U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Academic Improvement
Washington, D.C. 20202-6200

Fiscal Year 2017

Application for New Grants Under
Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant
Program

CFDA 84.371C

Dated Material - Open Immediately
Closing Date:

Approved OMB Number: 1810- 0729
Expiration Date: XX/XX/201X

Paperwork Burden Statement

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Dear Colleague:

Thank you for your interest in the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) Grant program, administered by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education (Department).

Please take the time to review the applicable priorities, requirements, definitions, selection criteria, and all of the application instructions thoroughly. An application will not be evaluated for funding if the applicant does not comply with all of the procedural rules that govern the submission of the application or the application does not contain the information required under the program (34 C.F.R. §75.216 (b) and (c)).

The fiscal year (FY) 2017 competition contains one absolute priority and two competitive preference priorities. The absolute priority centers on how State educational agencies (SEAs) require that (a) the comprehensive literacy instruction programs funded under this grant are supported by moderate evidence or strong evidence and (b) local literacy plans submitted to SEAs are aligned with the State comprehensive literacy plan. Competitive preference priority (1) requires that SEAs have a high-quality plan that describes the theory of action to be used to ensure that local projects serve the greatest numbers or percentages of disadvantaged children and competitive preference priority (2) encourages SEAs to prioritize local literacy plans that align pre-literacy strategies for children aged birth through five with pre-literacy and literacy strategies for students from kindergarten through grade five. Details concerning these priorities are found within the application package.

For this competition it is **mandatory** for applicants to use the government-wide website, Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov), to apply. Please note that the Grants.gov site works differently than the Department's e-Application System. We strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with Grants.gov and strongly recommend that you register *and* submit early.

Also be aware that applications submitted to Grants.gov for the Department will now be posted using Adobe forms. Therefore, applicants will need to download a compatible version of Adobe reader. Please review the **Submitting Applications with Adobe Reader Software** and **Education Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants** forms found within this application package for further information and guidance related to this requirement.

The Department expects to award $190,000,000 for new grants under this competition. We will award discretionary grants on a competitive basis for a project period of 36 months. Grants are expected to be awarded in September 2017.

Please visit our program website at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/strivingreaders-literacy/index.html for further information. If you have any questions about the program after reviewing the application package, please contact Cindy Savage, Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program, U.S. Department of

Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20202-6200. Ms. Savage can also be reached by phone at 202-453-5998 or by email at cindy.savage@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Sylvia E. Lyles, Ph.D.
Director
Office of Academic Improvement

Program Background Information

Program Overview

Purpose of the Program

The purpose of the SRCL program is to advance literacy skills, including pre-literacy skills, reading, and writing, for all children from birth through grade 12, with a special emphasis on disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, English learners, children with disabilities, and infants and toddlers with developmental delays.

Program Authority and Applicable Regulations

The SRCL program is carried out under the legislative authority of Section 1502 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (ESEA), and Title III of Division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (Pub. L. No. 114-113).[1] Other applicable regulations include: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474. (d) The regulations in 34 CFR part 299. (e) The notice of final priorities, requirements, and selection criteria published in the Federal Register on [INSERT DATE].

Eligibility Information

The Department awards competitive grants to SEAs under this program. Funds awarded to SEAs will be used to support subgrants to local educational agencies (LEAs) or other eligible subgrantees, including early learning providers. This program does not require cost sharing or matching.

Award Information

These are discretionary grant awards with a project period of 36 months. The following are estimated:
Available Funds: $190,000,000.
Range of Awards: $3,000,000 - $80,000,000.
Average Size of Awards: $18,000,000.

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[1] Title III of Division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (Pub L. 114-113) appropriated funds for the SRCL program under section 1502 of the ESEA, as amended by the NCLB. As such, the upcoming SRCL competition will be conducted under that authority. The Department notes that the ESEA, as amended in December 2015 by the ESSA, authorizes the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) program, a program that is substantively similar to SRCL. See sections 2221-2224 of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA. To provide for the orderly transition to future programs under the ESSA, the priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria that apply to the SRCL program through this notice align, to the extent possible, with certain new statutory requirements that will apply to the CLSD program.

Number of Awards: 10.

Note: The Department is not bound to these estimates. In addition, contingent upon the availability of funds and quality of applications, additional awards may be granted from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition in subsequent years.

Application Guidelines

These guidelines will help applicants to understand the Department's expectations for addressing the priorities, requirements, definitions and selection criteria which are in the notice of final priorities, requirements, definitions and selection criteria (NFP), published in the *Federal Register* on [INSERT DATE]. (See the Legal and Regulatory section of this application package which includes SRCL's Notice Inviting Applications.)

The program narrative is the section of the application that directly responds to the priorities, requirements and selection criteria. The narrative should follow the order of the selection criteria listed below and in the NIA. Applicants should describe, in detail, the activities planned for each funding period (covering the 36 month project period). The project narrative must be limited to 50 pages.

Priorities:

Absolute Priority. The fiscal year (FY) 2017 competition contains one absolute priority. The application must address the absolute priority for this competition, which is that the SEA must assure (1) that it will use an independent peer review process to prioritize awards to eligible subgrantees that propose a high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction program, and that are supported by moderate evidence or strong evidence, as defined in the notice inviting applications (NIA), where evidence is applicable and available, and (2) that the comprehensive literacy instruction program proposed by eligible subgrantees will align with the State's comprehensive literacy plan as well as local needs. **Applicants must meet the absolute priority to be considered for an award.**

Note: In responding to this absolute priority, SEAs must describe the independent peer review process that will be used, including the decision-making process for ensuring that the awards made to eligible subgrantees are prioritized to fund high quality comprehensive literacy instruction programs that are (1) supported by moderate evidence or strong evidence, where evidence is applicable and available; and (2) aligned with the State's comprehensive literacy plan as well as local needs.

Competitive Preference Priority. There are two competitive preference priorities in this competition. An additional five (5) points for each competitive preference priority will be awarded to an application, depending on how well the application meets one or more of the following competitive preference priorities:

(1) To meet Priority 1 (Serving Disadvantaged Children), an SEA must describe in its application a high-quality plan to award subgrants that will serve the greatest numbers or percentages of disadvantaged children (as defined in the NIA), including English learners and children with disabilities.

(2) To meet Priority 2 (Alignment within a Birth through Fifth Grade Continuum), an SEA must describe in its application a high-quality plan to align, through a progression of approaches appropriate for each age group, early language and literacy projects supported by this grant that serve children from birth to age five with programs and systems that serve students in kindergarten through grade five to improve school readiness and transitions for children across this continuum.

Requirements:

To be considered for a SRCL award, applications submitted under this competition must describe how the applicant will meet the following requirements:

(1) State Funding Allocations. Grantees must-- Subgrant no less than 95 percent of funds received under this competition to eligible subgrantees; Ensure that at least—(a) 15 percent of the subgranted funds serve children from birth through age five;(b) 40 percent of the subgranted funds serve students in kindergarten through grade five; and (c) 40 percent of the subgranted funds serve students in middle and high school, including an equitable distribution of funds between middle and high schools.

(2) State Comprehensive Literacy Plan. To be considered for an award under this program, an SEA must submit a new or revised State comprehensive literacy plan that is informed by a recent (conducted in the past five years) and comprehensive needs assessment developed with the assistance of its State literacy team. Additionally, the plan must be reviewed by the State literacy team and updated annually if an SEA receives an award under this program.

(3) Local Literacy Plan. Grantees must ensure that they will only fund subgrantees that submit a local literacy plan that: (1) is informed by a comprehensive needs assessment and that is aligned with the State comprehensive literacy plan; (2) provides for professional development; (3) includes interventions and practices that are supported by moderate evidence or strong evidence, where evidence is applicable and available; and (4) includes a plan to track children's outcomes consistent with all applicable privacy requirements.

(4) <u>Prioritization of Subgrants</u>. In selecting among eligible subgrantees, an SEA must give priority to eligible subgrantees serving greater numbers or percentages of disadvantaged children.

(5) <u>Continuous Program Improvement</u>. Grantees must use data, including the results of monitoring and evaluations and other administrative data, to inform the program's continuous improvement and decisionmaking, to improve program participant outcomes, and to ensure that disadvantaged children are served. Additionally, grantees must ensure that subgrantees, educators, families, and other key stakeholders receive the results of the evaluations conducted on the effectiveness of the program in a timely fashion, consistent with all applicable Federal, State, and other privacy requirements.

(6) <u>Supplement, not Supplant</u>. Grantees must use funds under this program to supplement, and not supplant, any non-Federal funds that would be used to advance literacy skills for children from birth through grade 12.

(7) <u>Cooperation with National Evaluation</u>. Applicants must assure they will only fund subgrantees that provide a written assurance to cooperate with a national evaluation of the SRCL program. This may include adhering to the results of a random assignment process (e.g., lottery) to select schools or early learning providers that will receive SRCL funds as well as agreeing to implement the literacy interventions proposed to be funded under SRCL only in schools or early learning providers that will receive SRCL funds.

Definitions:

There are a number of important terms associated with the implementation of comprehensive literacy instruction programs under this program. Please refer to the NIA found in the <u>Legal and Regulatory</u> section of this application for the definitions of these terms.

Selection Criteria:

Applications under this competition will be evaluated based on the selection criteria below. A panel of expert peer reviewers will review and score each application using the selection criteria. The maximum number of points for the selection criteria is 120. The maximum score for each selection criterion is indicated in parentheses below. Please be advised that if you do not respond to a specific criterion, it will negatively affect your score.

(1) <u>State-level activities (30 points)</u>. To determine the quality of the applicant's State-level activities, the Secretary considers:
(1) The extent to which the SEA will support and provide technical assistance to its SRCL program subgrantees to ensure they implement a high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction program that will improve student achievement, including technical assistance on

identifying and implementing with fidelity interventions and practices that are supported by moderate evidence or strong evidence and align with local needs; and

(2) The extent to which the SEA will collect data and other information to inform the continuous improvement, and evaluate the effectiveness and impact, of local projects.

(2) <u>SEA plan for subgrants (20 points)</u>. To determine the quality of the applicant's SEA plan for subgrants, the Secretary considers the extent to which the SEA has a high-quality plan to use an independent peer review process to award subgrants that propose a high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction program, including--

(1) A plan to prioritize projects that will use interventions and practices that are supported by moderate evidence or strong evidence; and

(2) A process to determine--

    (i) The extent to which the intervention or practice is supported by moderate evidence or strong evidence;

    (ii) The alignment of the local project to the State's comprehensive literacy plan and the local literacy plan;

    (iii) The extent to which the interventions and practices are differentiated and are appropriate for children from birth through age five and children in kindergarten through grade 5; and

    (iv) The relevance of cited studies to the project proposed and identified needs.

(3) <u>SEA monitoring plan (30 points)</u>. To determine the quality of the applicant's SEA monitoring plan, the Secretary considers the extent to which the SEA describes a high-quality plan for monitoring local projects, including how it will ensure that--

(1) The interventions and practices that are part of the comprehensive literacy instruction program are aligned with the SEA's State comprehensive literacy plan;

(2) The interventions and practices that subgrantees implement are supported by moderate evidence or strong evidence, to the extent appropriate and available;

(3) The interventions and practices are differentiated and are appropriate for children from birth through age five and children in kindergarten through grade 5; and

(4) The interventions and practices are implemented with fidelity and aligned with the SEA's State comprehensive literacy plan and local literacy plan.

(4) <u>Alignment of Resources (10 points)</u>. To determine the quality of the applicant's alignment of resources, the Secretary considers the extent to which the SEA will:

(1) Target subgrants supporting projects that will improve instruction for the greatest numbers or percentages of disadvantaged children; and

(2) Award subgrants of sufficient size to fully and effectively implement the local plan while also ensuring that at least--

    (a) 15 percent of the subgranted funds serve children from birth through age five;

    (b) 40 percent of the subgranted funds serve students in kindergarten through grade five; and

(c) 40 percent of the subgranted funds serve students in middle and high school, through grade 12, including an equitable distribution of funds between middle and high schools.

(5) Adequacy of resources (25 points). The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
(1) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project; and
(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits.

(6) Quality of the project design (5 points). The Secretary considers the quality of the project design. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

Note: A total of ten (10) competitive preference priority points may also be added to the total maximum score. The maximum possible score for all selection criteria and competitive preference priority points is 130.

Application Format

Applicants must limit the program narrative portion of their applications (*i.e.,* the applicant's responses to the selection criteria) to no more than 50 pages. Applications must adhere to the following guidelines:

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

Please note that the page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, or the letters of support. However, the page limit does apply to all of the application narrative (Please see the Electronic Application Submission Checklist section of this application package for more information on how applications should be organized.) **Also, please note that our reviewers will not read pages of your application that exceed the limit.**

Additionally, the applications for grants under this competition must be submitted electronically, unless you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement. All applications must be entered into the Grants.gov system. Applications submitted by email are not acceptable. Narrative attachments and all other attachments to your application must be submitted as files in a PDF (Portable Document) read-only, non-modifiable format. Please do not upload an interactive or fillable PDF file. **If applicants upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable PDF file, or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material. The Department will not convert material from other formats to PDF.**

Note: The Application Submission Procedures section of this application contains additional instructions on the application format and other requirements for submitting applications.

Application Deadline

The deadline for submitting an application is <mark>XXXXX</mark>. Please note that the electronic submission of your grant application must be completed by 4:30 p.m. (Washington, D.C. time), on the application deadline date. The Department will not accept an application for this competition after 4:30 p.m. (Washington, D.C. time). Therefore, we strongly encourage that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process. If you believe that there are technical issues of any nature that are impeding your application from being submitted, you MUST contact Grants.gov to receive a tracking number in order for a review of the situation to proceed. The Customer Support number for Grants.gov is 1-800-518-4726.

We will not accept emailed copies of applications. Furthermore, we will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks or by <mark>XXXX,</mark> before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you may qualify for one of these exceptions. Information on how one qualifies for one of the exceptions can be found in the NIA for this program which can be found in the Legal and Regulatory section of this application.

Program Contact

After reviewing the full application package, if you have any questions, please contact Cindy Savage at cindy.savage@ed.gov or (202) 453-5998. Information about this competition can also available at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/strivingreaders-literacy/index.html through the SRCL website.

Technical Assistance Workshops for Prospective Applicants

To assist applicants in preparing the application and to respond to questions, the Department will host three (3) technical assistance conference calls/webinar sessions. The first call is scheduled on XXXX (Washington, DC time) and the second call will take place on XXXX (Washington, DC time).

To participate in the call, please send an e-mail stating your interest in participating in the SRCL technical assistance conference call to [INSERT E-ADDRESS]. Please include "SRCL Technical Assistance Workshop" in the subject line. Once you have registered, you will receive specific information and instructions on joining the call.

Application Submission Procedures

The deadline for submission of SRCL program applications through Grants.gov is <mark>XXXXX</mark>

Application Transmittal Instructions

<u>Attention Electronic Applicants:</u>   This program **requires** the electronic submission of applications--specific requirements and instructions can be found in the Federal Register notice. Please note that you **must** follow the Application Procedures as described in the Federal Register notice announcing the grant competition.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described in the Federal Register notice for this competition, 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.

<u>Applications Submitted Electronically</u>
Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at <u>http://www.Grants.gov</u>. 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** e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

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 Federal Register notice for this competition, we will not consider your application if it is date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system later than 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in this application package to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system.

Please note the following:

- You must attach any narrative sections of your application as files in a **.pdf** (Portable Document) format. **If you upload a file type other than a .pdf file, or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material**.

- Grants.gov cannot process an application that includes two or more files that have the same name within a grant submission.

- When attaching files, applicants should limit the size of their file names. Lengthy file names could result in difficulties with opening and processing your application. We recommend your file names be less than 50 characters. 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.

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

- 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.

According to the instructions found in the Federal Register notice, <u>only those requesting and qualifying</u> for an Exception to the electronic submission requirement may submit an application via mail, commercial carrier or by hand delivery.

<u>Submission of Paper Applications by Mail</u>:
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 84.371C)
> 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.

<u>Note</u>: 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.

<u>Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery</u>:
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 84.371C)
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.

<u>Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications</u>:
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.

 Submitting Applications with Adobe Reader Software

The Department of Education, working with Grants.gov, is currently using Adobe Reader software exclusively and applications submitted to Grants.gov for the Department of Education will be posted using Adobe forms.

Please note: The compatible version of Adobe Reader is **<u>required</u>** for viewing, editing and submitting a complete grant application package for the Department of Education through Grants.gov. Applicants should confirm the compatibility of their Adobe Reader version **<u>before</u>** downloading the application. To ensure applicants have a version of Adobe Reader on their computer that is compatible with Grants.gov, applicants are encouraged to use the test package provided by Grants.gov that can be accessed at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html.

Important issues to consider:

- If the applicant opened or edited the application package with any software other than the compatible version of Adobe Reader, the application package may contain errors that will be transferred to the new package even if you later download the compatible Adobe Reader version.

- Applicants **cannot** copy and paste data from a package initially opened or edited with an incompatible version of Adobe Reader and will need to download an **entirely new package** using the compatible version of Adobe Reader.

- Some applicants using an incompatible version of Adobe Reader **may have trouble** opening and viewing the application package while others may find they can open, view and complete the application package but **may not be able to submit** the application package through Grants.gov.

- Grants.gov **does not** guarantee to support versions of Adobe Reader that are not compatible with Grants.gov.

- Any and all edits made to the Adobe Reader application package **must** be made with the compatible version of Adobe Reader.

For your convenience, the latest version of Adobe Reader is available for free download at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html.

We strongly recommend that you review the information on computer and operating system compatibility with Adobe available at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html **before** downloading, completing or submitting your application.

Applicants are reminded that they should submit their application a day or two in advance of the closing date as detailed in the Federal Register Notice. If you have any questions regarding this matter please email the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726

Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants

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

Browser Support

The latest versions of Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE), Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, and Apple Safari are supported for use with Grants.gov. However, these web browsers undergo frequent changes and updates, so we recommend you have the latest version when using Grants.gov. Legacy versions of these web browsers may be functional, but you may experience issues.

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

ATTENTION – 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 a compatible version of Adobe reader. Information on computer and operating system compatibility with Adobe and links to download the latest version is available on Grants.gov. We strongly recommend that you review these details on 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 or call 1-800-518-4726.

NEW: In addition to the Adobe form application package, Grants.gov now offers a new option called Workspace for application completion and submission. Workspace allows a team of registered Grants.gov applicants to use a shared online space for completing individual forms

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and submitting the final application. These forms can be filled out simultaneously by different users, instead of exchanging a single PDF package file via email or a flash drive as is used when completing the traditional Adobe application package. Please go to this Grants.gov link for more information and training, etc. on using Workspace:
http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html

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

   Primary information about SAM is available at 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. 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/applicant-faqs.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/applicants/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/support.html
 or access the Grants.gov Self-Service web portal at:
https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants.

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/support.html for help with Grants.gov. For additional tips related to submitting grant applications, please refer to the Grants.gov Applicant FAQs found on the Grants.gov site: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-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.)

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 have less than 50 characters in the file name, and, in general, applicants should not use any special characters. However, Grants.gov does allow for the following UTF-8 characters when naming your attachments: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore, hyphen, space, period, parenthesis, curly braces, square brackets, ampersand, tilde, exclamation point, comma, semi colon, apostrophe, at sign, number sign, dollar sign, percent sign, plus sign, and equal sign. Applications submitted that do not comply with the Grants.gov guidelines will be rejected at Grants.gov and not forwarded to the Department.

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 with all attachments is less than 5 MB. Therefore, you may want to check the total size of your package before submission.

Application Instructions

Electronic Application Format

Applications for grants under this competition <u>must</u> be submitted electronically, unless you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement in accordance with the instructions in this application package.

<u>In accordance with 34 C.F.R §75.216 (b) and (c), an application will not be evaluated for funding if the applicant does not comply with all of the procedural rules that govern the</u>

submission of the application or the application does not contain the information required under the program.

*Important note***:** Applications submitted to Grants.gov for the Department of Education will be posted using Adobe forms. Therefore, applicants will need to download a compatible version of Adobe reader.

Information on computer and operating system compatibility with Adobe and links to download a compatible version is available on Grants.gov. Also, please review the **Submitting Applications with Adobe Reader Software** and **Education Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants** forms found within this package for further information and guidance related to this requirement.

We strongly recommend that you review these details on 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. If you have any questions regarding this matter please email the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.

Note: Please do not attach any narratives, supporting files, or application components to any forms unless it is specifically required by the instructions for the individual section of the application. Although several forms accept attachments, the Department of Education will only review materials/files attached in accordance with the instructions provided within this application package.

Electronic Application Submission Checklist

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

Review your electronic application to ensure you have completed the following forms and sections:

Part 1: Preliminary Documents
❑ Application for Federal Assistance (form SF 424)
❑ ED Supplemental Information for SF 424

Part 2: Budget Information
❑ ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524)

Part 3: ED Abstract Form
❑ Project Abstract

Part 4: Project Narrative Attachment Form
❑ Application Narrative

Part 5: Budget Narrative Attachment Form
❑ Budget Narrative

Part 6: Other Attachments Form
❑ Individual Resumes for Project Directors & Key Personnel
❑ Copy of Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

Part 7: Assurances and Certifications
❑ Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B Form)
❑ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Standard Form LLL)
❑ Grants.gov Lobbying Form
❑ General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427 (ED GEPA 427 form)
❑ Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program Assurances

Part 8: Intergovernmental Review (Executive Order 12372)
❑ State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) List

*Part 1: **Preliminary Documents***

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

These forms require basic identifying information about the applicant and the application. Please provide all requested applicant information (including name, address, e-mail address and DUNS number).

When applying electronically via Grants.gov, you will need to ensure that the DUNS number you enter on your application is the same as the DUNS number your organization used when it registered with the System for Award Management (SAM).

Applicants are advised to complete the Application for Federal Assistance (Form SF 424) first. Grants.gov will automatically insert the correct CFDA and program name wherever needed on other forms.

NOTE: Please do not attach any narratives, supporting files, or application components to the Standard Form (SF 424). Although this form accepts attachments, the Department of Education will only review materials/files attached in accordance with the instructions provided within this application.

Reporting and Accountability

The Department has established the following Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 performance measures for the SRCL program:

(1) The percentage of participating four-year-old children who achieve significant gains in oral language skills.

(2) The percentage of participating fifth-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading/language arts assessments under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA.

(3) The percentage of participating eighth-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading/language arts assessments under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA.

(4) The percentage of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading/language arts assessments under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA.

These measures constitute the Department's indicator of success for this program. Consequently, we advise an applicant for a grant under this program to give careful consideration to these measures in conceptualizing the approach and evaluation for its proposed project. Each grantee will be required to provide, in its annual performance and final reports, data about its progress in meeting these measures.

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).

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

Legal and Regulatory

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