies under Other Attachments, in Grants.gov, for the determination of moderate evidence.

Submitted studies must meet the moderate evidence definition for an application to receive the three points.

13. If the evidence in one of the submitted activities is not deemed moderate, the institution will **not** receive the additional three points.
14. Institutions should include in their Abstracts whether or not they are addressing the competitive preference priority. If addressing the priority, the Abstract should include the citation of studies referenced.

#### **Cooperative Arrangement Development Grants:**

15. The lead institution in a Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant is the institution that submits the application on behalf of the cooperative partners and is the fiscal agent for the grant. **The lead institution must be an eligible institution.** Partner institutions do not need to be eligible institutions to participate in the cooperative arrangement. Applicants may submit an Individual and a Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant application and be awarded both.
16. The Department will make five-year awards for Individual and Cooperative Arrangement Development Grants in rank order from the funding slate according to the average score received from a panel of three readers. However, applications within funding range that addressed the competitive preference priority will have the evidence submitted in response to that priority reviewed by IES. Those applicants whose evidence is found to not meet the requirements of moderate evidence will not receive the additional three (3) points.
17. For FY 2015, applicants can only receive funding for one Title III or Title V program. Current SIP grantees may apply for and be awarded a Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant.

#### **Program Profile and Abstract:**

18. All applicants are required to submit a SIP Profile Form, which contains the tie-breaker information. Applicants are asked to carefully read question #4 on the Program Profile Form and, if applicable, to check the box or place an X next to the box certifying that they will comply with the statutory requirement and program assurances regarding endowments cited in the program regulations.
19. All applicants must provide an abstract limited to one single-spaced page. The abstract must be uploaded as a **PDF file only**. Complete instructions for submitting the abstract are included in the Instructions for Completing the Application Package.
20. Information on SIP is accessible at the Department's Web site at:  
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/iduestitle3a/index.html>.

# Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants

## 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.

#### **ATTENTION – Browser Support**

Grants.gov is a Custom Java Application that uses standard web-browsers as the client. Grants.gov leverages the latest web technologies such as Ajax which relies extensively on JavaScript, HTML, and CSS. Grants.gov recommends you use the most up-to-date web browser possible for the best User Experience. **We strongly recommend ED Staff use Firefox or Chrome; we currently do not have the latest version of Microsoft IE here at Education.** If you are unsure about which version of the browser you are using, please check the following places:

- **Microsoft IE** – the *About Internet Explorer* setting under Help on your toolbar
- **Firefox** – the *About Firefox* setting under Help on your toolbar
- **Chrome**- the *About Google Chrome* setting under the *Customize and Control Google Chrome* option (located on the far right  ) in your toolbar options for your browsers.

The table below lists supported Web Browsers:

Web Browser	Support	Comments
Microsoft IE 9/10/11	Supported	
Mozilla Firefox	Supported	Versions change frequently; we recommend you have the latest version. Legacy versions are functional but may experience some issues. It is recommended to upgrade to the latest version.
Google Chrome	Supported	Versions change frequently; we recommend you have the latest version. Legacy versions are functional but may experience some issues. It is recommended to upgrade to the latest version.
Apple Safari	Supported	Versions change frequently; we recommend you have the latest version. Legacy versions are functional but may experience some issues. It is recommended to upgrade to the latest version.

For additional information of updates, please see the Grants.gov Browser Support Page.

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/browser-support.html>

#### **ATTENTION – Adobe Forms and PDF Files Required**

Applications submitted to Grants.gov for the Department of Education will be posted using Adobe forms. Therefore, applicants will need to download the latest version of Adobe reader (at least Adobe Reader 10.1.14). (Please note that in early 2013, Grants.gov discovered an issue with the newest version of Adobe Reader XI but it was subsequently resolved.) Information on computer and operating system compatibility with Adobe and links to download the latest version is available on Grants.gov at this link: [compatibility table](#). We strongly recommend that you review these details on [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) before completing and submitting your application. In addition, applicants should submit their application a day or two in advance of the closing date as detailed below. Also, applicants are required to upload their attachments in .pdf format only. (See details below under “Attaching Files – Additional Tips.”) If you have any questions regarding this matter please email the Grants.gov Contact Center at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) or call 1-800-518-4726.



- 1) **REGISTER EARLY** – Grants.gov registration involves many steps including registration on SAM ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)) which may take approximately one week to complete, but could take upwards of several weeks to complete, depending upon 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> [Note: Your organization will need to update its SAM registration annually (formerly Central Contractor Registry (CCR).)]

Primary information about SAM is available at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). However, to further assist you with obtaining and registering your DUNS number and TIN in SAM or updating your existing SAM account the Department of Education has prepared a SAM.gov Tip Sheet which you can find at: <http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/sam-faqs.html>

- 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 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time on the deadline date.

**Note: To submit successfully, you must provide the DUNS number on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov. This DUNS number is typically the same number used when your organization registered with the SAM (formerly CCR -Central Contractor Registry). If you do not enter the same DUNS number on your application as the DUNS you registered with, 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 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC 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's Track My Application link.

If the date/time received is later than 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, D.C. 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/grant-application-process/application-statuses.html>. For more detailed information on troubleshooting Adobe errors, you can review the Adobe Reader Error Messages document at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/troubleshooting/encountering-error-messages.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 <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/about/contact-us.html>, or access the Grants.gov Self-Service web portal at: <https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants>

If electronic submission is optional and you have problems that you are unable to resolve before the deadline date and time for electronic applications, please follow the transmittal instructions for hard copy applications in the Federal Register notice and get a hard copy application postmarked by midnight on the deadline date.

If electronic submission is required, you must submit an electronic application before 4:30:00 p.m., unless you follow the procedures in the Federal Register notice and qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

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

Please note, once you download an application from Grants.gov, you will be working offline and saving data on your computer. Please be sure to note where you are saving the Grants.gov file on your computer. You will need to logon to Grants.gov to upload and submit the application. **You must provide the DUNS number on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov.**

Please go to <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/about/contact-us.html> for help with Grants.gov. For additional tips related to submitting grant applications, please refer to the Grants.gov Submit Application FAQs found on the Grants.gov <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/general-support/faqs.html>.

### **Dial-Up Internet Connections**

When using 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. **If you do not have access to a high-speed connection and electronic submission is required, 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 two weeks before the application deadline date.** (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

### **MAC Users**

For MAC compatibility information, review the Operating System Platform Compatibility Table at the following Grants.gov link: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/recommended-software.html>. **If electronic submission is required and you are concerned about your ability to submit electronically as a non-windows user, please follow instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.** (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

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

Please note the following tips related to attaching files to your application, especially the requirement that applicants **only include read-only, non-modifiable .PDF files** in their application:

1. Ensure that you attach **.PDF files only** for any attachments to your application, and they must be in a **read-only, non-modifiable format**. PDF files are the only Education approved file type accepted as detailed in the Federal Register application notice. Applicants must submit individual .PDF files only when attaching files to their application. Specifically, the Department will not accept any attachments that contain files within a file, such as PDF Portfolio files, or an interactive or fillable .PDF file. Any attachments uploaded that are not .PDF files or are password protected files will not be read.
2. 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.
3. When attaching files, applicants should follow the guidelines established by Grants.gov on the size and content of file names. Uploaded files must be less than 50 characters, contain no spaces, no special characters (example: -, &, \*, %, /, #, \) including periods (.), blank spaces and accent marks. Applications submitted that do not comply with the Grants.gov guidelines will be rejected at Grants.gov and not forwarded to the Department.

4. 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 totals 1 to 2 MB. Therefore, you may want to check the total size of your package before submission.

2/2015

## Application Transmittal Instructions

**ATTENTION ELECTRONIC APPLICANTS:** Please note that you must follow the **Application Procedures** as described in the Federal Register NIA announcing the grant competition.

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

According to the instructions found in the Federal Register NIA, those requesting and qualifying for an exception to the electronic submission requirement may submit an application by mail, commercial carrier or by hand delivery.

If you want to apply for a grant and be considered for funding, you must meet the following deadline requirements:

### **Applications Submitted Electronically:**

**You must submit your grant application through the Internet using the software provided on the Grants.gov Web site (<http://www.grants.gov>) by 4:30:00 p.m. (Washington, D.C. time) on or before the deadline date.**

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

For more information on using Grants.gov, please refer to the “Notice Inviting Applications” that was published in the Federal Register or visit <http://www.grants.gov>.

### **Submission of Paper Applications by Mail:**

If you submit your application in paper format by mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier), you must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education  
Application Control Center  
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.031A)  
LBJ Basement Level 1  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-4260

You must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.

(4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do **not** accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will **not** consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

**Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery:**

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education  
Application Control Center  
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.031A)  
550 12th Street, SW  
Room 7039, Potomac Center Plaza  
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

**Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications:** If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department--

- (1) You must indicate on the envelope and--if not provided by the Department--in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and
- (2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

**Late Applications**

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

## Notice Inviting Applications

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Strengthening Institutions Program

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of  
Education

ACTION: Notice.

### Overview Information:

Strengthening Institutions Program

Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY)  
2015.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.031A.

### Dates:

Applications Available: [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE  
FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS  
AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: [INSERT DATE 120 DAYS  
AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Full Text of Announcement

### I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP)  
provides grants to eligible institutions of higher education  
(IHES) to help them become self-sufficient and expand their

capacity to serve low-income students by providing funds to improve and strengthen the institution's academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability.

Priority: This notice contains one competitive preference priority. The competitive preference priority is from 34 CFR 75.226.

Competitive Preference Priority: For FY 2015 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition, this priority is a competitive preference priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), we award three additional points to an application that meets this priority.

This priority is:

Competitive Preference Priority -- Supporting Strategies for which there is Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness (3 additional points).

Projects that propose a process, product, strategy, or practice supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness (as defined in this notice).

Note: Applicants seeking to address this competitive preference priority should identify a minimum of one study to a maximum of two studies that support their proposed project and meet the definition of "moderate evidence of effectiveness." Applicants should provide a citation and link for each supporting study on

the one-page abstract submitted with the application. All cited studies must also be submitted with the application as a PDF.

To qualify as moderate evidence of effectiveness, among other things, a study's evaluation design must meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Evidence Standards (as defined in this notice). Both quasi-experimental design studies and randomized controlled trials (as defined in this notice) may meet WWC Evidence Standards. [The WWC review protocol for individual studies in the postsecondary education topic area, which describes the specific types of outcomes, populations, and other criteria that will be used by the Department to determine whether a study meets WWC Evidence Standards, can be found at: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/reference\\_resources/wwc\\_pe\\_protocol\\_v3.0.pdf.](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/reference_resources/wwc_pe_protocol_v3.0.pdf)

Applicants may cite to studies that (1) have already been determined by the Department to meet the WWC Evidence Standards (e.g., studies listed in the WWC-reviewed studies database or in the WWC database under the postsecondary topic area as having met WWC standards with or without reservations) or (2) have not yet been reviewed by the Department but that the applicant thinks will meet the WWC Evidence Standards. In the case of studies that have not yet been reviewed, the Department will review the studies to determine if they meet WWC Evidence Standards, in accordance with the procedures described under



Review and Selection Process in section IV of this notice. In both cases, the studies will be reviewed by the Department to determine if they also meet the other requirements of the definition for “moderate evidence of effectiveness.”

In order to receive the three additional points under this competitive preference priority, applicants should propose to implement the strategy from their supporting study or studies as closely as possible and describe in the narrative response to this priority how they will do so. Where modifications to a cited strategy will be made to account for student or institutional characteristics, resource limitations, or other special factors, the applicant should provide a justification or basis for the modifications in the narrative response to this priority. Modifications may not be proposed to the core aspects of any cited strategy.

Definitions: These definitions are from 34 CFR 77.1(c) and apply to the priority in this notice.

Large sample means an analytic sample of 350 or more students (or other single analysis units), or 50 or more groups (such as classrooms or schools) that contain 10 or more students (or other single analysis units).

Moderate evidence of effectiveness means one of the following conditions is met:

(i) There is at least one study of the effectiveness of the process, product, strategy, or practice being proposed that meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations, found a statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (with no statistically significant and overriding unfavorable impacts on that outcome for relevant populations in the study or in other studies of the intervention reviewed by and reported on by the What Works Clearinghouse), and includes a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to receive the process, product, strategy, or practice.

(ii) There is at least one study of the effectiveness of the process, product, strategy, or practice being proposed that meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations, found a statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (with no statistically significant and overriding unfavorable impacts on that outcome for relevant populations in the study or in other studies of the intervention reviewed by and reported on by the What Works Clearinghouse), includes a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to receive the process, product, strategy, or practice, and includes a large sample and a multi-site sample. (Note: multiple studies can cumulatively meet the large and multi-site sample requirements as long as each study meets the other requirements in this paragraph.)

Multi-site sample means more than one site, where site can be defined as an LEA, locality, or State.

Quasi-experimental design study means a study using a design that attempts to approximate an experimental design by identifying a comparison group that is similar to the treatment group in important respects. These studies, depending on design and implementation, can meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations (but not What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations).

Randomized controlled trial means a study that employs random assignment of, for example, students, teachers, classrooms, schools, or districts to receive the intervention being evaluated (the treatment group) or not to receive the intervention (the control group). The estimated effectiveness of the intervention is the difference between the average outcomes for the treatment group and for the control group. These studies, depending on design and implementation, can meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards means the standards set forth in the What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 3.0, March 2014), which can be found at the following link:

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1057-1059d (title III, part A, of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA)).

Note: In 2008, the HEA was amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) (P.L. 110-315). The HEOA made a number of technical and substantive revisions to SIP, and the program regulations in 34 CFR part 607 have not yet been updated to reflect these statutory changes.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 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 in 2 CFR part 3474. (d) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 607.

## II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants—Individual Development Grants and Cooperative Arrangement Development Grants.

Estimated Available Funds: \$18,197,309.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2016 from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition.

Individual Development Grants:

Estimated Range of Awards: \$400,000-\$450,000 per year.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$425,000 per year.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$450,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for the Office of Postsecondary Education may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the Federal Register.

Estimated Number of Awards: 36.

Cooperative Arrangement Development Grants:

Estimated Range of Awards: \$600,000-\$650,000 per year.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$625,000 per year.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$650,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. The Assistant Secretary for the Office of Postsecondary Education may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the Federal Register.

Estimated Number of Awards: 3.

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

Project Period: Up to 60 months for each type of award.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: (a) This program is authorized by title III, part A, of the HEA. To qualify as an eligible

institution under any title III, part A program, an institution must be--

(i) Accredited or pre-accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association that the Secretary has determined to be a reliable authority as to the quality of education or training offered;

(ii) Legally authorized by the State in which it is located to be a junior or community college or to provide an educational program for which it awards a bachelor's degree;

(iii) Designated as an "eligible institution" by demonstrating that it has: (A) an enrollment of needy students as described in 34 CFR 607.3; and (B) low average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate student as described in 34 CFR 607.4.

Note: For purposes of establishing eligibility for this competition, the notice inviting applications for eligibility designation for FY 2015 was published in the Federal Register on November 3, 2014 (79 FR 65197) and applications were due on December 22, 2014. Only institutions that submitted the required application and received designation through this process are eligible to submit applications for this competition.

(b) A grantee under the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) Program, which is authorized under title V of the HEA, may not receive a grant under any HEA, title III, part A

program, including SIP. Furthermore, a current HSI Program grantee may not give up its HSI grant to receive a grant under SIP or any title III, part A program as described in 34 CFR 607.2(g)(1).

An eligible HSI that is not a current grantee under the HSI Program may apply for a FY 2015 grant under all title III, part A programs for which it is eligible, as well as receive consideration for a grant under the HSI Program. However, a successful applicant may receive only one grant as described in 34 CFR 607.2(g)(1).

(c) An eligible IHE that submits an application for an Individual Development Grant and a Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant may be awarded both grants.

(d) An eligible IHE that currently has a SIP Individual Development Grant may apply for and be awarded a Cooperative Development Grant. A grantee with an Individual Development Grant or Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant may be a partner or subgrantee in one or more Cooperative Arrangement Development Grants. The lead institution in a Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant must be an eligible institution. Partners or subgrantees are not required to be eligible institutions.

2. a. Cost Sharing or Matching: This program does not require cost sharing or matching unless the grantee uses a

portion of its grant for establishing or improving an endowment fund. If a grantee uses a portion of its grant for endowment fund purposes, it must match those grant funds with non-Federal funds (20 U.S.C. 1059c(c) (3)(B)).

b. Supplement-Not-Supplant: This program involves supplement-not-supplant funding requirements. Grant funds shall 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 (34 CFR 607.30(b)).

#### IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package: You can obtain an application via the Internet using the following address: [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact one of the program contact persons listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities can obtain a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) by contacting one of the program contact persons listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice.



## 2. Content and Form of Application Submission:

Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for this program.

Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria and the competitive preference priority that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We have established the following mandatory page limits for Individual Development Grant and Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant applications:

- If you are not addressing the competitive preference priority you must limit your application narrative to no more than 50 pages for an Individual Development Grant application and to no more than 70 pages for a Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant application.
- If you are addressing the competitive preference priority you must limit your application narrative to no more than 55 pages for an Individual Development Grant application and 75 pages for a Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant application.

Applicants should provide information addressing the competitive preference priority in the section of the application titled "Competitive Preference Priority—Supporting Strategies for which there is Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness."

For the purpose of determining compliance with the page limit, each page on which there are words will be counted as one full page. Applicants must 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. Page numbers and an identifier may be within the 1" margins.

- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, except titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions. Text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs in the application narrative may be single spaced and will count toward the page limit.

- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger, and no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch). However, you may use a 10-point font in charts, tables, figures, graphs, footnotes, and endnotes.

- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial. An application submitted in any other font (including Times Roman or Arial Narrow) will not be accepted.

The page limit applies to all of the application narrative section, including your complete response to the selection criteria and the competitive preference priority. However, the page limit does not apply to Part I, the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424-cover sheet); the Department of Education

Supplemental Information Form (SF 424); Part II, the Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs Form (ED 524); Section A - Budget Summary - U.S. Department of Education Funds; Section B - Budget Summary - Non-Federal Funds; and Section C - Budget Narrative; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; the one-page program abstract; or bibliography. The page limit also does not apply to any copies of studies that are submitted in response to the competitive preference priority. However, if you include any attachments or appendices not specifically listed in this section or requested in the application package, these items will be counted as part of your application narrative for the purpose of the page-limit requirement.

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.

We will reject your application if you exceed the page limit.

### 3. Submission Dates and Times:

Applications Available: [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). For

information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically, or in paper format by mail or hand delivery if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, please refer to section IV. 7. Other Submission Requirements of this notice.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process should contact one of the program contact persons listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice. If the Department provides an accommodation or auxiliary aid to an individual with a disability in connection with the application process, the individual's application remains subject to all other requirements and limitations in this notice.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: [INSERT DATE 120 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

4. 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.

5. Funding Restrictions: (a) General. We specify unallowable costs in 34 CFR 607.10(c). We reference additional

regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

(b) Applicability of Executive Order 13202. Applicants that apply for construction funds under the title III, part A, HEA programs must comply with Executive Order 13202, as amended. This Executive order provides that recipients of Federal construction funds may not “require or prohibit bidders, offerors, contractors, or subcontractors to enter into or adhere to agreements with one or more labor organizations, on the same or other construction project(s)” or “otherwise discriminate against bidders, offerors, contractors, or subcontractors for becoming or refusing to become or remain signatories or otherwise to adhere to agreements with one or more labor organizations, on the same or other related construction project(s).” Projects funded under this program that include construction activity will be provided a copy of this Executive order and will be asked to certify that they will adhere to it.

6. Data Universal Numbering System Number, Taxpayer Identification Number, and System for Award Management: To do business with the Department of Education, you must--

a. Have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);

b. Register both your DUNS number and TIN with the System for Award Management (SAM) (formerly the Central Contractor Registry (CCR), the Government's primary registrant database;

c. Provide your DUNS number and TIN on your application;  
and

d. Maintain an active SAM registration with current information while your application is under review by the Department and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.

You can obtain a DUNS number from Dun and Bradstreet. A DUNS number can be created within one to two business days.

If you are a corporate entity, agency, institution, or organization, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service. If you are an individual, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service or the Social Security Administration. If you need a new TIN, please allow two to five weeks for your TIN to become active.

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 think you might want to apply for Federal financial assistance under a program administered by the Department, please allow sufficient time to

obtain and register your DUNS number and TIN. We strongly recommend that you register early.

Note: 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.

If you are currently registered with SAM, you may not need to make any changes. However, please make certain that the TIN associated with your DUNS number is correct. Also note that you will need to update your registration annually. This may take three or more business days.

Information about SAM is available at [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov). To further assist you with obtaining and registering your DUNS number and TIN in SAM or updating your existing SAM account, we have prepared a SAM.gov Tip Sheet, which you can find at: <http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/sam-faqs.html>.

In addition, if you are submitting your application via Grants.gov, you must (1) be designated by your organization as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (2) register yourself with Grants.gov as an AOR. Details on these steps are outlined at the following Grants.gov Web page: [www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html](http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html).

7. Other Submission Requirements: Applications for grants under the Strengthening Institutions Program must be submitted

electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section.

a. Electronic Submission of Applications.

Applications for grants under the Strengthening Institutions Program, CFDA number 84.031A, must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not email an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided later in this section under Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement.

You may access the electronic grant application for this competition at [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). You must search for the downloadable application package for this program by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.031, not 84.031A).



Please note the following:

- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.

- Applications received by Grants.gov are date and time stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted and must be date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not accept your application if it is received--that is, date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system--after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors, including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this competition to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov under News and Events on the Department's G5 system home page at [www.G5.gov](http://www.G5.gov).

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information you typically provide on the following forms: the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications.

- You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a PDF read-only, non-modifiable format. Do not upload an interactive or fillable PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable PDF or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page-limit requirements described in this notice.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic notification of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by the Department.) The Department then will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send a second notification to you by email. This second notification indicates that the Department has received your application and has assigned your application a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).

- We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues

with the Grants.gov System: 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 must keep a record of it.

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following

business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions described elsewhere in this notice.

If you submit an application after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date, please contact the persons listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number. We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that that problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

Note: The extensions to which we refer in this section apply only to the unavailability of, or technical problems with, the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the application deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement: You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may

submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through the Grants.gov system because--

- You do not have access to the Internet; or
- You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system;

and

- No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days or, if the fourteenth calendar day before the application deadline date falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the two grounds for an exception prevents you from using the Internet to submit your application.

If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to: Nalini Lamba-Nieves, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., room 6024, Washington, DC 20006-8513. FAX: (202) 502-7861.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

b. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your application to the Department. You must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education  
Application Control Center  
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.031A)  
LBJ Basement Level 1  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.  
Washington, DC 20202-4260

You must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

c. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education  
Application Control Center  
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.031A)  
550 12th Street, SW.  
Room 7039, Potomac Center Plaza  
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications: If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department--

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and--if not provided by the Department--in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number,

including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

#### V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this program are from 34 CFR 607.22(a)-(g). Applicants must address each of the following selection criteria. The total maximum number of points under the selection criteria is 100 points; the maximum score under each criterion is noted in parentheses. The complete text of the selection criteria is in the application package for this competition.

(a) Quality of the Applicant's Comprehensive Development Plan. (Maximum 25 Points) The extent to which--

(1) The strengths, weaknesses, and significant problems of the institution's academic programs, institutional management, and fiscal stability are clearly and comprehensively analyzed and result from a process that involved major constituencies of the institution;



(2) The goals for the institution's academic programs, institutional management, and fiscal stability are realistic and based on comprehensive analysis;

(3) The objectives stated in the plan are measurable, related to institutional goals, and, if achieved, will contribute to the growth and self-sufficiency of the institution; and

(4) The plan clearly and comprehensively describes the methods and resources the institution will use to institutionalize practice and improvements developed under the proposed project, including, in particular, how operational costs for personnel, maintenance, and upgrades of equipment will be paid with institutional resources.

(b) Quality of Activity Objectives. (Maximum 15 Points)

The extent to which the objectives for each activity are--

(1) Realistic and defined in terms of measurable results; and

(2) Directly related to the problems to be solved and to the goals of the comprehensive development plan.

(c) Quality of Implementation Strategy. (Maximum 20 Points) The extent to which--

(1) The implementation strategy for each activity is comprehensive;

(2) The rationale for the implementation strategy for each activity is clearly described and is supported by the results of relevant studies or projects; and

(3) The timetable for each activity is realistic and likely to be attained.

(d) Quality of Key Personnel. (Maximum 7 Points) The extent to which--

(1) The past experience and training of key professional personnel are directly related to the stated activity objectives; and

(2) The time commitment of key personnel is realistic.

(e) Quality of Project Management Plan. (Maximum 10 Points) The extent to which--

(1) Procedures for managing the project are likely to ensure efficient and effective project implementation; and

(2) The project coordinator and activity directors have sufficient authority to conduct the project effectively, including access to the president or chief executive officer.

(f) Quality of Evaluation Plan. (Maximum 15 Points) The extent to which--

(1) The data elements and the data collection procedures are clearly described and appropriate to measure the attainment of activity objectives and to measure the success of the project in achieving the goals of the comprehensive development plan; and

(2) The data analysis procedures are clearly described and are likely to produce formative and summative results on attaining activity objectives and measuring the success of the project on achieving the goals of the comprehensive development plan.

(g) Budget. (Maximum 8 Points) The extent to which the proposed costs are necessary and reasonable in relation to the project's objectives and scope.

2. Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants 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 also 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 of Education (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

Awards will be made in rank order according to the average score received from an evaluation performed by a panel of non-Federal reviewers based on responses to the selection criteria and, if applicable, the competitive preference priority. If an application is scored highly, has the possibility of being funded, and includes a response to the competitive preference priority, IES will review the studies cited in the application to determine whether they meet the "moderate evidence of effectiveness" standard. Only those applications that address the competitive preference priority and have the possibility of being funded because of high scores and available funds for new awards will undergo further review by IES. At least one study submitted must be found to meet the definition of "moderate evidence of effectiveness," in order for applicants to receive the additional points.

Tie-breaker for Development Grants. In tie-breaking situations for Development Grants, 34 CFR 607.23(b) requires that we award one additional point to an application from an IHE that has an endowment fund of which the current market value, per full time equivalent (FTE) enrolled student, is less than the average current market value of the endowment funds, per FTE enrolled student, at comparable type institutions that offer similar instruction. We also award one additional point to an application from an IHE that has expenditures for library

materials per FTE enrolled student that are less than the average expenditure for library materials per FTE enrolled student at similar type institutions. We also add one additional point to an application from an IHE that proposes to carry out one or more of the following activities--

- (1) Faculty development;
- (2) Funds and administrative management;
- (3) Development and improvement of academic programs;
- (4) Acquisition of equipment for use in strengthening management and academic programs;
- (5) Joint use of facilities; and
- (6) Student services.

For the purpose of these funding considerations, we use 2012-2013 data.

If a tie remains after applying the tie-breaker mechanism above, priority will be given in the case of applicants for: (a) Individual Development Grants, to applicants that have the lowest endowment values per FTE student; and (b) Cooperative Arrangement Development Grants, to applicants in accordance with section 394(b) of the HEA, if the Secretary determines that the cooperative arrangement is geographically and economically sound or will benefit the applicant institution.

3. Special Conditions: Under 2 CFR 3474.10, the Secretary may impose special conditions and, 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 (34 CFR 607.24(c)(2)); or is otherwise not responsible.

## 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 may notify you informally, also.

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. 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 multi-year 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).

4. Performance Measures: The Secretary has established the following key performance measures for assessing the effectiveness of the Strengthening Institutions Program:

a. The percentage change, over the five-year period, of the number of full-time degree-seeking undergraduates enrolled at SIP institutions. Note that this is a long-term measure, which will be used to periodically gauge performance;

b. The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students at four-year SIP institutions who were in

their first year of postsecondary enrollment in the previous year and are enrolled in the current year at the same SIP institution;

c. The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students at two-year SIP institutions who were in their first year of postsecondary enrollment in the previous year and are enrolled in the current year at the same SIP institution;

d. The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled at four-year SIP institutions graduating within six years of enrollment; and

e. The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled at two-year SIP institutions graduating within three years of enrollment.

5. Continuation Awards: In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, the performance targets in the grantee's approved application. In making a continuation grant, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, 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).

## VII. Agency Contacts

For Further Information Contact: Nalini Lamba-Nieves, Pearson Owens, or Don Crews, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., room 6024, Washington, DC 20006-8513. You may contact these individuals at the following email addresses and telephone numbers:

Nalini.Lamba-Nieves@ed.gov; (202) 502-7562

Pearson.Owens@ed.gov; (202) 502-7804

Don.Crews@ed.gov; (202) 502-7574

If you use a TDD or a TTY, call the FRS, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

## VIII. Other Information

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) on request to either program contact person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the Federal Register. Free Internet access to the official edition of the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations is available via the Federal Digital System at: [www.gpo.gov/fdsys](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys). 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 Adobe 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.

Delegation of Authority: The Secretary of Education has delegated authority to Jamiene S. Studley, Deputy Under Secretary, to perform the functions and duties of the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.

Dated:

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Jamiene S. Studley,  
Deputy Under Secretary.

## Program Statute

HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965, AS AMENDED

### TITLE III--INSTITUTIONAL AID

#### SEC. 301. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS. --The Congress finds that--

(1) there are a significant number of institutions of higher education serving high percentages of minority students and students from low-income backgrounds, that face problems that threaten their ability to survive;

(2) the problems relate to the management and fiscal operations of certain institutions of higher education, as well as to an inability to engage in long-range planning and development activities, including endowment building;

(3) in order to be competitive and provide a high-quality education for all, institutions of higher education should improve their technological capacity and make effective use of technology;

(4) the title III program prior to 1985 did not always meet the specific development needs of historically Black colleges and universities and other institutions with large concentrations of minority, low-income students;

(5) the solution of the problems of these institutions would enable them to become viable, fiscally stable and independent, thriving institutions of higher education;

(6) providing assistance to eligible institutions will enhance the role of such institutions in providing access and quality education to low-income and minority students;

(7) these institutions play an important role in the American system of higher education, and there is a strong national interest in assisting them in solving their problems and in stabilizing their management and fiscal operations, and in becoming financially independent; and

(8) there is a particular national interest in aiding those institutions of higher education that have historically served students who have been denied access to postsecondary education because of race or national origin and whose participation in the American system of higher education is in the Nation's interest so that equality of access and quality of postsecondary education opportunities may be enhanced for all students.

(b) PURPOSE. --It is the purpose of this title to assist such institutions in equalizing educational opportunity through a program of Federal assistance.

### PART A--STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

#### SEC. 311. PROGRAM PURPOSE.

(a) GENERAL AUTHORIZATION. --The Secretary shall carry out a program, in accordance with this part, to improve the academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability of eligible institutions, in order to increase their self-sufficiency and strengthen their capacity to make a substantial contribution to the higher education resources of the Nation.

(b) GRANTS AWARDED; SPECIAL CONSIDERATION. --

(1) From the sums available for this part under section 399(a)(1), the Secretary may award grants to any eligible institution with an application approved under section 351 in order to assist such an institution to plan, develop, or implement activities that promise to strengthen the institution.

- (2) Special consideration shall be given to any eligible institution--
- (A) which has endowment funds (other than any endowment fund built under section 332 of this Act as in effect on September 30, 1986, and under part B) the market value of which, per full-time equivalent student, is less than the average current market value of the endowment funds, per full-time equivalent student (other than any endowment fund built under section 332 of this Act as in effect on September 30, 1986, and under part B) at similar institutions; or
  - (B) which has expenditures per full-time equivalent student for library materials which is less than the average of the expenditures for library materials per full-time equivalent student by other similarly situated institutions.
- (3) Special consideration shall be given to applications which propose, pursuant to the institution's plan, to engage in
- (A) faculty development;
  - (B) funds and administrative management;
  - (C) development and improvement of academic programs;
  - (D) acquisition of equipment for use in strengthening funds management and academic programs;
  - (E) joint use of facilities such as libraries and laboratories;
- and
- (F) student services.
- (c) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.--Grants awarded under this section shall be used for 1 or more of the following activities:
- (1) Purchase, rental, or lease of scientific or laboratory equipment for educational purposes, including instructional and research purposes.
  - (2) Construction, maintenance, renovation, and improvement in classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other instructional facilities, including the integration of computer technology into institutional facilities to create smart buildings.
  - (3) Support of faculty exchanges, faculty development, and faculty fellowships to assist in attaining advanced degrees in the field of instruction of the faculty.
  - (4) Development and improvement of academic programs.
  - (5) Purchase of library books, periodicals, and other educational materials, including telecommunications program material.
  - (6) Tutoring, counseling, and student service programs designed to improve academic success.
  - (7) Funds management, administrative management, and acquisition of equipment for use in strengthening funds management.
  - (8) Joint use of facilities, such as laboratories and libraries.
  - (9) Establishing or improving a development office to strengthen or improve contributions from alumni and the private sector.
  - (10) Establishing or improving an endowment fund.
  - (11) Creating or improving facilities for Internet or other distance learning academic instruction capabilities, including purchase or rental of telecommunications technology equipment or services.
  - (12) Other activities proposed in the application submitted pursuant to subsection (c) that-
    - (A) contribute to carrying out the purposes of the program assisted under this part; and
    - (B) are approved by the Secretary as part of the review and acceptance of such application.
- (d) ENDOWMENT FUND.

- (1) IN GENERAL.--An eligible institution may use not more than 20 percent of the grant funds provided under this part to establish or increase an endowment fund at such institution.
- (2) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.--In order to be eligible to use grant funds in accordance with paragraph (1), the eligible institution shall provide matching funds from non-Federal sources, in an amount equal to or greater than the Federal funds used in accordance with paragraph (1), for the establishment or increase of the endowment fund.
- (3) COMPARABILITY.--The provisions of part C, regarding the establishment or increase of an endowment fund, that the Secretary determines are not inconsistent with this subsection, shall apply to funds used under paragraph (1).

### **SEC. 312. DEFINITIONS; ELIGIBILITY.**

(a) EDUCATIONAL AND GENERAL EXPENDITURES. -- For the purpose of this part, the term “educational and general expenditures” means the total amount expended by an institution of higher education for instruction, research, public service, academic support (including library expenditures), student services, institutional support, scholarships and fellowships, operation and maintenance expenditures for the physical plant, and any mandatory transfers which the institution is required to pay by law.

(b) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION. -- For the purpose of this part, the term “eligible institution” means --

(1) an institution of higher education--

(A) which has an enrollment of needy students as required by subsection (c) of this section;

(B) except as provided in section 392(b), the average educational and general expenditures of which are low, 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;

(C) which is

(i) legally authorized to provide, and provides within the State, an educational program for which such institution awards a bachelor’s degree;

(ii) a junior or community college; or

(iii) the College of the Marshall Islands, the College of Micronesia/Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau Community College;

(D) which is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary to be reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or which is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation;

(E) which meets such other requirements as the Secretary may prescribe; and

(F) located in a State; and

(2) any branch of any institution of higher education described under paragraph (1) which by itself satisfies the requirements contained in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of such paragraph.

For purposes of the determination of whether an institution is an eligible institution under this paragraph, the factor described under paragraph (1)(A) shall be given twice the weight of the factor described under paragraph (1)(B).

(c) ENDOWMENT FUND.-- For the purpose of this part, the term “endowment fund” means a fund that--

(1) is established by State law, by an institution of higher education, or by a foundation that is exempt from Federal income taxation;

(2) is maintained for the purpose of generating income for the support of the institution; and

(3) does not include real estate.

(d) **ENROLLMENT OF NEEDY STUDENTS.** -- For the purpose of this part, the term “enrollment of needy students” means an enrollment at an institution of higher education or a junior or community college which includes--

(1) at least 50 percent of the degree students so enrolled who are receiving need-based assistance under title IV of this Act in the second fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is being made (other than loans for which an interest subsidy is paid pursuant to section 428), or

(2) a substantial percentage of students receiving Pell Grants in the second fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which determination is being made, in comparison with the percentage of students receiving Pell Grants at all such institutions in the second fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made, unless the requirement of this subdivision is waived under section 392(a).

(e) **FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT STUDENTS.** For the purpose of this part, the term “full-time equivalent students” means the sum of the number of students enrolled full time at an institution, plus the full-time equivalent of the number of students enrolled part time (determined on the basis of the quotient of the sum of the credit hours of all part-time students divided by 12) at such institution.

(f) **JUNIOR OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE.**--For the purpose of this part, the term “junior or community college” means an institution of higher education--

(1) that admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located and who have the ability to benefit from the training offered by the institution;

(2) that does not provide an educational program for which it awards a bachelor’s degree (or an equivalent degree); and

(3) that--

(A) provides an educational program of not less than 2 years that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree, or

(B) offers a 2-year program in engineering, mathematics, or the physical or biological sciences, designed to prepare a student to work as a technician or at the semiprofessional level in engineering, scientific, or other technological fields requiring the understanding and application of basic engineering, scientific, or mathematical principles of knowledge.

(g) **HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY.**--For the purposes of this section, no historically black college or university which is eligible for and receives funds under part B of this title is eligible for or may receive funds under this part.

### **SEC. 313. DURATION OF GRANT.**

(a) **AWARD PERIOD.**--The Secretary may award a grant to an eligible institution under this part for 5 years.

(b) **LIMITATIONS.**--In awarding grants under this part the Secretary shall give priority to applicants who are not already receiving a grant under this part, except that for the purpose of this subsection a grant under subsection (c) and a grant under section 394(a)(1) shall not be considered a grant under this part.

(c) **PLANNING GRANTS.**--Notwithstanding subsection (a), the Secretary may award a grant to an eligible institution under this part for a period of one year for the purpose of preparation of plans and applications for a grant under this part.

(d) WAIT-OUT-PERIOD.--Each eligible institution that received a grant under this part for a 5-year period shall not be eligible to receive an additional grant under this part until 2 years after the date on which the 5-year grant period terminates.

#### **SEC. 314. APPLICATIONS.**

Each eligible institution desiring to receive assistance under this part shall submit an application in accordance with the requirements of section 391.

#### **SEC. 315. GOALS FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND ACADEMIC PROGRAM.**

(a) GOALS.-- Any application for a grant under this part shall describe measurable goals for the institution's financial management and academic programs, and include a plan of how the applicant intends to achieve those goals.

(b) CONTINUATION REQUIREMENTS. -- Any continuation application shall demonstrate the progress made toward achievement of the goals described pursuant to subsection (a).

### **PART F--GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **SEC. 391. APPLICATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE.**

(a) APPLICATIONS.--(1) APPLICATIONS REQUIRED.-- Any institution which is eligible for assistance under this title shall submit to the Secretary an application for assistance at such time, in such form, and containing such information, as may be necessary to enable the Secretary to evaluate the institution's need for the assistance. Subject to the availability of appropriations to carry out this title, the Secretary may approve an application for assistance under this title only if the Secretary determines that--

(A) the application meets the requirements of subsection (b);

(B) the applicant is eligible for assistance in accordance with the part of this title under which the assistance is sought; and

(C) the applicant's performance goals are sufficiently rigorous as to meet the purposes of this title and the performance objectives and indicators for this title established by the Secretary pursuant to the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 and the amendments made by such Act.

(2) PRELIMINARY APPLICATIONS.-- In carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretary may develop a preliminary application for use by eligible institutions applying under part A prior to the submission of the principal application.

(b) CONTENTS.-- An institution, in its application for a grant, shall--

(1) set forth, or describe how the institution (other than an institution applying under part C, D or E) will develop, a comprehensive development plan to strengthen the institution's academic quality and institutional management, and otherwise provide for institutional self-sufficiency and growth (including measurable objectives for the institution and the Secretary to use in monitoring the effectiveness of activities under this title);

(2) set forth policies and procedures to ensure that Federal funds made available under this title for any fiscal year will be used to supplement and, to the extent practical, increase the funds that would otherwise be made available for the purposes of section 311(b) or 323, and in no case supplant those funds;

(3) set forth policies and procedures for evaluating the effectiveness in accomplishing the purpose of the activities for which a grant is sought under this title;



- (4) provide for such fiscal control and fund accounting procedures as may be necessary to ensure proper disbursement of and accounting for funds made available to the applicant under this title;
- (5) provide (A) for making such reports, in such form and containing such information, as the Secretary may require to carry out the functions under this title, including not less than one report annually setting forth the institution's progress toward achieving the objectives for which the funds were awarded, and (B) for keeping such records and affording such access thereto, as the Secretary may find necessary to assure the correctness and verification of such reports;
- (6) provide that the institution will comply with the limitations set forth in section 357, except that for purposes of section 316, paragraphs (2) and (3) of section 396 shall not apply;
- (7) describe in a comprehensive manner any proposed project for which funds are sought under the application and include--
- (A) a description of the various components of the proposed project, including the estimated time required to complete each such component;
- (B) in the case of any development project which consists of several components (as described by the applicant pursuant to subparagraph (A)), a statement identifying those components which, if separately funded, would be sound investments of Federal funds and those components which would be sound investments of Federal funds only if funded under this title in conjunction with other parts of the development project (as specified by the applicant);
- (C) an evaluation by the applicant of the priority given any proposed project for which funds are sought in relation to any other projects for which funds are sought by the applicant under this title, and a similar evaluation regarding priorities among the components of any single proposed project (as described by the applicant pursuant to subparagraph (A));
- (D) a detailed budget showing the manner in which funds for any proposed project would be spent by the applicant; and
- (E) a detailed description of any activity which involves the expenditure of more than \$25,000, as identified in the budget referred to in subparagraph (E); and
- (8) include such other information as the Secretary may prescribe.
- (c) **PRIORITY CRITERIA PUBLICATION REQUIRED.**-- The Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register, pursuant to chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code, all policies and procedures required to exercise the authority set forth in subsection (a). No other criteria, policies, or procedures shall apply.
- (d) **ELIGIBILITY DATA.**-- The Secretary shall use the most recent and relevant data concerning the number and percentage of students receiving need-based assistance under title IV of this Act in making eligibility determinations under section 312 and shall advance the base-year forward following each annual grant cycle.

**Sec. 392. (20 U.S.C. 1068a) WAIVER AUTHORITY AND REPORTING REQUIREMENT.**

**(a) WAIVER REQUIREMENTS; NEED-BASED ASSISTANCE STUDENTS.--**

The Secretary may waive the requirements set forth in section 312(b)(1)(A) in the case of an institution--

- (1) which is extensively subsidized by the State in which it is located and charges low or no tuition;
- (2) which serves a substantial number of low-income students as a percentage of its total student population;
- (3) which is contributing substantially to increasing higher education opportunities for educationally disadvantaged, underrepresented, or minority students, who are low-income individuals;
- (4) which is substantially increasing higher educational opportunities for individuals in rural or other isolated areas which are unserved by postsecondary institutions;
- (5) located on or near an Indian reservation or a substantial population of Indians, if the Secretary determines that the waiver will substantially increase higher education opportunities appropriate to the needs of American Indians;
- (6) that is a tribally controlled college or university as defined in section 2 of the Tribally Controlled College or University Assistance Act of 1978; or
- (7) wherever located, if the Secretary determines that the waiver will substantially increase higher education opportunities appropriate to the needs of Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, or Pacific Islanders, including Native Hawaiians.

**(b) WAIVER DETERMINATIONS; EXPENDITURES.--** (1) The Secretary may waive the requirements set forth in section 312(b)(1)(B) if the Secretary determines, based on persuasive evidence submitted by the institution, that the institution's failure to meet that criterion is due to factors which, when used in the determination of compliance with such criterion, distort such determination, and that the institution's designation as an eligible institution under part A is otherwise consistent with the purposes of such parts.

(2) The Secretary shall submit to the Congress every other year a report concerning the institutions which, although not satisfying the criterion contained in section 312(b)(1)(B), have been determined to be eligible institutions under part A institutions which enroll significant numbers of Black American, Hispanic, Native American, Asian American, or Native Hawaiian students under part A, as the case may be. Such report shall--

(A) identify the factors referred to in paragraph (1) which were considered by the Secretary as factors that distorted the determination of compliance with subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 312(b)(1); and

(B) contain a list of each institution determined to be an eligible institution under part A including a statement of the reasons for each such determination.

(3) The Secretary may waive the requirement set forth in section 312(b)(1)(E) in the case of an institution located on or near an Indian reservation or a substantial population of Indians, if the Secretary determines that the waiver will substantially increase higher education opportunities appropriate to the needs of American Indians.

### **SEC. 393. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS.**

(a) REVIEW PANEL.--(1) All applications submitted under this title by institutions of higher education shall be read by a panel of readers composed of individuals selected by the Secretary. The Secretary shall assure that no individual assigned under this section to review any application has any conflict of interest with regard to the application which might impair the impartiality with which the individual conducts the review under this section.

(2) The Secretary shall take care to assure that representatives of historically and predominantly Black colleges, Hispanic institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and institutions with substantial numbers of Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Native American Pacific Islanders (including Native Hawaiians) are included as readers.

(3) All readers selected by the Secretary shall receive thorough instruction from the Secretary regarding the evaluation process for applications submitted under this title and consistent with the provisions of this title, including--

(A) explanations and examples of the types of activities referred to in section 311(b) that should receive special consideration for grants awarded under part A and of the types of activities referred to in section 323 that should receive special consideration for grants awarded under part B;

(B) an enumeration of the factors to be used to determine the quality of applications submitted under this title; and

(C) an enumeration of the factors to be used to determine whether a grant should be awarded for a project under this title, the amount of any such grant, and the duration of any such grant.

(b) RECOMMENDATIONS OF PANEL.-- In awarding grants under this title, the Secretary shall take into consideration the recommendations of the panel made under subsection (a).

(c) NOTIFICATION.-- Not later than June 30 of each year, the Secretary shall notify each institution of higher education making an application under this title of--

(1) the scores given the applicant by the panel pursuant to this section;

(2) the recommendations of the panel with respect to such application; and

(3) the reasons for the decision of the Secretary in awarding or refusing to award a grant under this title, and any modifications, if any, in the recommendations of the panel made by the Secretary.

(d) EXCLUSION.-- The provisions of this section shall not apply to applications submitted under part D.

### **SEC. 394. COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS.**

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY.-- The Secretary may make grants to encourage cooperative arrangements

(1) with funds available to carry out part A, between institutions eligible for assistance under part A and between such institutions and institutions not receiving assistance under this title; or

(2) with funds available to carry out part B, between institutions eligible for assistance under part B and institutions not receiving assistance under this title; for the activities described in section 311(b) or section 323, as the case may be, so that the resources of the cooperating institutions might be combined and shared to achieve the purposes of such parts and avoid costly duplicative efforts and to enhance the development of part A and part B eligible institutions.

(b) PRIORITY. -- The Secretary shall give priority to grants for the purposes described under subsection (a) whenever the Secretary determines that the cooperative arrangement is geographically and economically sound or will benefit the applicant institution.

(c) DURATION. -- Grants to institutions having a cooperative arrangement may be made under this section for a period as determined under section 313 or section 323.

### **SEC. 395. ASSISTANCE TO INSTITUTIONS UNDER OTHER PROGRAMS.**

(a) ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY.-- Each institution which the Secretary determines to be an institution eligible under part A or an institution eligible under part B may be eligible for waivers in accordance with subsection (b).

(b) WAIVER APPLICABILITY.-- (1) Subject to, and in accordance with, regulations promulgated for the purpose of this section, in the case of any application by an institution referred to in subsection (a) for assistance under any programs specified in paragraph (2), the Secretary is authorized, if such application is otherwise approvable, to waive any requirement for a non-Federal share of the cost of the program or project, or, to the extent not inconsistent with other law, to give, or require to be given, priority consideration of the application in relation to applications from other institutions.

(2) The provisions of this section shall apply to any program authorized by part D or title IV of this Act.

(c) LIMITATION. -- The Secretary shall not waive, under sub-section (b), the non-Federal share requirement for any program for applications which, if approved, would require the expenditure of more than 10 percent of the appropriations for the program for any fiscal year.

### **SEC. 396. LIMITATIONS.**

The funds appropriated under section 360 may not be used--

(1) for a school or department of divinity or any religious worship or sectarian activity;

(2) for an activity that is inconsistent with a State plan for desegregation of higher education applicable to such institution;

(3) for an activity that is inconsistent with a State plan of higher education applicable to such institution; or

(4) for purposes other than the purposes set forth in the approved application under which the funds were made available to the institution.

### **SEC. 397. PENALTIES.**

Whoever, being an officer, director, agent, or employee of, or connected in any capacity with, any recipient of Federal financial assistance or grant pursuant to this title embezzles, willfully misapplies, steals, or obtains by fraud any of the funds which are the subject of such grant or assistance, shall be fined not more than \$10,000 or imprisoned for not more than 2 years, or both.

### **SEC. 398. CONTINUATION AWARDS**

The Secretary shall make continuation awards under this title for the second and succeeding years of a grant only after determining that the recipient is making satisfactory progress in carrying out the grant.

### **SEC. 399. AUTHORIZATIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

(a) AUTHORIZATIONS.--

(1) PART A.--(A) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out part A, \$135,000,000 (other than section 316) for fiscal year 1999, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

(B) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 316, \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 1999 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

(C) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 317, \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 1999 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

(2) PART B.--(A) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out part B (other than section 326), \$135,000,000 for fiscal year 1999, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

(B) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 326, \$35,000,000 for fiscal year 1999, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

(3) PART C.-- There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out part C, \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 1999, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

(4) PART D.-- (A) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out part D (other than section 345(7), but including section 347), \$110,000 for fiscal year 1999, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

(B) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 345(7), such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 1999 and each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

(5) PART E.-- There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out part E, \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 1999, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years.

(b) USE OF MULTIPLE YEAR AWARDS.-- In the event of a multiple year award to any institution under this title, the Secretary shall make funds available for such award from funds appropriated for this title for the fiscal year in which such funds are to be used by the recipient.

**TITLE III—INSTITUTIONAL AID**

**SEC. 301. PROGRAM PURPOSE.**

Section 311 (20 U.S.C. 1057) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “351” and inserting “391”, and

(B) in paragraph (3)(F), by inserting “, including services that will assist in the education of special populations” before the period; and

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (6), by inserting “, including innovative, customized, instruction courses designed to help retain students and move the students rapidly into core courses and through program completion, which may include remedial education and English language instruction” before the period;

(B) by redesignating paragraphs (7) through (12) as paragraphs (8) through (13), respectively;

(C) by inserting after paragraph (6) the following:

“(7) Education or counseling services designed to improve the financial literacy and economic literacy of students or the students’ families.”;

(D) in paragraph (12) (as redesignated by subparagraph (B)), by striking “distance learning academic instruction capabilities” and inserting “distance education technologies”; and

(E) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) of paragraph (13) (as redesignated by subparagraph (B)), by striking “subsection (c)” and inserting “subsection (b) and section 391”.

**SEC. 302. DEFINITIONS; ELIGIBILITY.**

Section 312 (20 U.S.C. 1058) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(1)(A), by striking “subsection (c) of this section” and inserting “subsection (d)”;

(2) in subsection (d)(2), by striking “subdivision” and inserting “paragraph”;

(3) by redesignating subsection (g) as subsection (h); and

(4) by inserting after subsection (f) the following:

“(g) **LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUAL.**—For the purpose of this part, the term ‘low-income individual’ means an individual from a family whose taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of an amount equal to the poverty level determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census.”.

**SEC. 317. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**

Section 391 (20 U.S.C. 1068) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) **Technical Assistance.**--The Secretary, directly or by grant or contract, may provide technical assistance to eligible institutions to prepare the institutions to qualify, apply for, and maintain a grant, under this title.”.

**SEC. 318. WAIVER AUTHORITY.**

Section 392 (20 U.S.C. 1068a) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(c) **Waiver Authority With Respect to Institutions Located in an Area Affected by a Gulf Hurricane Disaster.**--

“(1) Waiver authority.--Notwithstanding any other provision of law, unless enacted with specific reference to this section, for any affected institution that was receiving assistance under this title at the time of a Gulf hurricane disaster, the Secretary shall, for each of the fiscal years 2009 through 2011 (and may, for each of the fiscal years 2012 and 2013)--

“(A) waive--

“(i) the eligibility data requirements set forth in section 391(d);

“(ii) the wait-out period set forth in section 313(d);

“(iii) the allotment requirements under section 324; and

“(iv) the use of the funding formula developed pursuant to section 326(f)(3);

“(B) waive or modify any statutory or regulatory provision to ensure that affected institutions that were receiving assistance under this title at the time of a Gulf hurricane disaster are not adversely affected by any formula calculation for fiscal year 2009 or for any of the four succeeding fiscal years, as necessary; and

“(C) make available to each affected institution an amount that is not less than the amount made available to such institution under this title for fiscal year 2006, except that for any fiscal year for which the funds appropriated for payments under this title are less than the appropriated level for fiscal year 2006, the amount made available to such institutions shall be ratably reduced among the institutions receiving funds under this title.

“(2) Definitions.--In this subsection:

“(A) Affected institution.--The term ‘affected institution’ means an institution of higher education that--

“(i) is--“(I) a part A institution (which term shall have the meaning given the term ‘eligible institution’ under section 312(b)); or (II) a part B institution, as such term is defined in section 322(2), or as identified in section 326(e);

“(ii) is located in an area affected by a Gulf hurricane disaster; and

“(iii) is able to demonstrate that, as a result of the impact of a Gulf hurricane disaster, the institution--(I) incurred physical damage; (II) has pursued collateral source compensation from insurance, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Small Business Administration, as appropriate; and (III) was not able to fully reopen in existing facilities or to fully reopen to the pre-hurricane enrollment levels during the 30-day period beginning on August 29, 2005.

“(B) Area affected by a gulf hurricane disaster; gulf hurricane disaster.--The terms ‘area affected by a Gulf hurricane disaster’ and ‘Gulf hurricane disaster’ have the meanings given such terms in section 209 of the Higher Education Hurricane Relief Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-148, 119 Stat. 2809).”.

### **SEC. 319. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

Section 399(a) (20 U.S.C. 1068h(a)) is amended to read as follows:

“(a) Authorizations.--

“(1) Part a.--(A) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out part A (other than sections 316 through 320), \$135,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

“(B) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 316, \$30,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

“(C) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 317, \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

``(D) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 318, \$75,000,000 for fiscal year 2009 and each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

``(E) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 319, \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

``(F) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 320, \$30,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

``(2) Part b.--(A) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out part B (other than section 326), \$375,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

``(B) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 326, \$125,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

``(3) Part c.--There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out part C, \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

``(4) Part d.--(A) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out part D (other than section 345(9), but including section 347), \$185,000 for fiscal year 2009, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

``(B) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out section 345(9) such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2009 and each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

``(5) Part e.--(A) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out subpart 1 of part E, \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

``(B) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out subpart 2 of part E, such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2009 and each of the five succeeding fiscal years.".

## **SEC. 320. TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.**

Title III (20 U.S.C. 1051 et seq.) is further amended—

(1) in section 342(5) (20 U.S.C. 1066a(5))--

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting a comma after "344(b)"; and

(B) in subparagraph (C), by striking "equipment technology,," and inserting "equipment, technology,";

(2) in section 343(e) (20 U.S.C. 1066b(e)), by inserting "Sale of Qualified Bonds.--" before "Notwithstanding";

(3) in the matter preceding clause (i) of section 365(9)(A) (20 U.S.C. 1067k(9)(A)), by striking "support" and inserting "supports";

(4) in section 391(b)(7)(E) (20 U.S.C. 1068(b)(7)(E)), by striking "subparagraph (E)" and inserting "subparagraph (D)";

(5) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) of section 392(b)(2) (20 U.S.C. 1068a(b)(2)), by striking "eligible institutions under part A institutions" and inserting "eligible institutions under part A"; and

(6) in the matter preceding paragraph (1) of section 396 (20 U.S.C. 1068e), by striking "360" and inserting "399".



## 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:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.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# 84.031A, 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 4:30 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 requires each applicant to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

This section allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six barriers that can impede equitable access or participation that you may address: *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.

### **\*Notes:**

- Applicants are required to address this provision by attaching a statement to the ED GEPA 427 Form that must be downloaded from Grants.gov.
- All applicants must include information in their applications to address this provision in order to receive funding under this program.

## 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.

### How has the Department of Education Responded to the GPRA Requirements?

As required by GPRA, the Department of Education has prepared a strategic plan for 2014-2018. This plan reflects the Department's priorities and integrates them with its mission and program authorities and describes how the Department will work to improve education for all children and adults in the U.S. The Department's goals, as listed in the plan, are:

1. **Postsecondary Education, Career and Technical Education, and Adult Education.** *Increase college access, quality, and completion by improving higher education and lifelong learning opportunities for youth and adults.*
2. **Elementary and Secondary.** *Prepare all elementary and secondary students for college and career by improving the education system's ability to consistently deliver excellent classroom instruction with rigorous academic standards while providing effective support services.*
3. **Early Learning.** *Improve the health, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes for all children from birth through 3rd grade, so that all children, particularly those with high needs, are on track for graduating from high school college- and career-ready.*
4. **Equity.** *Ensure effective educational opportunities for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, disability, language, and socioeconomic status.*
5. **Continuous Improvement of the U.S. Education System.** *Enhance the education system's ability to continuously improve through better and more widespread use of data, research and evaluation, transparency, innovation, and technology.*
6. **U.S. Department of Education Capacity.** *Improve the organizational capacities of the Department to implement this Strategic Plan.*

## **What are the Performance Indicators for SIP?**

The specific performance indicators for SIP are as follows:

1. The number of full-time degree-seeking undergraduates enrolled at SIP institutions. Note that this is a long-term measure, which will be used periodically to gauge performance, beginning in FY 2009.
2. The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students at 4-year SIP institutions who were in their first year of postsecondary enrollment in the previous year and are enrolled in the current year at the same SIP institution.
3. The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students at 2-year SIP institutions who were in their first year of postsecondary enrollment in the previous year and are enrolled in the current year at the same SIP institution.
4. The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled at 4-year SIP institutions graduating within six years of enrollment.
5. The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled at 2-year SIP institutions who graduate within three years of enrollment.
6. The cost per successful program outcome: federal cost per undergraduate and graduate degree at SIP institutions.

## **How does the Department of Education determine whether performance goals have been met?**

An applicant that receives a grant award will be required to submit annual progress reports and a final report as a condition of the award. The reports will document the extent to which project goals and objectives are met.

The most recent version of this program's annual performance report can be viewed at <https://apr.ed.gov>. To login, please click on the training tab and request login information to obtain access.

## Instructions for Completing the Application

The SIP application consists of the following four parts. These parts 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. Note: **All attachments must be PDF files.** The parts are as follows:

**Part I:**

**424 Forms**

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)
- Department of Education Supplemental Information form for SF 424

**Part II:**

**U.S. Department of Education Budget Summary Forms**

- ED 524 (Section A and Section B)

The “**U.S. Department of Education Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs**” is where applicants provide budget information for Section A – Budget Summary U.S. Department of Education Funds and Section B – Budget Summary Non-Federal Funds. Applicants should include costs for all project years.

**Part III:**

**Department of Education Abstract Form**

- Include a one-page Abstract as a PDF file. (If addressing the priority, please indicate so in the Abstract.)

**Project Narrative Attachment Forms**

- ED Abstract Form
- Project Narrative Attachment Form
  - o Upload the 50-page (individual grants) or 70-page (cooperative grants) responses to the selection criteria (project narrative);
- Budget Narrative Attachment Form
- Program Profile

**Other Attachments**

Upload:

- the five-page competitive preference priority narrative and;
- a separate PDF titled Evidence Studies (for the determination of moderate evidence)

**Part IV:**

**Assurances, Certifications, and Survey Forms**

- GEPA Section 427 requirement
- Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)
- Lobbying Form (ED Form 80.0013)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)

**ED Abstract Form:** Attach your one-page project abstract that will provide an overview of the proposed project.

**Project Narrative Attachment Form:** The project narrative should include the narrative responses to the selection criteria and the competitive preference priority that will be used to evaluate your application submitted for this competition. Please include a Table of Contents as the first page of the application narrative. You must limit the application narrative to no more than 50 pages for the Individual Development Grant application or 70 pages for the Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant application. The Project Narrative pages should be consecutively numbered. If you are addressing the competitive preference priority, your response to the priority should not be more than five pages. This applies to both Individual and Cooperative Arrangement Development Grants. You must attach your project narrative to the Project Narrative Attachment Form in Grants.gov. Responses and studies addressing the competitive preference priority should be attached to the “Other Attachments” in Grants.gov.

**Budget Narrative Attachment Form:** Attach a detailed line item budget to justify that costs are reasonable and necessary to accomplish the proposed project objectives. Note: The selection criteria also require a budget section that you will respond to as a part of your project narrative.

**Program Profile:** Included in this application is a SIP Program Profile. You must complete this profile and attach it to Part III, Project Narrative Attachment Form, in Grants.gov.

**PDF of evidence studies to determine moderate evidence:** In Part III, the Other Attachments Form is where you attach both, your five-page Competitive Preference Priority-- Supporting Strategies for which there is Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness narrative and the accompanying evidence studies.

***NOTE: Please do not attach any narratives, supporting files, or application components to the Standard Form (SF 424). Although the form accepts attachments, the Department of Education will only review materials/files attached to the attachment forms listed above. All attachments must be in PDF format. Other types of files will not be accepted.***

## Project Narrative Instructions

**The project narrative shall be attached to the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” in Grants.gov.**

Before preparing the Project Narrative, applicants should review the program statute, program regulations, the Federal Register NIA, and the Dear Applicant Letter for specific guidance and requirements.

The Secretary evaluates an application according to the program specific criteria in 34 CFR 607.22. The Project Narrative should provide in detail the responses to each selection criterion. The maximum possible score for each category of selection criterion is indicated in parenthesis. For ease of reading by the reviewers, applicants should follow the sequence of the criteria as provided below. Applications should be written in a concise and clear manner. You must limit the section of the narrative that addresses the selection criteria and the competitive preference priority to no more than 55 pages for the Individual Development Grant application or 75 pages for the Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant application. Applicants not addressing the competitive preference priority, must limit their responses to the selection criteria to 50 pages for Individual Development Grants or 70 pages for Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant applications.

**Note:** Please include a separate document with its own heading when responding to the competitive preference priority and attach it to the “Other Attachments Form” in Grants.gov.

**Applicants MUST address each of the following SIP selection criteria:**

- |    |   |             |
|----|---|-------------|
| 1. | Quality of Comprehensive Development Plan | (25 points) |
| 2. | Quality of Activity Objectives            | (15 points) |
| 3. | Quality of Implementation Strategy        | (20 points) |
| 4. | Quality of Key Personnel                  | ( 7 points) |
| 5. | Quality of Project Management Plan        | (10 points) |
| 6. | Quality of Evaluation Plan                | (15 points) |
| 7. | Quality of Budget                         | ( 8 points) |

**Total Maximum Score for Selection Criteria** 100 points

**The following guidance may assist you in addressing the questions that will be used to evaluate your responses to the selection criteria:**

**(a) Quality of Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP)**  
**(Maximum: 25 points).**

**(1) The strengths, weaknesses, and significant problems of the institution’s academic programs, institutional management, and fiscal stability are clearly and**

**comprehensively analyzed and result from a process that involved major constituencies of the institution.**

**Content:** Separately describe and analyze your institution's strengths, weaknesses, and significant problems in the following three areas as they relate to each proposed activity:

1. Academic programs,
2. Institutional management, and
3. Fiscal stability.

We are considering “weaknesses” and “significant problems” to be one and the same. Use the grant funds to address some of these weaknesses and problems. Here are some guidelines for stating the problems:

- State what is “too high” or what is “too low.” For example, the percentage of freshmen students who fail four courses is too high. When you state the problem this way, the objectives become obvious. Such as, “to decrease, from 42 percent to 30 percent, the percentage of freshmen students who fail four courses.”
- Avoid problem statements that declare the problem as "the lack of " or "the need for" the very solution you are proposing for funding. Such as, “the problem with our academic programs is a lack of or need for student services outside the classroom. Thus, we propose an activity to establish those student services." This type of statement usually contains circular reasoning.
- Provide summaries of or excerpts from recent data, reports, evaluations or studies that demonstrate that you have objectively and thoroughly analyzed your institution’s main problems.
- Describe the process you used to formulate the above information.
- Provide evidence of the extent and nature of the faculty, staff, students, community, industry, and other major constituents' involvement in this process. You may rely on previously written information, such as a self-study for accreditation, as long as your process for developing the information involved the major constituencies' representatives and reflects your institution's current situation.

**(2) The goals for the institution’s academic programs, institutional management, and fiscal stability are realistic and based on comprehensive analysis.**

**Content:** Based on a comprehensive analysis of your institution's strengths, weaknesses, and significant problems, separately state the institutional goals as they relate to each proposed activity you plan to address using Title III, Part A Strengthening Institutions Program funds.



**(3) The objectives stated in the plan are measurable, related to institutional goals, and if achieved, will contribute to the growth and self-sufficiency of the institution.**

**Content:** Focusing only on the institutional objectives that are specifically related to your proposed Title III, Part A Strengthening Institutions Program activities, separately provide measurable objectives for how you will reach each of the goals as you discussed in #2. Achieving the objectives outlined should contribute to the growth and self-sufficiency of the institution.

**Describe in measurable terms how objectives are related to the goals of the institution. The description should include details on the following:**

Specific Tasks

Institutionalize personnel, programs, and services.

Methods Involved

Operational funding budgeted and allocated to sustain improvements.

Tangible Results

Program, services, and personnel fully institutionalized.

**(4) The plan clearly and comprehensively describes the methods and resources the institution will use to institutionalize practices and improvements developed under the proposed project, including, in particular, how operational costs for personnel, maintenance, and upgrades of equipment will be paid with institutional resources.**

**Content:** In this section, separately describe the following for each proposed activity:

The methods your institution will use to integrate practices and improvements developed into its operations and, if appropriate, continue them after the grant ends. For example, provide specifics on how your institution will obtain approval from appropriate internal and/or external governance authorities to conduct new or revised curricula and use new intervention strategies. What will the time period be for these actions?

Provide the resources you will need to institutionalize newly developed practices and improvements and, most importantly, how you will fund them. In particular, discuss how your institution will fund operational costs such as personnel, maintenance, and upgraded equipment. For example, one way to ensure that positions continue after the grant ends is for your institution to pay a percentage of the salary during the grant and increase that percentage during years two, three, four, and five.

**(b) Quality of Activity Objectives (Maximum: 15 Points).**

**(1) The extent to which the objectives for each activity are realistic and defined in terms of measurable results.**

**Content:** State your annual objectives, separately for each activity, which, when combined with their performance indicator(s), are measurable and realistic (not too high, not too low). Connect each objective to the problem or weakness it should address, as you described in the CDP. In addition:

- o DO NOT identify process objectives such as: "To establish a college-wide committee," whose measurement is: "We formed a committee." Identify processes or tasks under the Implementation Strategy as discussed next.
- o DO use words such as "to increase" or "to decrease" since you are more likely to be describing a genuine, outcome objective.
- o DO NOT begin your objective with words such as "to provide," "to develop," or "to establish." This heightens the likelihood you may be describing a process or task rather than an outcome objective.
- o DO provide a realistic number of objectives and performance indicators for each proposed activity and for each year you are requesting funds for that activity.

**(2) The extent to which the objectives for each activity are directly related to the problems to be solved and to the goals of the comprehensive development plan.**

**Content:** Separately describe how meeting the objectives of each proposed activity will address a problem identified in the CDP and affect your institution's ability to address its goals for its academic programs, institutional management, or fiscal stability.

If you need funds for more than one activity, you may propose different start and end dates and vary the duration of each. For example, you may need only three years to develop a new curriculum but five years to develop a new management information system. Any proposed activity should address a critical problem that the CDP describes as hindering institutional growth and self-sufficiency. If you propose to use up to 20% for endowment investing, do not write an activity narrative regarding this use of endowment investing, as we do not consider it an activity in the usual sense.

**(c) Quality of Implementation Strategy (Maximum: 20 Points).**

**(1) The extent to which the implementation strategy for each activity is comprehensive.**

**(2) The extent to which the rationale for the implementation strategy for each activity is clearly described and is supported by the results of relevant studies or projects.**

**Content:** For each proposed activity, explain why you chose a specific method for implementing that activity. Include how you determined that method to be most

effective, indicating relevant studies or projects that you reviewed and experts that you consulted.

**(3) The timetable for each activity is realistic and likely to be attained.**

- Chart an implementation strategy to meet your objectives for each year you are requesting funds and for each activity.
- Use time frames that are realistic for completing a task. Chart each of the five years using the budget period of October 1 to September 30.
- Describe in a comprehensive, sequential and clear manner who will do what and how they will do it to meet the objectives of each activity.
- Identify, by title, the primary participants who will carry out the tasks to meet the objectives. Describe how the personnel will perform the tasks and the results you expect from them.

**(d) Quality of Key Personnel (Maximum: 7 Points).**

**(1) The extent to which the experience and training of key professional personnel are directly related to the stated activity objectives.**

**(2) The extent to which the time commitment of key personnel is realistic.**

**Content:** For each proposed activity, list, by title and name (if available) which positions are being proposed using Title III funds and describe the qualifications you require of that position and the amount of time each person will allot to the proposed activity.

If you want to use a consultant, explain why a consultant is more advantageous than using the institution's personnel.

**(e) Quality of Project Management Plan (Maximum: 10 Points).**

**(1) The extent to which procedures for managing the project are likely to ensure efficient and effective project implementation.**

**(2) The extent to which project coordinator and activity directors have sufficient authority to conduct the project effectively, including access to the president or chief executive officer.**

For the Title III, Part A, Strengthening Institutions Program coordinator's position, provide the following:

- Under "Quality of Key Personnel," be sure to include the coordinator's required qualifications (education, experience, training, etc.) and the specific duties of the position. Directly relate the duties to the stated purposes and objectives of the project.

- Indicate how much time the Title III, Part A, coordinator will commit to the project. Make the time commitment realistic, not too high nor too low, relative to the tasks the individual will perform.

Note: Your Title III, Part A coordinator's time commitment to a project may vary considerably from that in another project or another institution's project. One project focused on developing a management information system, for example, may have a coordinator who is the director of technology in the ordinary hierarchy of the college. He or she may allot 10 percent time to coordinate the project for which the college will pay. On the other hand, a new coordinator of a faculty development project may be an instructional developer with a 50 percent time or 100 percent time commitment paid for with Title III, Part A, funds. Carefully think through the management structure and time commitment that will work best at your institution and specify the reasons for your choice.

- Describe the procedures the project coordinator (project director) will use to manage and monitor the project's progress such as how information will be provided to key administrators so they can integrate project activities with related, on-going institutional activities.
- Describe the project coordinator's (project director) administrative authority over the activity director(s) who is normally responsible for accomplishing a specific activity's objectives. Also, describe the administrative authority of the activity director(s) over subordinates.
- Chart the lines of authority of the project coordinator to key institutional decision makers, including the president.

**(f) Quality of Evaluation Plan (Maximum: 15 Points).**

**(1) The extent to which the data elements and the data collection procedures are clearly described and appropriate to measure the attainment of activity objectives and to measure the success of the project in achieving the goals of the comprehensive development plan.**

**Content:** For each proposed activity, describe the data collection procedures the institution will use to identify the data elements, objectives, and goals identified in the CDP. Include measure attainment of each proposed activity. Include procedures for analyzing and using both formative and summative data.

**(2) The extent to which the data analysis procedures are clearly described and are likely to produce formative and summative results on attaining activity objectives and measuring the success of the project on achieving the goals of the comprehensive development plan.**

**Content:** For each proposed activity, describe in detail the project's evaluation plan, including who, what, when and how. Define the baseline indicators of progress that you will use.

The detailed evaluation plan should:

- Produce a valid assessment of your implementation strategies;
- Result in annual, quantifiable evidence of the extent to which you attained your objectives for each activity and your goals for which funding is requested;
- Include the data elements and collection procedures that you will use; and
- Describe procedures for analyzing and using both formative and summative data.

All applicants must submit a plan to conduct a project evaluation as part of their grant activities. The planned evaluation should be systematic in assessing the worth of a project and useful in guiding project objectives and focus primarily on determining the outcomes and impacts of the project relative to those objectives. The evaluation should also serve to strengthen the management of the project and lead to better knowledge of what works in producing the desired outcomes.

An individual or organization, independent of the project team (and all of its partners), but not necessarily external to the grantee institution, should execute the project evaluation plan. This independent evaluator should assist in the initial preparation of the evaluation plan and be willing to work alongside the project team throughout the duration of the project. The evaluator should possess good evaluation skills commonly found among practitioners of the American Evaluation Association. Helpful Web sites to consult when preparing an evaluation plan include:

- Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/fipse/evaluate.html>
- National Science Foundation: [http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04016/nsf04016\\_4.htm](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04016/nsf04016_4.htm)
- Kellogg Foundation: <http://www.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=75&CID=281&NID=61&LanguageID=0> (for their evaluation handbook)
- Academic Competitiveness Council [http://hub.mspnet.org/search/?action=true&search\\_text=evaluation](http://hub.mspnet.org/search/?action=true&search_text=evaluation)

The project director and team should be committed to gathering the best evaluation data possible for formative and summative purposes. Projects should collect baseline data before the project starts as a basis for measuring progress.

A summary of the evaluation report must be included in the final performance report submitted by the project to the Department of Education. The report, which also includes fiscal and management performance information, is due within 90 days after expiration of

the award. The evaluation report should be included as an appendix to the final performance report as well as available upon request. (Please see 34 CFR 75.217 for information on how project performance may affect future funding.)

For the Title III, Strengthening Institutions Program, the evaluation plan should produce a valid assessment of the implementation strategies. It should also result in annual, quantifiable evidence of the attainment of objectives for each activity and of the goals in the CDP.

**(g) Budget (Maximum: 8 Points).**

**The extent to which the proposed costs are necessary and reasonable in relation to the project's objectives and scope.**

**Content:** Review the program regulations (34 CFR 607.10 and 607.30) for guidance on which activities and costs are allowable. For example, you may not use your grant funds to:

- Recruit students;
- Provide scholarships for students;
- Carry out activities that are operational rather than developmental;
- Carry out student activities such as entertainment, cultural or social enrichment programs, student publications, social clubs or associations;
- Pay for organized fund raising and;
- Cover indirect costs.

Prepare a separate, detailed, budget narrative for each proposed activity for each year you are requesting grant funds. Demonstrate and justify that all costs are reasonable in today's market and necessary to accomplish your activity objectives. Please pay particular attention in your justification to those (per item) costs exceeding \$25,000, excluding salaries and fringe benefits. For each activity, provide itemized costs (in dollars), and a narrative justification to support your request for:

- Personnel
- Fringe Benefits
- Travel
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Contractual
- Construction
- Other
- Total

You must provide details so we can determine if the costs are allowable, necessary and reasonable.

**NOTE: The Title III, Strengthening Institutions Program, CFDA 84.031A, does not reimburse grantees for indirect costs they incur in carrying out a project funded under this program. Therefore, applicants should not show any dollar amounts for indirect costs on either line 10 of the application budget form (ED 524) or in their budget narrative. Applicants should also be aware that un-reimbursed indirect costs under grants of this program may not be charged as direct cost items in the same award, used to satisfy matching or cost-sharing requirements, or charged to another Federal award.**

Do not include a budget narrative (as a separate activity) for endowment investing.

**Note:** Check all combined totals for the proposed activity budgets and compare it to the total on the ED 524. The totals must match.

**U. S. Department of Education Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (Section A - Budget Summary U.S. Department of Education Funds and Section B – Budget Summary Non-Federal Funds (ED 524 form)).**

First, carefully read the instructions contained in this document. Then, using the Department of Education Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (ED524) form, prepare a budget for the entire project that totals all the costs for each year of the grant. If you choose to use up to 20 percent of grant funds to establish or increase your institution's endowment fund through endowment investing, enter the amount of your contribution in the summary budget on the "other" line. If you have additional items for the other category, separate the endowment contribution from the other items and make two entries for "other." Endowment monies should be listed first.

## Competitive Preference Priority Narrative

For the FY 2015 84.031A SIP competition, there is one competitive preference priority: **Supporting Programs, Practices, or Strategies for which there is Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness.**

Only projects that are supported by moderate evidence (as defined in the FY 2015, Title III, Part A, SIP competition Federal Register NIA) will be considered for the additional three (3) points.

The purpose of the evidence preference is to provide grants for proposed projects that have demonstrated evidence of effectiveness. As such, in responding to this preference, applicants are encouraged to explain how one of their activities in the application is supported by moderate evidence. To determine moderate evidence, applicants must identify a minimum of one to a maximum of two pieces of evidence that they deem the best indicator(s) that this activity meets the definition of moderate evidence.

Applicants should also consider how their proposed implementation of practices with an existing evidence base presents new opportunities for evaluation or knowledge-building about these practices that could be used to improve these practices either at their institution or in other contexts.

If addressing the priority, you may use up to an additional five pages to address the competitive priority, for a maximum total of 55-pages for individual grants and 75-pages for cooperative arrangement grants. No portion of these five pages can be used as additional pages to respond to the selection criteria. **An applicant must include all supporting evidence in PDF format.** This PDF information, will be attached as a separate document in Part III (Other Attachments Form) in Grants.gov, with the title: Evidence Studies. If the Department determines that an applicant has provided insufficient information, the applicant will not have an opportunity to provide additional information to support the application.



## Instructions for Standard Forms

- o Instructions for the SF-424
- o Instructions for Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424
- o Definitions for Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424
- o Instructions for ED 524
- o Instructions for Completion of SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

### **Other Information and Guidance:**

- o Supplemental Information and Instructions

## Supplemental Information and Instructions

**SIP Profile:** All applicants must complete the information requested on this page. Using the profile, the applicant will provide information on assurances and eligibility. **Do not modify, amend or delete any of this document.**

Applicants must copy and paste this page into a separate document, or recreate the page exactly as it appears. Then, complete the page, save it to your computer and attach it to Part III, Project Narrative Attachment Form, in Grants.gov, as a PDF document. Do not modify or amend the contents of the form in any way.

**Page Limits:** The project narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We have established mandatory page limits for Individual Development Grant applications and for Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant applications. Applicants not addressing the competitive preference priority must limit their narrative to no more than 50 pages for individual grants and 70-pages for cooperative grants. Applicants addressing the priority are limited to five additional pages for the competitive preference priority, for a total of 55-pages for individual grants and 75-pages for cooperative grants.

**Note:** Please include a separate heading when responding to the competitive preference priority.

The page limit does not apply to Part I, the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); the Department of Education Supplemental Information form (SF 424); Part II, Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524); Part III, the one-page project abstract, the Program Profile, the PDF titled Evidence Studies; and Part IV, the assurances and certifications. However, the page limit does apply to all of the project narrative section (attached in Part III), including the budget narrative of the selection criteria. If you include any attachments or appendices not specifically requested in the application package, these items will be counted as part of the project narrative (Part III) for purposes of the page limit requirement. 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, **except** 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. Applications submitted in any other font (including Times Roman and Arial Narrow) will not be accepted. Use font size 12.

**Special Note:** No special accommodations or reformatting justifications will be given for any applications not meeting page limits and formatting requirements.

## 84.031A Strengthening Institutions Program Profile

**INSTRUCTIONS:** ALL applicants must complete these pages. The completed pages must be attached to the "Other Attachments Form" in the application package in the Grants.gov system (as a .PDF document). DO NOT MODIFY OR AMEND THESE PAGES.

OPE ID # \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. INSTITUTION (Legal Name):

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you applying as a Branch Campus? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

### 3. ADDRESS (Applicants must indicate the address where the project will be located):

Project Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. ENDOWMENT FUND ASSURANCE:

**By checking this box (or placing an "X" beside it)**, an applicant certifies that the institution of higher education proposes to use up to twenty percent (20%) of the Strengthening Institutions Program grant award, made under the authority of Title III, Part A of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, to establish or increase the institution's endowment fund. The institution agrees to abide by the Department of Education's regulations governing the Endowment Challenge Grant program, 34 CFR Part 628, the program statute, and the program regulations, 34 CFR Part 607. The institution further agrees to raise the required matching funds.

**5. COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENT FOR PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS:** The applicant institution must provide for each Participating Institution: the Institution Name, DUNS Number, Location (City and State).

### 6. Tie-Breaker Information

If the selection process ends in a tie and funds are not sufficient to fund all institutions, we will use the information provided here to determine who will receive a grant. In accordance with Section 607.23(b), the Secretary will award up to three (3) additional points based on the information provided here.

Content: On a separate page, provide the following information:

TOTAL 2012-2013 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) STUDENTS= \_\_\_\_\_

- Total market value of endowment fund at the end of 2012-2013 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

B. Total expenditures for library materials during 2012-2013 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

C. Check all activities the applicant proposes to carry out in application:

- a. Faculty development \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Funds and administrative management \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Development and improvement of academic programs \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Acquisition of equipment for use in strengthening management and academic programs \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Joint use of facilities \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Student services \_\_\_\_\_

## Application Checklist

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

Application 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 – Attached to the “ED Abstract Form” in Grants.gov

Project Narrative for the proposed grant – Attached to the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” in Grants.gov.

Narrative for the competitive preference priority narrative, titled: “Competitive Preference Priority -- Supporting Programs, Practices, or Strategies for which there is Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness.”) – Attached to the “Other Attachments Form” in Grants.gov

Budget Narrative – Attached to the “Budget Narrative Attachment Form” in Grants.gov

Strengthening Institutions Program Profile – Attached to the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” in Grants.gov

PDF of Evidence Studies – Attached to the “Other Attachments Form” in Grants.gov

Assurances and Certifications – found in Grants.gov

Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)

Grants.gov Lobbying Form (ED 80-0013)

Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)

ED GEPA 427 Form

## 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. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 65 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 benefit as authorized by Title III, Part A, Sections 311-315, of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended by the HEOA; and governed by the program regulations in 34 CFR Part 607. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) during the public comment period for this collection of information. If you have specific questions about the form, instrument or survey, please contact: Nalini Lamba-Nieves, Strengthening Institutions Program, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW, Room 6024, Washington, DC 20006-8544 directly.