

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Postsecondary Education
Washington, DC 20006-8544
www.ed.gov/fipse



Fiscal Year 2015

Application for Grants Under

FIRST IN THE WORLD--VALIDATION
CFDA # 84.116X

Form Approved

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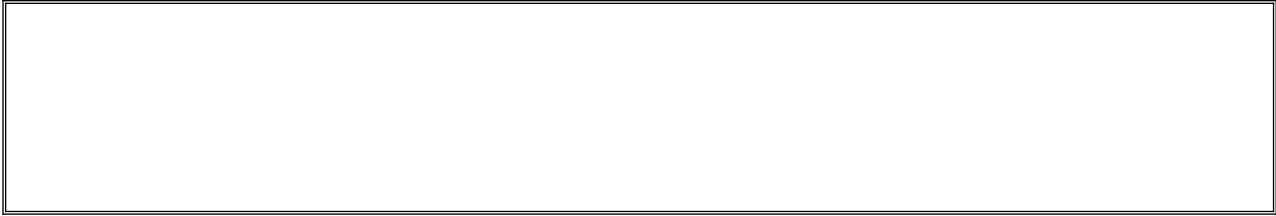


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Dear Applicant Letter

May 2015

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in applying for a grant under the 2015 First in the World (FITW) Program. This program is administered by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) of the U.S. Department of Education (the Department). The purpose of the FITW program is to provide testing and replication grants to eligible institutions of higher education and agencies to implement innovative strategies and practices that can be effective in improving student persistence and completion. The 2015 FITW program has two competitions—Development (84.116F) and Validation (84.116X). You are encouraged to read both notices since the two programs are quite different and have different requirements. Make sure you apply in grants.gov for the specific competition you have selected.

The information you need to develop a competitive Validation proposal is contained in this application package. We strongly encourage you to read these pages carefully. We anticipate that the competition will be very competitive. The instructions are detailed, the application requirements are clearly spelled out, and there are a number of mandatory documents. To ensure fairness for all applicants, we will not accept late applications and we will not review incomplete applications.

Please note that the FY 2015 competition includes four absolute priorities. Applicants must select one priority for their application. For additional information about the priorities, see the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) in this application package. The NIA published in the Federal Register is the official document describing the requirements for submitting a grant application. Four selection criteria are also described. These serve as the template for submission as well as peer review. The selection criteria are listed in the NIA, but a more detailed explanation is found in the “Instructions for the Project Narrative” section of the application package.

The central features of each competition in the FITW program are the evidence-based requirements. In the Validation program, there are evidence eligibility requirements as

well as evidence requirements for the project results. Please read the evidence requirements listed in the NIA carefully.

The Department requires submission of grant applications through Grants.gov, an Internet-based electronic system, unless you have grounds for a waiver. A detailed description of the system is included in this application package and we urge you to acquaint yourself with the Grants.gov system early. We suggest that you submit your application several days before the closing date. Grants.gov is accessible through its portal page at: www.grants.gov.

FIPSE appreciates your interest in the FITW program and looks forward to receiving your application.

Sincerely,

/signed/

Ralph Hines, Director

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education

Competition Highlights

1. Electronic Submission. First in the World (FITW) program Validation applications for FY 2015 must be submitted electronically using Grants.gov. You are urged to acquaint yourself with the requirements of Grants.gov early as the registration procedures may require several days to complete. Grants.gov is accessible through its portal page at: <http://grants.gov>. The requirements for obtaining an exception to the electronic submission requirement are included in the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) for FY 2015. If you think you may need an exception, you are urged to review the requirements promptly. Since there are several competitions listed under 84.116, make sure you download the specific competition materials you want to apply for. That same caution applies for your application in grants.gov.
2. Closing Date and Time. Please note that you must submit your application by 4:30:00 p.m. (Washington, D.C. time) on or before the application closing 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 closing date and time.
3. Page Limit. Applicants must adhere to the 35 page limit specified in the Instructions for Project Narrative portion of the application. The NIA published in the Federal Register contains specific information governing page limits and formatting instructions.
4. Format for Attachments. All attachments must be in non-modifiable PDF format. No other types of files will be accepted. Please note, once you download an application from Grants.gov, you will be working offline and saving data on your computer. You will need to log on to Grants.gov to upload and submit the application. You must provide the DUNS number that was used when your organization registered with the System for Award Management (SAM).
5. Contact Information. For Grants.gov related questions and assistance, contact:

Support Desk e-Mail:	support@Grants.gov
Support Desk Telephone:	(800) 518-4726
Contact Telephone Hours:	24 hours every day, except Federal holidays
6. Priorities. In the FY 2015 FITW Validation competition, the Department has established four absolute priorities. The NIA provides more detail about each priority.

Absolute Priority I – Improving Success in Developmental Education
Absolute Priority II – Improving Teaching and Learning
Absolute Priority III – Improving Student Support Services
Absolute Priority IV – Influencing the Development of Non-cognitive Factors

7. Project Narrative. As you develop your proposal, carefully consider the page format, page limit, and required documents. The project narrative should be developed in four sections that correspond to the four selection criteria listed in the NIA. See the Instructions for the Project Narrative.
8. Performance and Budget Periods. All successful applicants funded under the FY 2015 FITW Validation competition will receive four-year grant awards. All grants will be forward funded with a four-year budget plan.
9. Abstract and Information Page. Applicants must provide a one-page abstract and information page. The abstract should briefly describe the project goals, the target population, the proposed activities, and the anticipated results. The page must indicate which absolute priority the application is addressing. Applicants must also indicate if they wish to be considered as a Minority-Serving Institution. The instructions for submitting the abstract and information page are in the Instructions for Completing the Abstract and Information Page section of this application. The abstract and information page must be uploaded into the ED Abstract Form in Grants.gov.
10. Instructions for Submitting Supporting Studies. Applicants may provide up to two citations for studies supporting a Validation application. At least one of these studies must meet the What Works Clearinghouse evidence standard with or without reservations. For more details on this requirement, see the Supporting Studies section and the NIA in the application package.
11. Website. Information on the FITW Program is accessible at the Department's website at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/fitw/index.html>.

ELIGIBILITY

AUTHORIZATION

Higher Education Act Title VII, Part B, Subparts 741-745 as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

PROGRAM STATUTE

20 U.S.C. 1138-1138d First in the World (FITW) Program

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligibility for the 2015 FITW Validation competition is based on program statute language. Eligible applicants include “institutions of higher education, combinations of such institutions, and other public and private institutions and agencies.”

To qualify as an eligible Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) under the “First in the World” competition, applicants must satisfy certain criteria listed below in Section I and Section II. Carefully review the information contained in this section to ascertain if you qualify as an MSI. The Department of Education will not determine an applicant’s status prior to submitting an application.

Please note that you are not required to upload documentation in Grants.gov to verify eligibility as an MSI. If an applicant institution submits an application requesting consideration for MSI status,” the Department of Education will use the most recent Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) survey information to verify eligibility as an MSI. If the Department is unable to verify an applicant’s eligibility using IPEDS data, applications will still be reviewed as non-MSI applications.

Section I. Current Eligibility Status

Applicants may indicate that they qualify as an MSI if they meet at least one of the conditions listed in this section.

1. Participated in the Department’s FY 2015 designation of eligibility process and received an approval letter to apply for grant programs authorized under Title III and/or Title V of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.
2. Currently has an open grant under one of the Department’s Title III, Parts A and F and/or Title V programs.
3. Designated as a Historically Black College or University or a Tribally Controlled College or University.

Section II. MSI Eligibility Determination

If the applicant does not meet any of the criteria listed in Section I, IPEDS data will be used to determine the proportion of minority students served and/or needy student and educational and general (E&G) expenditure for income eligibility.

Part I. Proportion of Minority Students Served

To qualify as an eligible MSI, applicants must meet one of the race/ethnic group enrollment levels listed below. In some cases, applicants must also meet the needy student and educational and general (E&G) expenditure requirements referenced below.

Hispanic Serving Institution - At the time of application, the applicant institution has an enrollment of undergraduate students that has at least 25% Hispanic students. **Please review income eligibility requirements in Part II.**

Native American (non-tribal) Institution - At the time of application, the applicant institution has an enrollment of undergraduate students that has at least 10% Native American students.

Asian American Pacific Islander Institution - At the time of application, the applicant institution has an enrollment of undergraduate students that has at least 10% Asian or Pacific Islander students. **Please review income eligibility requirements in Part II.**

Predominantly Black Institution - At the time of application, the applicant institution has an enrollment of at least 1,000 undergraduate students that has at least 40% African American students. **Please review income eligibility requirements in Part II.**

Alaska Native Institution - At the time of application, the applicant institution has an enrollment of undergraduate students that has at least 20% Alaska Native students.

Native Hawaiian Institution - At the time of application, the applicant institution has an enrollment of undergraduate students that has at least 10% Native Hawaiian students.

Students from Underrepresented Minority Groups - At the time of application, the applicant has an enrollment of undergraduate students that has at least 50% minority students (excluding non-underrepresented Asian students). **Please review income eligibility requirements in Part II.**

Part II. Needy Student and Educational and General (E&G) Expenditure Criteria for Determining Income Eligibility

Applicants must meet the criteria in this section if they fall under one of the following race/ethnic categories in Part I: Hispanic Serving Institution; Asian American Pacific Islander Institution; Predominantly Black Institution, and Students from Underrepresented Minority Groups.

Carefully review the income eligibility information and reference tables below to ascertain if you meet the needy student and E & G expenditure requirements.

Enrollment of Needy Students Requirement:

The percentage of your institution’s undergraduate degree students who were enrolled on at least a half-time basis and received Federal Pell Grants exceeded the median percentage of undergraduate degree students who were enrolled on at least a half time basis and received Federal Pell Grants at comparable institutions that offer similar instruction. See Table 1 below for the current median percentages for institutions comparable to the applicant institution.

Table 1: Enrollment of Needy Students – median percentage of undergraduate students receiving Pell grants, by institution level (2-year or 4-year) and control (public or private not-for-profit): academic year 2012-2013 (n=3,062)

	Public	Private Not-for-Profit
Two-year Institutions	Median: 34.7% (n=939)	Median: 38% (n=88)
Four-year Institutions	Median: 45% (n=688)	Median: 44% (n=1,347)

Table 2: E&G Expenditures per FTE Student – average core expenses per full-year full-time equivalent (FTE) student, by institution level (2-year or 4-year) and control (public or private not-for-profit): academic year 2012-2013 (n= 3,317)

	Public	Private Not-for-Profit
Two-year Institutions	\$11,287 (n=941)	\$13,657 (n= 88)
Four-year Institutions	\$27,608 (n=700)	\$34,641 (n=1,588)

Note: Tables are based on academic year 2012-2013 data for all degree-granting Title IV-eligible postsecondary institutions (n=3,351). Eligible MSIs must meet race/ethnic group enrollment levels (see text) and in addition must have the same or higher Pell grant recipient levels (Table 1) and the same or lower E&G expenditure levels per FTE student (Table 2) corresponding to their institutional classification.

Source: Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Educational Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Source: Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

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. 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 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.

- 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 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. 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 notice announcing the grant competition.

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

According to the instructions found in the Federal Register notice, 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://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 84.116X
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.

An applicant should note that the U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, an applicant should check with its local post office.

Special Note: Due to potential disruption to normal mail delivery, the Department encourages you to consider using an alternative delivery method (for example, a commercial carrier, such as Federal Express or United Parcel Service; U.S. Postal Service Express Mail; or a courier service) to transmit your application for this competition to the Department. If you use an alternative delivery method, please obtain the appropriate proof of mailing under “Applications Delivered by Mail,” and then follow the instructions for “Applications Delivered by Hand.”

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 84.116X
550 12th Street, SW.
Room 7039, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260**

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.

Application Control Center Hours of Operation

The Application Control Center accepts application deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (Washington, D.C. time) except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

Late Applications

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

Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; First in the World Program--
Validation Grants

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of
Education

ACTION: Notice.

Overview Information:

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE)--
First in the World (FITW) Program--Validation Grants

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

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.116X.

Dates:

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

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 50 DAYS
AFTER PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: [INSERT DATE 110 DAYS
AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The FITW program is designed to support the development, replication, and dissemination of innovative solutions and evidence for what works in addressing persistent and widespread challenges in postsecondary education for students who are at risk for not persisting in and completing postsecondary programs, including, but not limited to, adult learners, working students, part-time students, students from low-income backgrounds, students of color, students with disabilities, and first-generation students. The focus of the FITW program is to build evidence for what works in postsecondary education by testing the effectiveness of these strategies in improving student persistence and completion outcomes.

For FY 2015, the Department will award two types of grants under FITW: "Development" grants and "Validation" grants. These grants differ in terms of the level of evidence of effectiveness required for consideration of funding, the level of scale the funded project should reach, and, consequently, the amount of funding available to support the project.

This notice invites applications for Validation grants only. Validation grants provide funding to support the expansion and replication of projects supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness (as defined in this notice) to a scaled multi-site sample (as defined in this notice), which would include multiple

institutions of higher education, including multiple institutions within a State system.

All Validation grantees must evaluate the effectiveness of the project at each partner entity. The evaluation design will be assessed on the extent to which it could meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards (as defined in this notice) without reservations.

The Department has published a separate notice inviting applications for Development grants elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register.

Priorities: This notice contains four absolute priorities. The first three absolute priorities are from the notice of final priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criterion for this program (NFP), published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register. The fourth absolute priority is from the Department's notice of final supplemental priorities and definitions for discretionary grant programs (Supplemental Priorities), published in the Federal Register on December 10, 2014 (79 FR 73425).

Absolute Priorities: For FY 2015 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are absolute priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that address one of the four absolute priorities. Applicants must

specify on the Abstract and Information page which absolute priority is addressed in the application.

These priorities are:

Absolute Priority 1: Improving Success in Developmental Education.

The Secretary gives priority to:

Projects designed to improve student success in developmental education or accelerate student progress into credit-bearing postsecondary courses.

Note: Many students arrive at college unprepared for college-level coursework. They often lack the critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills needed for success in college and preparation for the workforce.

This priority invites applications for evidence-based interventions and solutions that engage students more quickly in credit-bearing courses, such as streamlined approaches through GED equivalency or high school credential equivalency for adult learners to allow them to begin taking formal postsecondary coursework.

Absolute Priority 2: Improving Teaching and Learning.

The Secretary gives priority to projects designed to improve teaching and learning.

Note: Methods of teaching have stayed largely static, with the traditional lecture as the core instructional design. New

approaches to teaching and learning that incorporate curriculum and course re-design, such as by using tools and strategies that go beyond the traditional lecture to support active learning or customize learning, must be tested and expanded to more postsecondary institutions to improve accessibility and quality and reduce cost.

Absolute Priority 3: Improving Student Support Services.

The Secretary gives priority to projects designed to improve the supports or services provided to students prior to or during the students' enrollment in postsecondary education.

Note: Almost all institutions of higher education offer a diverse array of student support services to assist with financial aid, academic barriers and other issues related to persistence and completion. The range of services and support is extensive and includes interventions both inside and outside the classroom and campus. Many of these services are also provided by outside organizations, including non-profits.

However, few student support services strategies are widely implemented on the basis of evidence of effectiveness. There is a great need to expand validated cost effective approaches, so that a greater number of students can be served.

Absolute Priority 4: Influencing the Development of Non-cognitive Factors.

The Secretary gives priority to projects that are designed

to improve students' mastery of non-cognitive skills and behaviors (such as academic behaviors, academic mindset, perseverance, self-regulation, social and emotional skills, and approaches toward learning strategies) and enhance student motivation and engagement in learning.

Note: The development of non-cognitive factors is critical during the postsecondary years as students face new academic challenges, social comparisons, and stereotypes regarding their potential for success. How students negotiate these changes has major implications for their academic futures.

The selection criteria for the FY 2015 Validation competition are designed to ensure that applications selected for funding have the best potential to generate substantial improvements and research in student outcomes, and include well-articulated plans for the implementation, dissemination, and evaluation of the proposed projects. Applicants should review the selection criteria and submission instructions carefully to ensure their applications address this year's criteria.

Applicants should note that we screen for eligibility at multiple points before, during, and after the review process. Applicants that are determined to be ineligible at any point in the review process will not receive a grant award regardless of peer reviewer scores or comments. If we determine that a Validation grant application is not supported by moderate

evidence of effectiveness, either because the study submitted does not meet the standard or is not closely relevant to the proposed project, the application will not be considered for funding.

Requirements: The following requirements are from the NFP and apply to all applications submitted under this competition:

(a) Innovations that Improve Outcomes for High-Need Students: Grantees must implement projects designed to improve one or more of the following outcomes of high-need students (as defined in this notice) in postsecondary education:

- (i) Persistence.
- (ii) Academic progress.
- (iii) Time to degree.
- (iv) Completion.

(b) Evidence and Sample Size Standards:

(i) An application for a Validation grant must be supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

(ii) An application for a Validation grant must be supported by the following level of sample size: Scaled multi-site sample, such as across a system of institutions, across institutions in a State, a region, or nationally, or across institutions in a labor market sector.

(iii) An applicant's project must propose to implement the core aspects of the process, product, strategy, or practice from the supporting study as closely as possible. Where modifications to a cited process, product, strategy, or practice will be made to account for student or institutional characteristics, resource limitations, or other special factors or to address deficiencies identified by the cited study, the applicant must provide a justification or basis for the modifications. Modifications may not be proposed to the core aspects of any cited process, product, strategy, or practice.

(c) Evaluation:

(i) The grantee must conduct an independent evaluation (as defined in this notice) of its project. The evaluation must estimate the impact of the FITW-supported practice (as implemented at the proposed level of scale) on a relevant outcome (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1(c)).

(ii) The grantee must make broadly available, digitally and free of charge, through formal (e.g., peer-reviewed journals) or informal (e.g., newsletters) mechanisms, the results of any evaluations it conducts of its funded activities. The grantee must also ensure that the data from its evaluation are made available to third-party researchers consistent with applicable privacy requirements.

(iii) The grantee and its independent evaluator must agree to cooperate on an ongoing basis with any technical assistance provided by the Department or its contractor, including any technical assistance provided to ensure that the evaluation design meets the required evaluation standards, and comply with the requirements of any evaluation of the program conducted by the Department. This includes providing to the Department, within 100 days of a grant award, an updated comprehensive evaluation plan in a format and using such tools as the Department may require. Grantees must update this evaluation plan at least annually to reflect any changes to the evaluation and provide the updated evaluation plan to the Department. All of these updates must be consistent with the scope and objectives of the approved application.

(d) Funding Categories: An applicant will be considered for an award only for the type of FITW grant (Development or Validation) for which it applies. Applicants may not apply for a FITW competition in which they currently have an active FITW grant. An applicant may submit only one FITW application in FY 2015.

(e) Management Plan: Within 100 days of a grant award, the grantee must provide an updated comprehensive management plan for the approved project in a format and using such tools as the Department may require. This management plan must include

detailed information about implementation of the first year of the grant, including key milestones, staffing details, and other information that the Department may require. It must also include a complete list of performance metrics, including baseline measures and annual targets. The grantee must update this management plan at least annually to reflect implementation of subsequent years of the project and provide the updated management plan to the Department.

Definitions:

The following definitions are from the NFP and from 34 CFR 77.1 and apply to the priorities, requirements, and selection criteria in this notice:

High-need student means a student at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support such as adult learners, working students, part-time students, students from low-income backgrounds, students of color, first-generation students, students with disabilities, and students who are English learners. (Note: The Department does not limit the definition of high-need students to this list. This list is illustrative and may include other categories of high-need students).

Independent evaluation means an evaluation that is designed and carried out independent of and external to the grantee, but

in coordination with any employees of the grantee who develop a process, product, strategy, or practice and are implementing it.

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).

Minority-serving institution means an institution that is eligible to receive assistance under sections 316 through 320 of part A of Title III, under part B of Title III, or under Title V of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA).

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

(a) 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 (as defined in this notice) (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.

(b) 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 (as defined in this notice) (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 (as defined in this notice) and a multi-site sample (as defined in this notice). 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 a local educational agency, locality, or State.

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

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 outcome 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.

Relevant outcome means the student outcome(s) (or the ultimate outcome if not related to students) the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice is designed to improve, consistent with the specific goals of a program.

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. 1138–1138d.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement) 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 NFP. (e) The Supplemental Priorities.

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

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Available Funds: \$60,000,000 total for the FITW program, with up to \$16,000,000 set aside for Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), in accordance with the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015. In implementing this set aside, the Department may fund applications from MSIs out of rank order in this competition, in the competition for Development grants or in both. We may allocate up to \$40 million for Validation grants but the actual amount will depend on the quality of the proposals in the Development and Validation grant competitions.

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

Estimated Range of Awards: \$6,000,000 to \$10,000,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$7,000,000.

Maximum Award: We will not make an award for any application above the maximum award of \$10,000,000 for a single budget period of 48 months. The Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education may change the maximum amount through a notice published in the Federal Register.

Estimated Number of Awards: 0-5.

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

Project Period: 48 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: Institutions of higher education, combinations of such institutions, and other public and private nonprofit institutions and agencies.

To qualify as an eligible MSI under the FITW program, an institution of higher education must meet one of two criteria. The first criterion includes: current eligibility approval as defined by the Department's FY 2015 eligibility process for Title III and/or Title V of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended; an open grant under one of the Department's Title III,

Parts A and F and/or Title V programs; or a designation as a Historically Black College or University or a Tribally Controlled College. The second criterion includes: specific enrollment percentages for minority students served; and, if applicable, needy student and educational and general expenditure criteria for determining income eligibility.

More information on MSI eligibility is in the application package under the section entitled Eligibility. The Department will screen the applications to verify MSI eligibility based on these criteria and, if applicable, will use the most recent Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data Systems data. In the event an application does not qualify for MSI eligibility, it will still be reviewed.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching. This competition does not require cost sharing or matching.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package: You can obtain an application package via the Internet or from the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs). To obtain a copy via the Internet, use the following address:

www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapp/index.html. To obtain a copy from ED Pubs, write, fax, or call the following: ED Pubs, U.S. Department of Education, P.O. Box 22207, Alexandria, VA 22304. Telephone, toll free: 1-877-433-7827. FAX: (703) 605-

6794. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call, toll free: 1-877-576-7734.

You can contact ED Pubs at its Web site, also:
www.EDPubs.gov or at its email address: edpubs@inet.ed.gov.

If you request an application from ED Pubs, be sure to identify this program or competition as follows: CFDA number 84.116X.

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 the person or team listed under Accessible Format in section VIII 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 competition.

Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. There is a limit for the application narrative of no more than 35 pages using the following standards:

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

all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions.

- 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.

The page limit for the application does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract and information page, the resumes (three-page limit per resume), the bibliography, the appendices, or the letters of support.

3. Submission Dates and Times:

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

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 50 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 the person 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 110 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

4. Intergovernmental Review: This competition 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 competition.

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

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. 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: 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.

7. Other Submission Requirements:

Applications for grants for the FITW 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 FITW program, CFDA number 84.116X (Validation grants), must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at 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 the FITW program at www.Grants.gov. You must search for the downloadable application package for this program this competition by the CFDA

number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.116, not 84.116X).

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.

- 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 (Portable Document) 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 person 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: Frank Frankfort, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., room 6166, Washington, DC 20006.

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 84.116X)
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 84.116X)
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 following selection criteria for the Validation competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 and the NFP. The points assigned to each criterion are indicated in parentheses. We will award up to a total of 100 points to an application under the selection criteria.

A. Significance (up to 20 points).

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

1. The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

2. The extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings that may be utilized by other appropriate agencies and organizations.

3. The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings

B. Quality of the Project Design (up to 30 points).

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

1. The extent to which the design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives.

2. 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.

3. The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

C. Adequacy of Resources (up to 20 points).

The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

1. The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization.

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

3. 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.

4. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.

D. Quality of Project Evaluation (up to 30 points).

The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project evaluation to be conducted, the Secretary considers the following factors:

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

2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well-implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

3. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Note: Successful applications will be those that have an evaluation design that has the potential to meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. The response to this selection criterion should include a description and number of students who will receive the intervention at each partner institution as well as a description and number of students to whom they will be compared at each partner institution. Finally, applicants should also address whether the person or firm conducting the independent evaluation (as defined in this notice) has experience in the design and management of evaluations designed to meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards.

We encourage eligible applicants to review the following technical assistance resources on evaluation:

(1) What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook:

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/references/idocviewer/doc.aspx?docid=19&tocid=1>; and

(2) IES/NCEE Technical Methods papers:

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/tech_methods/.

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.

Before making awards, we will screen applications submitted in accordance with the requirements in this notice to determine whether the application meets the eligibility requirements. This screening process may occur at various stages of the process. Applicants that are determined to be ineligible at any stage of the review process will not be considered further or receive a grant.

We will use independent peer reviewers with varied backgrounds and professions, such as college and university educators, researchers and evaluators, social entrepreneurs, strategy consultants, and others with education expertise for the peer review process. All reviewers will be thoroughly screened

for conflicts of interest to ensure a fair and competitive review process.

Peer reviewers will read the assigned applications, prepare a written evaluation, and score the applications using the selection criteria provided in this notice.

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).

For FITW Validation grant applications the Department will create review panels comprised of content and evaluation experts. Content reviewers will review all eligible proposals but score only the first three selection criteria: A. Significance; B. Quality of the Project Design; and C. Adequacy of Resources. Evaluation experts will review all eligible proposals but score only the fourth criterion, D. Quality of the Project Evaluation.

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; 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.

To ensure that the Federal investment of these funds has as broad an impact as possible and to encourage innovation in the development and dissemination of learning materials, FITW grantees will be required to license to the public all intellectual property (except for computer software source code,

as discussed below) created with the support of grant funds, including both new content created with grant funds and modifications made to pre-existing, grantee-owned content using grant funds. That license must be worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free, perpetual, irrevocable, and grant the public permission to access, reproduce, publicly perform, publicly display, adapt, distribute, and otherwise use the intellectual property referenced above (except for computer software source code, discussed below) for any purposes, conditioned only on the requirement that attribution be given to authors as designated. Further, the Department requires that all computer software source code developed or created with FITW funds will be released under an intellectual property license that allows others to freely use and build upon them.

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. You must also submit a final evaluation report. 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. You must also submit an annual evaluation report. 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.

4. Performance Measures. Under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, the Department will use the following performance measures in assessing the successful performance of FIPSE's FITW grants:

(1) The extent to which funded projects are replicated (i.e., adopted or adapted by others).

(2) The extent to which projects are institutionalized and continued after funding.

(3) The extent to which the metrics used to assess and evaluate project results measure performance under the absolute priority the project is designed to address.

(4) The percentage of projects supported by FITW grants that produce evidence of their effectiveness (that meets What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations) at improving student outcomes and college affordability, especially for low-income students.

(5) The percentage of projects supported by FITW grants that provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback that allow for periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(6) The cost per student served by FITW grants.

(7) The cost per successful student outcome.

If funded, you will be asked to collect and report data from your project on steps taken toward achieving the outcomes evaluated by these performance measures. Consequently, applicants are advised to include these outcomes in conceptualizing the design, implementation, and evaluation of their proposed projects.

VII. Agency Contact

For Further Information Contact: Frank Frankfort, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., room 6166, Washington, DC 20006-8544. Telephone: (202) 502-7513. FAX: (202) 502-7877 or by email. You may send emails to OPEFITWValidation@ed.gov.

If you use a TDD or a TTY, call the Federal Relay Service, 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 the 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. 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. 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:

Jamiene S. Studley,
Deputy Under Secretary.

Authorizing Legislation

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) - Authorizing Legislation 2008

20 U.S.C. 1138-1138d

Higher Education Act of 1965

Title VII, Part B, Subparts 741-745

(As amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008)

PART B, SEC. 741. — FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

(a) **AUTHORITY** — The Secretary is authorized to make grants to, or enter into contracts with, institutions of higher education, combinations of such institutions, and other public and private nonprofit institutions and agencies, to enable such institutions, combinations, and agencies to improve postsecondary education opportunities by—

(1) the encouragement of reform and improvement of, and innovation in, postsecondary education and the provision of educational opportunity for all students, including nontraditional students;

(2) the creation of institutions, programs, and joint efforts involving paths to career and professional training, including—

(A) Efforts that provide academic credit for programs; and

(B) Combinations of academic and experiential learning;

(3) the establishment and continuation of institutions, programs, consortia, collaborations, and other joint efforts based on communications technology, including those efforts that utilize distance education and technological advancements to educate and train postsecondary students (including health professionals serving medically underserved populations);

(4) the carrying out, in postsecondary educational institutions, of changes in internal structure and operations designed to clarify institutional priorities and purposes;

(5) the design and introduction of cost-effective methods of instruction and operation;

(6) the introduction of institutional reforms designed to expand individual opportunities for entering and reentering postsecondary institutions and pursuing programs of postsecondary study tailored to individual needs;

(7) the introduction of reforms in graduate education, in the structure of academic professions, and in the recruitment and retention of faculties;

(8) the creation of new institutions and programs for examining and awarding credentials to individuals, and the introduction of reforms in current institutional practices related thereto;

(9) the introduction of reforms in remedial education, including English language instruction, to customize remedial courses to student goals and help students progress rapidly from remedial courses into core courses and through postsecondary program completion;

(10) the provision of support and assistance to partnerships between institutions of higher education and secondary schools with a significant population of students identified as late-entering limited English proficient students, to establish programs that—

(A) Result in increased secondary school graduation rates of limited English proficient students; and

(B) Increase the number of participating late-entering limited English proficient students who pursue postsecondary education;

(11) the creation of consortia that join diverse institutions of higher education to design and offer curricular and co-curricular interdisciplinary programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, sustained for not less than a 5 year period, that—

(A) Focus on poverty and human capability; and

(B) Include—

(i) A service-learning component; and

(ii) the delivery of educational services through informational resource centers, summer institutes, midyear seminars, and other educational activities that stress the effects of poverty and how poverty can be alleviated through different career paths;

(12) the provision of support and assistance for demonstration projects to provide comprehensive support services to ensure that homeless students, or students who were in foster care or were a ward of the court at any time before the age of 13, enroll and succeed in postsecondary education, including providing housing to such students during periods when housing at the institution of higher education is closed or generally unavailable to other students; and

(13) the support of efforts to work with institutions of higher education, and nonprofit organizations, that seek to promote cultural diversity in the entertainment media industry, including through the training of students in production, marketing, and distribution of culturally relevant content.

(b) **PLANNING GRANTS** — The Secretary is authorized to make planning grants to institutions of higher education for the development and testing of innovative techniques in postsecondary education. Such grants shall not exceed \$20,000.

(c) **CENTER FOR BEST PRACTICES TO SUPPORT SINGLE PARENT STUDENTS** —

(1) The Secretary is authorized to award one grant or contract to an institution of higher education to enable such institution to establish and maintain a center to study and develop best practices for institutions of higher education to support single parents who are also students attending such institutions.

(2) The Secretary shall award the grant or contract under this subsection to a four-year institution of higher education that has demonstrated expertise in the development of programs to assist single parents who are students at institutions of higher education, as shown by the institution's development of a variety of targeted services to such students, including on-campus housing, child care, counseling, advising, internship opportunities, financial aid, and financial aid counseling and assistance.

(3) The center funded under this section shall—

(A) Assist institutions implementing innovative programs that support single parents pursuing higher education;

(B) Study and develop an evaluation protocol for such programs that includes quantitative and qualitative methodologies;

(C) Provide appropriate technical assistance regarding the replication, evaluation, and continuous improvement of such programs; and

(D) Develop and disseminate best practices for such programs.

(d) PROHIBITION —

(1) In general. — No funds made available under this part shall be used to provide direct financial assistance in the form of grants or scholarships to students who do not meet the requirements of section 484(a).

(2) Rule of construction. — Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent a student who does not meet the requirements of section 484(a) from participating in programs funded under this part.

(e) PRIORITY — In making grants under this part to any institution of higher education after the date of enactment of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, the Secretary may give priority to institutions that meet or exceed the most current version of ASHRAE/IES Standard 90.1 (as such term is used in section 342(a)(6) of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6313(a)(6)) for any new facilities construction or major renovation of the institution after such date, except that this subsection shall not apply with respect to barns or greenhouses or similar structures owned by the institution.

(f) SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR FAMILY MEMBERS OF VETERANS OR MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY —

(1) Authorization. — The Secretary shall enter into a contract with a nonprofit organization with demonstrated success in carrying out the activities described in this subsection to carry out a program to provide postsecondary education scholarships for eligible students.

(2) Definition of eligible student.--In this subsection, the term 'eligible student' means an individual who is enrolled as a full-time or part-time student at an institution of higher education (as defined in section 102) and is--

(A) A dependent student who is a child of--

(i) An individual who is--

(I) serving on active duty during a war or other military operation or national emergency (as defined in section 481); or

(II) Performing qualifying National Guard duty during a war or other military operation or national emergency (as defined in section 481);

(ii) Was (at the time of death of the veteran) a spouse of a veteran who--

(I) served or performed, as described in clause (i), since September 11, 2001; and

(II) died as a result of such service or performance;

or

(iii) Is a spouse of a veteran who--

(I) served or performed, as described in clause (i), since September 11, 2001; and

(II) has been disabled as a result of such service or performance.

(3) Awarding of scholarships. --Scholarships awarded under this subsection shall be awarded based on need with priority given to eligible students who are eligible to receive Federal Pell Grants under subpart 1 of part A of title IV.

(4) Maximum scholarship amount. --The maximum scholarship amount awarded to an eligible student under this subsection for an award year shall be the lesser of \$5,000, or the student's cost of attendance (as defined in section 472).

(5) Amounts for scholarships. --All of the amounts appropriated to carry out this subsection for a fiscal year shall be used for scholarships awarded under this subsection, except that the nonprofit organization receiving a contract under this subsection may use not more than one percent of such amounts for the administrative costs of the contract.

SEC. 742. BOARD OF THE FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT — There is established a National Board of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (in this part referred to as the `Board'). The Board shall consist of 15 members appointed by the Secretary for overlapping 3-year terms. A majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum. Any member of the Board who has served for 6 consecutive years shall thereafter be ineligible for appointment to the Board during a 2-year period following the expiration of such sixth year.

(b) MEMBERSHIP — The Secretary shall designate one of the members of the Board as Chairperson of the Board. A majority of the members of the Board shall be public interest representatives, including students, and a minority shall be educational representatives. All members selected shall be individuals able to contribute an important perspective on priorities for improvement in postsecondary education and strategies of educational and institutional change.

(c) DUTIES — The Board shall—

(1) Advise the Secretary on priorities for the improvement of postsecondary education and make such recommendations as the Board may deem appropriate for the improvement of postsecondary education and for the evaluation, dissemination, and adaptation of demonstrated improvements in postsecondary educational practice;

(2) advise the Secretary on the operation of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, including advice on planning documents, guidelines, and procedures for grant competitions prepared by the Fund; and

(3) Meet at the call of the Chairperson, except that the Board shall meet whenever one-third or more of the members request in writing that a meeting be held.

(d) INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE — The Secretary shall make available to the Board such information and assistance as may be necessary to enable the Board to carry out its functions.

SEC. 743. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.

The Secretary may appoint, for terms not to exceed 3 years, without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, not more than 7 technical employees to administer this part who may be paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

SEC. 744. SPECIAL PROJECTS.

(a) GRANT AUTHORITY — The Secretary is authorized to make grants to institutions of higher education, or consortia thereof, and such other public agencies and nonprofit organizations as the Secretary deems necessary for innovative projects concerning one or more areas of particular national need identified by the Secretary.

(b) APPLICATION — No grant shall be made under this part unless an application is made at such time, in such manner, and contains or is accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require.

(c) AREAS OF NATIONAL NEED — Areas of national need shall include at a minimum, the following:

(1) Institutional restructuring to improve learning and promote productivity, efficiency, quality improvement, and cost reduction.

(2) Improvements in academic instruction and student learning, including efforts designed to assess the learning gains made by postsecondary students.

(3) Articulation between two- and four-year institutions of higher education, including developing innovative methods for ensuring the successful transfer of students from two- to four-year institutions of higher education.

(4) Development, evaluation, and dissemination of model courses, including model courses that—

(A) Provide students with a broad and integrated knowledge base;

(B) include, at a minimum, broad survey courses in English literature, American and world history, American- political institutions, economics, philosophy, college-level mathematics, and the natural sciences; and

(C) Include study of a foreign language that leads to reading and writing competency in the foreign language.

(5) International cooperation and student exchanges among postsecondary educational institutions.

(6) Support of centers to incorporate education in quality and safety into the preparation of medical and nursing students, through grants to medical schools, nursing schools, and osteopathic schools. Such grants shall be used to assist in providing courses of instruction that specifically equip students to—

(A) Understand the causes of, and remedies for, medical error, medically induced patient injuries and complications, and other defects in medical care;

(B) Engage effectively in personal and systemic efforts to continually reduce medical harm; and

(C) Improve patient care and outcomes, as recommended by the Institute of Medicine.

SEC. 745. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this part such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2009 and each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

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# 84.116X, 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.**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION PACKAGE

The application consists of the following four parts. These parts are organized in the same manner that the submitted application should be organized. The parts are as follows:

Part I: SF 424 Form
Application for Federal Assistance - (SF 424)
Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424

***Notes:**

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

Part II: ED Form 524

Department of Education Budget Summary Form - (ED Form 524)
Sections A & C (B is optional. You may mark as not applicable.)
(**NOTE:** Section C – Budget Narrative must be included as part of the Other Attachments Form.)

The budget should demonstrate and justify that all costs are reasonable and necessary to accomplish the proposed project activities.

Part III: Attachments

ED Abstract Form
Project Narrative Attachment Form
Other Attachments Form

The **Department of Education Abstract Form** is where you attach the Abstract and Information page.

The **Project Narrative Attachment Form** is where you attach the project narrative organized according to the four selection criteria. The page limit for the project narrative portion of the application for the FY 2015 FITW Validation competition is 35 pages.

Please see the Notice Inviting Applications for detailed information on page limits and formatting requirements.

You should include a Table of Contents for your application as the first page of this section. The Table of Contents will not count against the 35 page limit.

The **Other Attachments Form** is where you attach:

- Key personnel resumes (3 pp limit)
- Project Director resume (3 pp limit)
- Evaluator's resume (3 pp limit)
- Budget Narrative
- Letters of commitment

These will not be counted as part of the 35-page limit.

***All attachments must be in a .PDF format only. Other types of files will not be accepted.**

Part IV: Assurances and Certifications

ED-GEPA Section 427 Requirement
Assurances – Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)
Grants.gov Lobbying Form (formerly ED Form 80-0013)
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE ABSTRACT AND INFORMATION PAGE

The abstract and information page is required for submission.

The purpose of this page is to provide FIPSE staff and peer reviewers a short reference guide to your application. Enter the items in the order listed below and use the same number format. This page is not part of the narrative page limit. You may use single spacing on this page. The abstract and information page must be uploaded as a pdf file into the ED Abstract Form in Grants.gov.

1. Name of applicant institution
2. Names of partner institutions and agencies
3. Project title
4. Project director with contact information
5. Evaluator with contact information
6. Abstract (limit 200 words)

The abstract should be a summary of the project goals, a definition of the students in the study, the proposed activities, and the anticipated results.

7. List the absolute priority used for this application.
8. Indicate whether or not you wish to be considered as a Minority-Serving Institution applicant. MSI eligibility for a grant is based solely on the status of the applicant institution. Read the eligibility requirements for MSI submission under the Eligibility page of this application package and in the NIA.
9. Indicate the total number of (unduplicated headcount) students involved in the project over the four year period. This is a count of the students in all the control and treatment groups.
10. List the citation(s) for the supporting study or studies.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING SUPPORTING STUDIES

The Validation competition has an eligibility requirement that supporting studies be submitted in support of the proposed project. The purpose of this page is to provide information about how to submit supporting studies for the Validation competition. An applicant for a Validation grant may identify and cite up to two studies to be reviewed against What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards for the purposes of meeting the FITW evidence standard requirement.

There are two eligibility requirements related to supporting studies: First, you have a choice of submitting one or two supporting studies. However, at least one of two studies must meet the What Works Clearinghouse standard with or without reservations. It is very important that applicants understand what this means. It is advisable to seek expert advice on this. Read the FAQs on this on the FIPSE website.

Second, the core components of the study (or studies) must correspond to the core components of the proposed project. This means that the core components of the study (or studies) and the core components of the proposed project should be the same or very similar. You should carefully list the core components of the study (or studies) and compare them to the list of components or interventions in the proposed project. Depending on that comparison, you should explain any key differences and provide a justification for any modifications for the proposed project.

The study (or studies) validating the intervention or practice may have occurred at the applicant institution or agency, but it could also have been completed by another entity. Likewise, the study (or studies) may come from the evaluated studies in the What Works Clearinghouse, or may come from another source.

The links for the study (or studies) should be cited on the [Abstract and Information page](#) of the application package. The description of the topics in the study (or studies) and the proposed project, the comparative listing of the core components, and the justification for modifications should be in section two of the project narrative. This section deals with the selection criterion on quality of the project design.

An applicant must ensure that all evidence is available to the Department from publicly available sources and provide links or other guidance indicating where it is available; or, in the application, include copies of evidence. If the Department determines that an applicant has provided insufficient information, the applicant will not have an opportunity to provide additional information at a later time.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROJECT NARRATIVE

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

Page Limit and Format

Please note that the page limit for the project narrative is **35 pages**. The page limit applies only to the project narrative. Be sure to follow the formatting instructions in the NIA. All supporting charts, tables, footnotes, endnotes, references and bibliography are part of the narrative and are counted as part of the 35 page limit.

Review Process

The Secretary evaluates an application on the basis of the criteria in § 34 CFR 75.210 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). The maximum score that any application may receive on the selection criteria is 100 points.

The Department intends to conduct a single stage review process for the Validation competition for all eligible applications. The review panel will consist of four peer reviewers—two content reviewers and two evaluation reviewers. The content reviewers will read the entire proposal but score only the first three criteria: A. Significance (20 points); B. Quality of the Project Design (30 points); and C. Adequacy of Resources (20 points). The two evaluation reviewers will also read the entire proposal but score only the last criterion: Quality of the Project Evaluation (30 points). High rated applications from this review process will then have their supporting studies reviewed by the Department's Institute for Education Sciences (IES) and by the FITW program.

Selection Criteria

The application narrative should be organized in four clearly labelled sections that correspond and follow the order of the four selection criteria. Each selection criterion is listed below and includes a number of subparts. It is followed by a description of how the criterion applies to the First in the World competition. The reviewers use these criteria in assigning points and ratings to the applications. The overall rating assessment of an application is based on the extent to which the project narrative addresses all parts of the selection criteria. These selection criteria serve as the overall template for submitting as well as reviewing applications.

The four selection criteria and factors for applications in this Validation competition are:

- A. Significance (up to 20 points).

The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.

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

- (1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of education problems, issues, or effective strategies.
- (2) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings that may be utilized by other appropriate agencies and organizations.
- (3) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

Note: This first selection criterion should be explained in the first section of the project narrative. Applicants are encouraged to begin their narrative with a description of the major challenges in higher education, and then indicate how their proposal would add knowledge to what is already known. Applicants are encouraged to focus on these challenges in ways that validate approaches and strategies. Applicants are also encouraged to explain how their planned strategies will be replicated at other institutions.

B. Quality of the Project Design (up to 30 points).

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

- (1) The extent to which the design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives.
- (2) 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.
- (3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

Note: The applicant should explain how the project meets this selection criterion in the second section of the project narrative. Applicants are encouraged to base their project on piloted and tested interventions, and to define carefully the number and type of students served. Applicants are encouraged to describe carefully how their proposed approach can expand beyond the original model. Applicants are also encouraged to base their project on the core components of recent research.

In this section the applicant should explain the correlation between the core components of the supporting study (or studies) and the proposed project.

C. Adequacy of Resources (up to 20 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 adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization.
- (2) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.
- (3) 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.
- (4) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.

Note: The applicant should explain how the project meets this selection criterion in the third section of the project narrative. Applicants are encouraged to describe the resources and capacity of the applicant and the partners to conduct a successful project and to provide letters of commitment. Letters must be appended to the application under Other Attachments. Additionally, applicants are encouraged to describe how the requested funds are reasonable in relation to the complexity and scale of the project, as well as the number of students in the control and treatment groups. Successful applications will be those that identify and provide a resume for the person who will be the project director. The project director should not be a placeholder or supervisor for someone to be hired after the start of the project.

D. Quality of the Project Evaluation (up to 30 points).

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

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

- (1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.
- (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented,

produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. The link for the What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 3.0, March 2014), can be found at:

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/references/idocviewer/doc.aspx?docid=19&tocid=1>.

- (3) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

Note: Successful applications will be those that have an evaluation design that has very clearly defined goals and objectives. The evaluation should also have the potential to meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations. The response to this evaluation criterion should include a description of the sample size of students at each partner institution as well as the total for the whole project. Finally, applicants should also address whether the person or firm conducting the independent evaluation (as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications) has experience in the design and management of evaluations designed to meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STANDARD FORMS

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)
- Department of Education Supplemental Form for the SF 424
- Department of Education Budget Summary Form (ED 524)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SF 424

This is a standard form required for use as a cover sheet for submission of pre-applications and applications and related information under discretionary programs. Some of the items are required and some are optional at the discretion of the applicant or the federal agency (agency). Required fields on the form are identified with an asterisk (*) and are also specified as "Required" in the instructions below. In addition to these instructions, applicants must consult agency instructions to determine other specific requirements.

Item	Entry:	Item	Entry:
1.	<p>Type of Submission: (Required) Select one type of submission in accordance with agency instructions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-application • Application • Changed/Corrected Application – Check if this submission is to change or correct a previously submitted application. Unless requested by the agency, applicants may not use this form to submit changes after the closing date. 	10.	<p>Name Of Federal Agency: (Required) Enter the name of the federal agency from which assistance is being requested with this application.</p>
		11.	<p>Catalog Of Federal Domestic Assistance Number/Title: Enter the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number and title of the program under which assistance is requested, as found in the program announcement, if applicable.</p>
2.	<p>Type of Application: (Required) Select one type of application in accordance with agency instructions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New – An application that is being submitted to an agency for the first time. • Continuation - An extension for an additional funding/budget period for a project with a projected completion date. This can include renewals. • Revision - Any change in the federal government's financial obligation or contingent liability from an existing obligation. If a revision, enter the appropriate letter(s). More than one may be selected. If "Other" is selected, please specify in text box provided. <p>A. Increase Award D. Decrease Duration B. Decrease Award E. Other (specify) C. Increase Duration</p>	12.	<p>Funding Opportunity Number/Title: (Required) Enter the Funding Opportunity Number (FON) and title of the opportunity under which assistance is requested, as found in the program announcement.</p>
		13.	<p>Competition Identification Number/Title: Enter the competition identification number and title of the competition under which assistance is requested, if applicable.</p>
		14.	<p>Areas Affected By Project: This data element is intended for use only by programs for which the area(s) affected are likely to be different than the place(s) of performance reported on the SF-424 Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form. Add attachment to enter additional areas, if needed.</p>
3.	<p>Date Received: Leave this field blank. This date will be assigned by the Federal agency.</p>	15.	<p>Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project: (Required) Enter a brief descriptive title of the project. If appropriate, attach a map showing project location (e.g., construction or real property projects). For pre-applications, attach a summary description of the project.</p>
4.	<p>Applicant Identifier: Enter the entity identifier assigned by the Federal agency, if any, or the applicant's control number if applicable.</p>		
5a.	<p>Federal Entity Identifier: Enter the number assigned to your organization by the federal agency, if any.</p>	16.	<p>Congressional Districts Of: 16a. (Required) Enter the applicant's congressional district. 16b. Enter all district(s) affected by the program or project. Enter in the format: 2 characters state abbreviation – 3 characters district number, e.g., CA-005 for California 5th district, CA-012 for California 12 district, NC-103 for North Carolina's 103 district. If all congressional districts in a state are affected, enter "all" for the district number, e.g., MD-all for all congressional districts in Maryland. If nationwide, i.e. all districts within all states are affected, enter US-all. If the program/project is outside the US, enter 00-000. This optional data element is intended for use only by programs for which the area(s) affected are likely to be different than place(s) of performance reported on the SF-424 Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form. Attach an additional list of program/project congressional districts, if needed.</p>
5b.	<p>Federal Award Identifier: For new applications, enter NA. For a continuation or revision to an existing award, enter the previously assigned federal award identifier number. If a changed/corrected application, enter the federal identifier in accordance with agency instructions.</p>		
6.	<p>Date Received by State: Leave this field blank. This date will be assigned by the state, if applicable.</p>		
7.	<p>State Application Identifier: Leave this field blank. This identifier will be assigned by the state, if applicable.</p>		
8.	<p>Applicant Information: Enter the following in accordance with agency instructions:</p>		
	<p>a. Legal Name: (Required) Enter the legal name of applicant that will undertake the assistance activity. This is the organization that has registered with the Central</p>	17.	<p>Proposed Project Start and End Dates: (Required) Enter the proposed start date and end date of the project.</p>

	Contractor Registry (CCR). Information on registering with CCR may be obtained by visiting www.Grants.gov .		
	b. Employer/Taxpayer Number (EIN/TIN): (Required) Enter the employer or taxpayer identification number (EIN or TIN) as assigned by the Internal Revenue Service. If your organization is not in the US, enter 44-4444444.	18.	Estimated Funding: (Required) Enter the amount requested, or to be contributed during the first funding/budget period by each contributor. Value of in-kind contributions should be included on appropriate lines, as applicable. If the action will result in a dollar change to an existing award, indicate only the amount of the change. For decreases, enclose the amounts in parentheses.
	c. Organizational DUNS: (Required) Enter the organization's DUNS or DUNS+4 number received from Dun and Bradstreet. Information on obtaining a DUNS number may be obtained by visiting www.Grants.gov .	19.	Is Application Subject to Review by State Under Executive Order 12372 Process? (Required) Applicants should contact the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Federal Executive Order 12372 to determine whether the application is subject to the State intergovernmental review process. Select the appropriate box. If "a." is selected, enter the date the application was submitted to the State.
	d. Address: Enter address: Street 1 (Required); city (Required); County/Parish, State (Required if country is US), Province, Country (Required), 9-digit zip/postal code (Required if country US).	20.	Is the Applicant Delinquent on any Federal Debt? (Required) Select the appropriate box. This question applies to the applicant organization, not the person who signs as the authorized representative. Categories of federal debt include; but, may not be limited to: delinquent audit disallowances, loans and taxes. If yes, include an explanation in an attachment.
	e. Organizational Unit: Enter the name of the primary organizational unit, department or division that will undertake the assistance activity. f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application: Enter the first and last name (Required); prefix, middle name, suffix, title. Enter organizational affiliation if affiliated with an organization other than that in 7.a. Telephone number and email (Required); fax number.	21.	Authorized Representative: To be signed and dated by the authorized representative of the applicant organization. Enter the first and last name (Required); prefix, middle name, suffix. Enter title, telephone number, email (Required); and fax number. A copy of the governing body's authorization for you to sign this application as the official representative must be on file in the applicant's office. (Certain federal agencies may require that this authorization be submitted as part of the application.)
9.	Type of Applicant: (Required) Select up to three applicant type(s) in accordance with agency instructions. A. State Government B. County Government C. City or Township Government D. Special District Government E. Regional Organization F. U.S. Territory or Possession G. Independent School District H. Public/State Controlled Institution of Higher Education I. Indian/Native American Tribal Government (Federally Recognized) J. Indian/Native American Tribal Government (Other than Federally Recognized) K. Indian/Native M. Nonprofit N. Private Institution of Higher Education O. Individual P. For-Profit Organization (Other than Small Business) Q. Small Business R. Hispanic-serving Institution S. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) T. Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs) U. Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions V. Non-US Entity W. Other (specify)		

	American Tribally Designated Organization L. Public/Indian Housing Authority			
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[U.S Department of Education note: As of spring, 2010, the FON discussed in Block 12 of the instructions can be found via the following URL: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/find_grant_opportunities.jsp.]

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION FOR SF 424

1. Project Director. Name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address of the person to be contacted on matters involving this application. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory.

2. Novice Applicant. Check “Yes” if you meet the definition for novice applicants specified in the regulations in 34 CFR 75.225 and included on the attached page entitled “Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424”). By checking “Yes” the applicant certifies that it meets these novice applicant requirements. Check “No” if you do not meet the definition for novice applicants.

This novice applicant information will be used by ED to: 1) determine the amount and type of technical assistance that a novice might need, if funded, and 2) determine novice applicant eligibility in discretionary grant competitions that give special consideration to novice applications. Certain ED discretionary grant programs give special consideration to novice applications, either by establishing a special competition for novice applicants or by giving competitive preference to novice applicants under the procedures in 34 CFR 75.105(c) (2). If special consideration is being given to novice applications under a particular discretionary grant competition, the application notice for the competition published in the Federal Register will specify this information

3. Human Subjects Research. (See I. A. “Definitions” in attached page entitled “Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424.”)

3a. If Not Human Subjects Research. Check “No” if research activities involving human subjects are not planned at any time during the proposed project period. The remaining parts of Item 3 are then not applicable.

3a. If Human Subjects Research. Check “Yes” if research activities involving human subjects are planned at any time during the proposed project period, either at the applicant organization or at any other performance site or collaborating institution. Check “Yes” even if the research is exempt from the regulations for the protection of human subjects. (See I. B. “Exemptions” in attached page entitled “Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF-424.”)

3b. If Human Subjects Research is Exempt from the Human Subjects Regulations. Check “Yes” if all the research activities proposed are designated to be exempt from the regulations. Check the exemption number(s) corresponding to one or more of the six exemption categories listed in I. B. “Exemptions.” In addition, follow the instructions in II. A. “Exempt Research Narrative” in the attached page entitled “Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424.”

3b. If Human Subjects Research is Not Exempt from Human Subjects Regulations. Check “No” if some or all of the planned research activities are covered (not exempt). In addition, follow the instructions in II. B. “Nonexempt Research Narrative” in the attached page entitled “Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424.”

3b. Human Subjects Assurance Number. If the applicant has an approved Federal Wide Assurance (FWA) on file with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, that covers the specific activity, insert the number in the space provided. (A list of current FWAs is available at: <http://ohrp.cit.nih.gov/search/asearch.asp#ASUR>) If the applicant does not have an approved assurance on file with OHRP, enter “None.” In this case, the applicant, by signature on the SF-424, is declaring that it will comply with 34 CFR 97 and proceed to obtain the human subjects assurance upon request by the designated ED official. If the application is recommended/selected for funding, the designated ED official will request that the applicant obtain the assurance within 30 days after the specific formal request.

3c. If applicable, please attach your “Exempt Research” or “Nonexempt Research” narrative to your submission of the U.S Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424 form as instructed in item II, “Instructions for Exempt and Nonexempt Human Subjects Research Narratives” in the attached page entitled “Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424.”

Note about Institutional Review Board Approval. ED does not require certification of Institutional Review Board approval with the application. However, if an application that involves non-exempt human subjects research is recommended/selected for funding, the designated ED official will request that the applicant obtain and send the certification to ED within 30 days after the formal request. **No covered human subjects research can be conducted until the study has ED clearance for protection of human subjects in research.**

Paperwork Burden Statement. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1894-0007. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average between 15 and 45 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-0170. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form write directly to: (insert program office), U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202.

Definitions for U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424

Definitions:

Novice Applicant (See 34 CFR 75.225)

For discretionary grant programs, novice applicant means any applicant for a grant from ED that—

- Has never received a grant or subgrant under the program from which it seeks funding;
- Has never been a member of a group application, submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129, that received a grant under the program from which it seeks funding; and
- Has not had an active discretionary grant from the Federal government in the five years before the deadline date for applications under the program. For the purposes of this requirement, a grant is active until the end of the grant's project or funding period, including any extensions of those periods that extend the grantee's authority to obligate funds.

In the case of a group application submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129, a group includes only parties that meet the requirements listed above.

PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

I. Definitions and Exemptions

A. Definitions.

A research activity involves human subjects if the activity is research, as defined in the Department's regulations, and the research activity will involve use of human subjects, as defined in the regulations.

—Research

The ED Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects, Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 97, define research as “a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities which meet this definition constitute research whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program that is considered research for other purposes. For example, some demonstration and service programs may include research activities.

—Human Subject

The regulations define human subject as “a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual, or (2) identifiable private information.” (1) *If an activity involves obtaining information about a living person by manipulating that person or that person’s environment, as might occur when a new instructional technique is tested, or by communicating or interacting with the individual, as occurs with surveys and interviews, the definition of human subject is met.* (2) *If an activity involves obtaining private information about a living person in such a way that the information can be **directly or indirectly** linked to that individual), the definition of human subject is met* [Private information includes information about behavior that occurs in a context in which an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or recording is taking place, and information which has been provided for specific purposes by an individual and which the individual can reasonably expect will not be made public (for example, a school health record).]

B. Exemptions.

Research activities in which the **only** involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following six categories of **exemptions** are not covered by the regulations:

(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (a) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (b) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods. ***If an educational practice is being introduced to the site and is not widely used for similar populations, it is not covered by this exemption.***

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (a) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (b) any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation. ***If the subjects are children, exemption 2 applies only to research involving educational tests and observations of public behavior when the investigator(s) do not participate in the activities being observed.***

Exemption 2 does not apply if children are surveyed or interviewed or if the research involves observation of public behavior and the investigator(s) participate in the activities being observed. [Children are defined as persons who have not attained the legal age for consent to treatments or procedures involved in the research, under the applicable law or jurisdiction in which the research will be conducted.]

(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under section (2) above, if the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. ***[This exemption applies only to retrospective studies using data collected before the initiation of the research.]***

(5) Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (a) public benefit or service programs; (b) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (c) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (d) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs. ***[The standards of this exemption are rarely met because it was designed to apply only to specific research conducted by the Social Security Administration and some Federal welfare benefits programs.]***

(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (a) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (b) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

II. Instructions for Exempt and Nonexempt Human Subjects Research Narratives

If the applicant marked “Yes” for Item 3.b. of the U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF 424, the applicant must attach a human subjects “exempt research” or “nonexempt research” narrative to the U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424 form. If you have multiple projects and need to provide more than one narrative, be sure to label each set of responses as to the project they address.

A. Exempt Research Narrative.

If you marked “Yes” for item 3.b. and designated exemption numbers(s), attach the “exempt research” narrative to the U.S.

Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424. The narrative must contain sufficient information about the involvement of human subjects in the proposed research to allow a determination by ED that the designated exemption(s) are appropriate. The narrative must be succinct.

B. Nonexempt Research Narrative.

If you marked “No” for item 3.b. you must attach the “nonexempt research” narrative to the U.S. Department of Education Supplemental Information for the SF-424. The narrative must address the following seven points. Although no specific page limitation applies to this section of the application, be succinct.

(1) Human Subjects Involvement and Characteristics:

Provide a detailed description of the proposed involvement of human subjects. Describe the characteristics of the subject population, including their anticipated number, age range, and health status. Identify the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of any subpopulation. Explain the rationale for the involvement of special classes of subjects, such as children, children with disabilities, adults with disabilities, persons with mental disabilities, pregnant women, prisoners, institutionalized individuals, or others who are likely to be vulnerable

(2) Sources of Materials: Identify the sources of research material obtained from individually identifiable living human subjects in the form of specimens, records, or data. Indicate whether the material or data will be obtained specifically for research purposes or whether use will be made of existing specimens, records, or data.

(3) Recruitment and Informed Consent: Describe plans for the recruitment of subjects and the consent procedures to be followed. Include the circumstances under which consent will be sought and obtained, who will seek it, the nature of the information to be provided to prospective subjects, and the method of documenting consent. State if the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has authorized a modification or waiver of the elements of consent or the requirement for documentation of consent.

(4) Potential Risks: Describe potential risks (physical, psychological, social, legal, or other) and assess their likelihood and seriousness. Where appropriate, describe alternative treatments and procedures that might be advantageous to the subjects.

(5) Protection Against Risk: Describe the procedures for protecting against or minimizing potential risks, including risks to confidentiality, and assess their likely effectiveness. Where appropriate, discuss provisions for ensuring necessary medical or professional intervention in the event of adverse effects to the subjects. Also, where appropriate, describe the provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.

(6) Importance of the Knowledge to be Gained: Discuss the importance of the knowledge gained or to be gained as a result of the proposed research. Discuss why the risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits to subjects and in relation to the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result.

(7) Collaborating Site(s): If research involving human subjects will take place at collaborating site(s) or other performance site(s), name the sites and briefly describe their involvement or role in the research.

Copies of the Department of Education’s Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects, 34 CFR Part 97 and other pertinent materials on the protection of human subjects in research are available from the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4331, telephone: (202) 245-8090, and on the U.S. Department of Education’s Protection of Human Subjects in Research Web Site:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/humansub.html>

NOTE: The **State Applicant Identifier** on the SF-424 is for State Use only. Please complete it on the SF-424 in the upper right corner of the form (if applicable).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ED 524

General Instructions

This form is used to apply to individual U.S. Department of Education (ED) discretionary grant programs. Unless directed otherwise, provide the same budget information for each year of the multi-year funding request. Pay attention to applicable program specific instructions, if attached. You may access the Education Department General Administrative Regulations, 34 CFR 74 – 86 and 97-99, on ED's website at:

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.html>

You must consult with your Business Office prior to submitting this form.

Section A - Budget Summary

U.S. Department of Education Funds

All applicants must complete Section A and provide a break-down by the applicable budget categories shown in lines 1-11.

Lines 1-11, columns (a)-(e): For each project year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.

Lines 1-11, column (f): Show the multi-year total for each budget category. If funding is requested for only one project year, leave this column blank.

Line 12, columns (a)-(e): Show the total budget request for each project year for which funding is requested.

Line 12, column (f): Show the total amount requested for all project years. If funding is requested for only one year, leave this space blank.

Indirect Cost Information: On line 10 (ED Form 524), provide the amount of indirect costs that you propose to charge against the grant.

All grants awarded under the FITW Program are designated as training grants. The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) limit reimbursement to grantees for indirect costs they incur under training grants to the grantee's actual indirect costs as determined by the grantee's negotiated indirect cost agreement or a maximum of 8 percent of a modified total direct cost base, **whichever is less**. (NOTE: This limitation does not apply to State agencies, or local governments, or federally recognized Indian tribal governments. [§75.562(c) (2)]) If you are applying for a grant under a Restricted Rate Program (34 CFR 75.563 or 76.563), indicate whether you are using a restricted indirect cost rate that is included on your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or whether you are using a restricted indirect cost rate that complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2). Note: State or Local government agencies may not use the provision for a restricted indirect cost rate specified in 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2). Check only one response. Leave blank, if this item is not applicable.

Section B - Budget Summary

Non-Federal Funds

There is no cost share or match in FITW. The instructions for Section B do not apply to the FITW program. Leave this section blank or write in NA.

If you are required to provide or volunteer to provide cost-sharing or matching funds or other non-Federal resources to the project, these should be shown for each applicable budget category on lines 1-11 of Section B.

Lines 1-11, columns (a)-(e): For each project year, for which matching funds or other contributions are provided, show the total contribution for each applicable budget category.

Lines 1-11, column (f): Show the multi-year total for each budget category. If non-Federal contributions are provided for only one year, leave this column blank.

Line 12, columns (a)-(e): Show the total matching or other contribution for each project year.

Line 12, column (f): Show the total amount to be contributed for all years of the multi-year project. If non-Federal contributions are provided for only one year, leave this space blank.

Section C - Budget Narrative [Attach separate sheet(s)]
Pay attention to applicable program specific instructions.

1. Provide an itemized budget breakdown, and justification by project year, for each budget category listed in Sections A. For grant projects that will be divided into two or more separately budgeted major activities or sub-projects, show for each budget category of a project year the breakdown of the specific expenses attributable to each sub-project or activity.
2. For non-Federal funds or resources listed in Section B that are used to meet a cost-sharing or matching requirement or provided as a voluntary cost-sharing or matching commitment, you must include:
 - a. The specific costs or contributions by budget category;
 - b. The source of the costs or contributions; and
 - c. In the case of third-party in-kind contributions, a description of how the value was determined for the donated or contributed goods or services.

[Please review ED's general cost sharing and matching regulations, which include specific limitations, in 34 CFR 74.23, applicable to non-governmental entities, and 80.24, applicable to governments, and the applicable Office of Management and Budget (OMB) cost principles for your entity type regarding donations, capital assets, depreciation and use allowances. OMB cost principle circulars are available on OMB's website at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html>.]

3. If applicable to this program, provide the rate and base on which fringe benefits are calculated.
4. If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line 10, this information is to be completed by your Business Office. Specify the estimated amount of the base to which the indirect cost rate is applied and the total indirect expense. Depending on the grant program to which you are applying and/or your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, some direct cost budget categories in your grant application budget may not be included in the base and multiplied by your indirect cost rate. For example, you must multiply the indirect cost rates of "Training grants" (34 CFR 75.562) and grants under programs with "Supplement not Supplant" requirements ("Restricted Rate" programs) by a "modified total direct cost" (MTDC) base (34 CFR 75.563 or 76.563). Please indicate which costs are included and which costs are excluded from the base to which the indirect cost rate is applied.

When calculating indirect costs (line 10) for "Training grants" or grants under "Restricted Rate" programs, you must refer to the information and examples on ED's website at: <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>.

You may also contact (202) 377-3838 for additional information regarding calculating indirect cost rates or general indirect cost rate information.

5. Provide other explanations or comments you deem necessary.

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is **1894-0008**. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to vary from 13 to 22 hours per response, with an average of 17.5 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data sources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to (insert program office), U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BUDGET SUMMARY AND ITEMIZED LINE ITEM BUDGET

NOTE: Applicants must submit: (1) budget information that categorizes the requested funds (ED Form 524, Section A), **AND** (2) a detailed budget narrative (Section C) for each year of the budget period. Section B, Non-federal funds does not apply to this competition.

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

The budget narrative is to be included in the “Other Attachments Form.”

This section requests information on the applicant’s financial plan for carrying out the project. Submit an annual budget for four years plus a total for the entire period.

The requested federal funds are to be included on the Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524).

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

1. **Personnel:** On line 1 (ED Form 524), enter only the project personnel salaries and wages. All fees and expenses for evaluators must be included on line 6 (Contractual). The budget should include the total commitment of time and the total salary to be charged to the project for each key staff member. You should provide a breakdown of project personnel that includes: the position titles; the percent of time and number of months committed to the project for each key staff member; the salary for each key staff member; and the total salary costs to be charged to the grant.
2. **Fringe Benefits:** On line 2 (ED Form 524), enter the amount of fringe benefits for each person listed under Personnel. The institution or agency’s normal fringe benefit contribution may be charged to the program. In the budget, include an explanation and appropriate justification if the institution or agency’s normal fringe benefit contribution exceeds 20 percent of salaries.

3. Travel: On line 3 (ED Form 524), provide the travel costs for project personnel. The evaluator's travel must be included on line 6. In the budget, you should detail the proposed travel costs: for each trip explain the purpose and objective of the travel and provide the number of persons traveling. In addition to project travel, include in each year of the budget travel expenses for the project director, the evaluator (list on line 6), and one participant from each partner organization to attend a project directors' meeting in Washington, D.C. Transportation costs should not exceed tourist class airfare. For automobile mileage, the established institution or agency rate should be used. Reimbursement is allowed for taxicab, bus, train, or limousine transportation. Per diem at the established institution or agency rate is permitted when an individual is away from home overnight on official project business (see OMB Circular A-21, J.48.c - Commercial Air Travel). Use of federal per diem and lodging rates are allowed. In the first year of the grant schedule an extra meeting for the project director and evaluator. This will be held in late fall or early winter. All travel must be domestic and related to the project's overall purpose and proposed activities. No international travel is authorized under the grant.
4. Equipment: On line 4 (ED Form 524), indicate the cost of equipment -- non-expendable personal property, which has a usefulness of greater than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. Consistent with an applicant's policy, a lower dollar amount may be used to define equipment. In the budget, explain why the requested equipment is necessary to carry out project activities, and include a list of all equipment in the following format: item, quantity, cost per unit, and total cost. FIPSE funds only equipment that directly supports the activities related to the proposed interventions.
5. Supplies: On line 5 (ED Form 524), include the costs of all tangible personal property that was not included as "equipment" on line 4. In the budget narrative provide an itemized list.
6. Contractual: All costs/fees/travel for the evaluator(s) should be included here. Provide a detailed breakdown of the costs (fees to be paid, estimated number of days of services, and all travel expenses, including per diem). Cost allowances for per diem and travel should not exceed amounts permitted by institutional policies.
7. Construction: Not applicable. Leave blank. The FITW program is a non-construction program and does not fund construction, remodeling, or renovation.
8. Other: On line 8 (ED Form 524), indicate all direct costs not covered on lines 1 through 5. Examples of "other" costs are: equipment rental, required fees, communication costs, and printing costs. In the budget, provide a breakdown of all direct costs not clearly covered by other budget categories.

FIPSE statutory language prohibits student financial assistance. That includes stipends, tuition, and all forms of student financial assistance. Funding to support housing, food, mentoring, tutoring, summer camps, or stipends for undergraduate

research are also not an allowable cost.

Undergraduate and graduate students who work on grant administration or data collection may be paid out of grant funds

9. Total Direct Costs: On line 9 (ED Form 524), provide the total direct costs requested – the sum of lines 1 through 8.
10. Indirect Costs: On line 10 (ED Form 524), provide the amount of indirect costs that you propose to charge against the grant. All grants awarded under the FITW Program are designated as training grants. The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) limit reimbursement to grantees for indirect costs they incur under training grants to the grantee's actual indirect costs as determined by the grantee's negotiated indirect cost agreement or a maximum of 8% of a modified total direct cost base, whichever is less. (NOTE: This limitation does not apply to State agencies, or local governments, or federally recognized Indian tribal governments. [§75.562(c) (2)])

A modified total direct cost base is defined as total direct costs, less stipends, tuition and related fees, and capital expenditures of \$5,000 or more per unit.

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

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

11. Training Stipends: Not applicable. Leave blank.

12. Total Costs: On line 12 (ED Form 524), provide the total amount for the entire four years that you are requesting – the sum of lines 9 and 10. Note: This amount should also be the same as that shown in 18g on the application face sheet (SF 424) and on the detailed budget narrative in Part III.

Note to applicants about total funding. Peer reviewers and FIPSE staff will review the budget for line items and total amount requested. To ensure a competitive budget your

request should be commensurate with the scope and scale of your project. Funding is dependent on merit, not institutional need. Make sure your request is reasonable in relation to the number of students involved, the number of staff and faculty working on the project, additional hires you may need, funding for the evaluation to meet the required level of evidence, the number of interventions, the frequency of data collections, and the costs for partners.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF SF-LLL, DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

This disclosure form shall be completed by the reporting entity, whether subawardee or prime Federal recipient, at the initiation or receipt of a covered Federal action, or a material change to a previous filing, pursuant to title 31 U.S.C. section 1352. The filing of a form is required for each payment or agreement to make payment to any lobbying entity for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with a covered Federal action. Complete all items that apply for both the initial filing and material change report. Refer to the implementing guidance published by the Office of Management and Budget for additional information.

1. Identify the type of covered Federal action for which lobbying activity is and/or has been secured to influence the outcome of a covered Federal action.

2. Identify the status of the covered Federal action.

3. Identify the appropriate classification of this report. If this is a follow-up report caused by a material change to the information previously reported, enter the year and quarter in which the change occurred. Enter the date of the last previously submitted report by this reporting entity for this covered Federal action.

4. Enter the full name, address, city, State and zip code of the reporting entity. Include Congressional District, if known. Check the appropriate classification of the reporting entity that designates if it is, or expects to be, a prime or subaward recipient. Identify the tier of the subawardee, e.g., the first subawardee of the prime is the 1st tier. Subawards include but are not limited to subcontracts, subgrants and contract awards under grants.

5. If the organization filing the report in item 4 checks "Subawardee," then enter the full name, address, city, State and zip code of the prime Federal recipient. Include Congressional District, if known.

6. Enter the name of the federal agency making the award or loan commitment. Include at least one organizational level below agency name, if known. For example, Department of Transportation, United States Coast Guard.

7. Enter the Federal program name or description for the covered Federal action (item 1). If known, enter the full Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for grants, cooperative agreements, loans, and loan commitments.

8. Enter the most appropriate Federal identifying number available for the Federal action identified in item 1 (e.g., Request for Proposal (RFP) number; Invitations for Bid (IFB) number; grant announcement number; the contract, grant, or loan award number; the application/proposal control number assigned by the Federal agency). Included prefixes, e.g., "RFP-DE-90-001."

9. For a covered Federal action where there has been an award or loan commitment by the Federal agency, enter the Federal amount of the award/loan commitment for the prime entity identified in item 4 or 5.

10. (a) Enter the full name, address, city, State and zip code of the lobbying registrant under the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 engaged by the reporting entity identified in item 4 to influence the covered Federal action.

(b) Enter the full names of the individual(s) performing services, and include full address if different from 10(a). Enter Last Name, First Name, and Middle Initial (MI).

11. The certifying official shall sign and date the form, print his/her name, title, and telephone number.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act, as amended, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control Number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is OMB No. 0348-0046. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes 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. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0348-0046), Washington, DC 20503

GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

To Whom Does This Provision Apply?

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

What Does This Provision Require?

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) 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 provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully

participate in the project and to achieve to high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.

(1) An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.

(2) An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.

(3) An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.

Estimated Burden Statement for GEPA Requirements

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1894-0005. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1.5 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-4537.

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 FITW program is designed to support the development, replication, and dissemination of innovative solutions and evidence for what works in addressing persistent and widespread challenges in postsecondary education for students who are at risk for not persisting in and completing postsecondary programs.

What are the performance indicators for this Program?

Performance Measures. Under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, the Department will use the following performance measures in assessing the successful performance of FIPSE's FITW grants:

- (1) The extent to which funded projects are replicated (i.e., adopted or adapted by others).
- (2) The extent to which projects are institutionalized and continued after funding.
- (3) The extent to which the metrics used to assess and evaluate project results measure performance under the absolute priority the project is designed to address.
- (4) The percentage of projects supported by FITW grants that produce evidence of their effectiveness (that meets What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations) at improving student outcomes and college affordability, especially for low-income students.
- (5) The percentage of projects supported by FITW grants that provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback that allow for periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.
- (6) The cost per student served by FITW grants.
- (7) The cost per successful student outcome.

If funded, you will be asked to collect and report data from your project on steps taken toward achieving the outcomes evaluated by these performance measures. Consequently, applicants are advised to include these outcomes in conceptualizing the design, implementation, and evaluation of their proposed projects.

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 performance 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 reports will be submitted using the FIPSE Grant Database. This online system collects narratives and data about funded projects to help program officers determine if a grantee is making substantial progress toward meeting approved project objectives. The database is accessible at: <https://fipsedatabase.ed.gov/fipse/index.cfm>.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Before you submit the application package, please review the following list to ensure that you have attached all required materials/files in the prescribed format.

Part I: Application for Federal Assistance – SF 424
Department of Education Supplemental Information Form for SF 424

NOTE: Please do not attach any narratives, supporting files, or application components to the Standard Form 424. Although this form accepts attachments, the Department of Education will review only materials/files attached to the attachment forms listed above.

Part II: Department of Education Budget Summary Form – ED 524
Sections A & B

NOTE: Section B does not apply to this program. If uploaded leave it blank or write in NA

Part III: Department of Education Abstract Form

Upload the Abstract and Information Page as a PDF file.

Project Narrative Attachment Form

Upload the Project Narrative as a PDF file

Other Attachments Form

- Key personnel resumes (3 pp limit)
- Project Director resume (3 pp limit)
- Evaluator's resume (3 pp limit)
- Budget Narrative
- Letters of commitment

These will not be counted as part of the 35-page limit.

Part IV: Assurances and Certifications

- GEPA Section 427
- Assurances – Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)
- Certification Regarding Lobbying (ED 80-0013)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)

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 20/minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (20 U.S.C.1183). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to 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:

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