

**U.S. Department of Education  
OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY  
EDUCATION**

**Washington, DC 20202**

[www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html)

**FY TBD  
APPLICATION FOR GRANTS  
UNDER THE  
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM**

**CFDA NUMBER: 84.042A**

Form Approved  
OMB No. 1840-  
0017

(Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX)



**DATED MATERIAL – OPEN IMMEDIATELY  
CLOSING DATE: XX/XX/XXXX**

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## DEAR APPLICANT LETTER

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

Dear Applicant,

We are pleased to provide the application package for the fiscal year (FY) **20XX** Student Support Services (SSS) Program grant competition, which contains the information and instructions needed to submit a complete application to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) through Grants.gov.

The SSS Program provides grants to institutions of higher education to operate projects that provide opportunities for academic development, student assistance with basic college requirements, and motivation for students to successfully complete their postsecondary education. The goal of SSS is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants.

The FY **20XX** competition contains XX competitive preference priorities, which are described in the Notice Inviting Applications and this application package. We sincerely hope applicants will consider addressing these competitive preference priorities.

Please review the entire application package carefully before preparing and submitting an application. Additional information on the SSS Program is accessible on the Department's website at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/triostudsupp/index.html>.

Lastly, please do not rely upon any information that is inconsistent with the guidance contained within the *Federal Register* Notice.

Thank you for your interest in the Student Support Services Program. We look forward to receiving your application.

Sincerely,

/s/

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Higher Education Programs

## COMPETITION HIGHLIGHTS

1. **SSS Program applications for FY 20XX must be submitted electronically using Grants.gov.** You are urged to acquaint yourself with the requirements of Grants.gov early as the registration procedures may require 5 or more days to complete. A more thorough discussion is included later in this application package. Grants.gov is accessible through its portal page at: <https://www.Grants.gov>. The requirements for obtaining an exception to the electronic submission requirement are included in the Notice for FY 20XX. If you think you may need an exception, you are urged to review the requirements promptly.
2. **REGISTER EARLY** – Grants.gov registration involves many steps including registration on SAM ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)) which may take approximately one week to complete, but could take upwards of several weeks to complete, depending upon the completeness and accuracy of the data entered into the SAM database by an applicant. You may begin working on your application while completing the registration process, but you cannot submit an application until all of the registration steps are complete. Please note that once your SAM registration is active, it will take 24-48 hours for the information to be available in Grants.gov.
3. Grants.gov does not allow applicants to “un-submit” applications. Therefore, if you discover that changes or additions are needed once your application has been accepted and validated by the Department, you must “re-submit” the application. You should know that if the Department receives duplicate applications, we will accept and process the application with the latest “date/time received” validation.
4. Please note that you must submit your application by 11:59:59 p.m. (Eastern Time) on or before the application deadline date. Late applications will not be accepted. **We suggest that you submit your application several days before the deadline.** The Department is required to enforce the established deadline to ensure fairness to all applicants. No changes or additions to an application will be accepted after the deadline date and time.
5. Electronic submission of applications is required; therefore, you must submit an electronic application unless you follow the procedures outlined in the Notice for FY 20XX and qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement.
6. We recommend that you limit the application narrative, which includes the budget narrative, to the equivalent of no more than 65 pages.
7. **All attachments must be in a Portable Document Format (PDF) or Microsoft Word. Other types of files will not be accepted.** Please note, once you download an application from Grants.gov, you will be working offline and saving data on your computer. It is important to note where you are saving the Grants.gov file on your computer. You will need to log on to Grants.gov to upload and submit the application. You must provide the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) that was used when your organization registered with the System for Award Management (SAM).

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

Support Desk e-Mail: support@Grants.gov

Support Desk Telephone: (800) 518-4726

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

Online Web Site: <https://www.Grants.gov>

Also, refer to the “U.S. Department of Education Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants” section found in this application booklet.

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

8. In the FY 20XX competition, the program has XXX competitive preference priorities. They are:

**TBD**

9. As you develop your application, we ask you to carefully consider the specific content that you will provide in the Objectives section of the application. This part of the application should address the appropriate standardized objectives related to the participants' academic achievements, including retention, academic standing, and graduation/transfer as stated on the SSS Program Profile Form.
10. In the Project Narrative, you must address each of the appropriate objectives, and explain how the objective is ambitious and attainable. Applicants should use comparative data to show why the proposed percentages are ambitious based on information provided in the Need section of the Project Narrative and attainable based on the information provided in the Plan of Operation and the resources available to the project. **Applicants may not modify, amend or delete any of these objectives.**
11. Consistent with the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), applicants may submit multiple SSS program applications to address the needs of different campuses of a single institution or to address the needs of the different populations that have been identified in this application (e.g., students with disabilities; students for whom English is a second language; students entering specific disciplines of study) as appropriate recipients for project services as defined by the program regulations.
12. All applicants must complete the SSS Program Profile Form. The SSS Program Profile Form contains three standardized objectives. All applicants are required to propose the percentage or number--as indicated on the form--at which each of these objectives will be met. Applicants may not modify, amend or delete any of these objectives. Instructions for submitting the form are included in the Instructions for Completing the Application Package.
13. All applicants must provide a one-page abstract. Complete instructions for submitting the

abstract are included in the Instructions for Completing the Application Package in this application. The abstract must be uploaded into the ED Abstract Form section in Grants.gov.

14. Information on the SSS Program is accessible at the Department's Web site at: <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/triostudsupp/index.html>.

## OVERVIEW

### STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

#### **Authorization**

Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended; Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2, Chapter 1, Sec. 402D;  
20 U.S.C. 1070a-14

#### **Program Regulations**

34 CFR part 646 Student Support Services Program

#### **What is the Student Support Services Program?**

The Student Support Services Program provides grants for projects designed to—

- (a) Increase the college retention and graduation rates of eligible students;
- (b) Increase the transfer rate of eligible students from two-year to four-year institutions; and

(c) Foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, individuals with disabilities, homeless children and youth, foster care youth, or other disconnected students; and

(d) Improve the financial and economic literacy of students in areas such as—

(1) Basic personal income, household money management, and financial planning skills;  
and

(2) Basic economic decision-making

skills. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11

and 1070a-14)

[61 FR 38537, July 24, 1996, as amended at 75 FR 65790, Oct. 26, 2010]

#### **Who is eligible to receive a grant?**

An institution of higher education or a combination of institutions of higher education is eligible to receive a grant to carry out a Student Support Services project.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-14)

## **What activities and services can a project provide?**

### **Required Services**

A Student Support Services project must provide the following services:

(1) Academic tutoring, directly or through other services provided by the institution, to enable students to complete postsecondary courses, which may include instruction in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, science, and other subjects.

(2) Advice and assistance in postsecondary course selection.

(3)(i) Information on both the full range of Federal student financial aid programs and benefits (including Federal Pell Grant awards and loan forgiveness) and resources for locating public and private scholarships; and

(ii) Assistance in completing financial aid applications, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

(4) Education or counseling services designed to improve the financial and economic literacy of students, including financial planning for postsecondary education.

(5) Activities designed to assist participants enrolled in four-year institutions of higher education in applying for admission to, and obtaining financial assistance for enrollment in, graduate and professional programs.

(6) Activities designed to assist students enrolled in two-year institutions of higher education in applying for admission to, and obtaining financial assistance for enrollment in, a four-year program of postsecondary education.

### **Permissible Services**

A Student Support Services project may provide the following services:

(1) Individualized counseling for personal, career, and academic matters provided by assigned counselors.

(2) Information, activities, and instruction designed to acquaint students participating in the project with the range of career options available to the students.

(3) Exposure to cultural events and academic programs not usually available to disadvantaged students.

(4) Mentoring programs involving faculty or upper-class students, or a combination thereof.



(5) Securing temporary housing during breaks in the academic year for—

(i) Students who are homeless children and youths or were formerly homeless children and youths; and

(ii) Foster care youths.

(6) Programs and activities as described in paragraph (a) of this section or paragraphs (b) (1) through (b)(4) of this section that are specially designed for students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, students who are individuals with disabilities, students who are homeless children and youths, students who are foster care youth, or other disconnected students.

(7) Other activities designed to meet the purposes of the Student Support Services Program in §646.1.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-14)

[75 FR 65790, Oct. 26, 2010]

# GRANTS.GOV SUBMISSION PROCEDURES AND TIPS FOR APPLICANTS

Revised 04/2022

## IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ FIRST

U.S. Department of Education

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

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

#### Browser Support

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

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

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

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

Below is an overview of applying on Grants.gov. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>

- 1) Create a Workspace: Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- 2) Complete a Workspace: Add participants to the workspace to work on the application together, complete all the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the state of your application process as you apply. As you apply using Workspace, you may click the blue question mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page to access context-sensitive help.
  - a. Adobe Reader: If you decide not to apply by filling out web forms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device

storage, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>

- b. **Mandatory Fields in Forms:** In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.
  - c. **Complete SF-424 Fields First:** The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Number. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.
- 3) **Submit a Workspace:** An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.
  - 4) **Track a Workspace Submission:** After successfully submitting a workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html>.

### **Helpful Reminders**

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

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

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

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

- 3) **VERIFY SUBMISSION IS OK –** You will want to verify that Grants.gov received your application submission on time and that it was validated successfully. To see the date/time your application was received, login to Grants.gov and click on the Track My Application link. For a successful submission, the date/time received should be earlier than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on the deadline date, AND the application status should be: Validated, Received by Agency, or Agency Tracking Number Assigned. Once the Department of Education receives your application from Grants.gov, an Agency Tracking Number (PR/award number) will be assigned to your application and will be available for viewing on Grants.gov’s Track My Application link.

If the date/time received is later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on the deadline date, your application is late. If your application has a status of “Received” it is still awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will either change to “Validated” or “Rejected with Errors.” If the status is “Rejected with Errors,” your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found on the Grants.gov site: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/encountering-error-messages.html>. For more detailed information on troubleshooting Adobe errors, you can review the Adobe Reader Software Tip Sheet at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>. If you discover your application is late or has been rejected, please see the instructions below. Note: You will receive a series of confirmations both online and via e-mail about the status of your application. Please do not rely solely on e-mail to confirm whether your application has been received timely and validated successfully.

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

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

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

must be postmarked no later than 14 calendar days before the application deadline date (See the [2021 Common Instructions](#) for detailed instructions regarding this procedure).

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

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

### **Slow Internet Connections**

*When using a slow internet connection, such as a dial-up connection, to upload and submit your application, it can take significantly longer than when you are connected to the Internet with a high-speed connection, e.g., cable modem/DSL/T1. While times will vary depending upon the size of your application, it can take a few minutes to a few hours to complete your grant submission using a dial up connection. Failure to fully upload an application by the deadline date and time will result in your application being marked late in the G5 system. If you do not have access to a high-speed internet connection, you may want to consider following the instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than 14 calendar days before the application deadline date. (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions and the [2021 Common Instructions](#).)*

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

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

- When you submit your application electronically, you must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in either Portable Document Format (PDF) or Microsoft Word. Although applicants have the option of uploading any narrative sections and all other attachments to their application in either PDF or Microsoft Word, we **recommend** applicants submit all documents as read-only flattened PDFs, meaning any fillable PDF files must be saved and submitted as non-fillable PDF files and not as interactive or fillable PDF files, to better ensure applications are processed in a more timely, accurate, and efficient manner.
- Grants.gov cannot process an application that includes two or more files that have the same name within a grant submission. Therefore, each file uploaded to your application package should have a unique file name.
- When attaching files, applicants should follow the guidelines established by Grants.gov on the size and content of file names. Uploaded file names must be fewer than 50 characters, and, in general, applicants should not use any special characters. However, Grants.gov does allow for the following UTF-8 characters when naming your attachments: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore, hyphen, space, period, parenthesis, curly braces, square brackets, ampersand, tilde, exclamation point, comma, semi colon, apostrophe, at sign, number sign, dollar sign, percent sign, plus sign, and equal sign. Applications submitted that do not comply with the Grants.gov guidelines will be rejected at Grants.gov and not forwarded to the Department.

- Applicants should limit the size of their file attachments. Documents submitted that contain graphics and/or scanned material often greatly increase the size of the file attachments and can result in difficulties opening the files. For reference, the average discretionary grant application package with all attachments is less than 5 MB. Therefore, you may want to check the total size of your package before submission.

## APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

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://www.grants.gov>) by 11:59:59 p.m. (Eastern 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>.

### **Other Submission Instructions**

For detailed instructions on applications sent by mail or delivery, please review the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs Notice, published in the Federal Register on December 27, 2021 (86 FR 73264), and available at: [www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-27979](http://www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-27979).

### **Late Applications**

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

## NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR NEW AWARDS

**Note: The U.S. Department of Education is not planning to have a Student Support Services grant competition in FY 2022. Therefore, the most recent Notice Inviting Applications for this program (FY 2020) has been included.**

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Student Support Services Program

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is issuing a notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2020 for the Student Support Services (SSS) Program, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 84.042A. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1840-0017.

DATES:

Applications Available: December 17, 2019

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: January 27, 2020

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: March 26, 2020

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on February 13, 2019



(84 FR 3768), and available at [www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf](http://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lavelle Wright, U.S.

Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, room 268-24, Washington, DC 20202-4260. Telephone: (202) 453-7739. Email: [Lavelle.Wright@ed.gov](mailto:Lavelle.Wright@ed.gov).

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the SSS Program is to increase the number of disadvantaged, low-income college students, first-generation college students, and college students with disabilities in the United States who successfully complete a program of study at the postsecondary level. The support services that are provided should increase the retention and graduation rates for these categories of students and facilitate their transfer from two-year to four-year colleges and universities. The support services should also foster an institutional climate that supports the success of students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are historically underrepresented in postsecondary education, students with disabilities, students who are homeless children

and youths, students who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system, and other disconnected students.

Student support services should also improve the financial and economic literacy of students.

Priorities: This notice contains two competitive preference priorities. Competitive Preference Priorities 1 and 2 are from the Secretary's Notice of Final Supplemental Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on March 2, 2018 (83 FR 9096) (Supplemental Priorities).

Note: Applicants must include, in the one-page abstract submitted with the application, a statement indicating which, if any, of the competitive preference priorities are addressed. If the applicant has addressed the competitive preference priorities, this information must also be listed on the SSS Program Profile Form.

Competitive Preference Priorities: For FY 2020 and any subsequent year for which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are competitive preference priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c) (2)(i), we award up to an additional five points to an application, depending on how well the application meets these priorities.

These priorities are:

Competitive Preference Priority 1--Fostering Flexible and

Affordable Paths to Obtaining Knowledge and Skills (up to 3 points).

Projects that are designed to address improving collaboration between education providers and employers to ensure student learning objectives are aligned with the skills or knowledge required for employment in in-demand industry sectors or occupations (as defined in section 3(23) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014).

Competitive Preference Priority 2--Fostering Knowledge and Promoting the Development of Skills That Prepare Students To Be Informed, Thoughtful, and Productive Individuals and Citizens (up to 2 points).

Projects that are designed to address supporting instruction in personal financial literacy, knowledge of markets and economics, knowledge of higher education financing and repayment (e.g., college savings and student loans), or other skills aimed at building personal financial understanding and responsibility.

Note: For both priorities, the Department is sufficiently interested in these topics that we may later seek to partner with successful applicants to conduct research and evaluation.

Definitions: The definitions below are from 34 CFR 77.1(c).

Demonstrates a rationale means a key project component included in the project's logic model is informed by research or

evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes.

Logic model (also referred to as a theory of action) means a framework that identifies key project components of the proposed project (i.e., the active “ingredients” that are hypothesized to be critical to achieving the relevant outcomes) and describes the theoretical and operational relationships among the key project components and relevant outcomes.

Note: In developing logic models, applicants may want to use resources such as the Regional Educational Laboratory Program’s (REL Pacific) Education Logic Model Application, available at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/elm.asp>,

to help design their logic models. Other sources include:

[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL\\_2014025.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014025.pdf),

[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL\\_2014007.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014007.pdf), and

[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL\\_2015057.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2015057.pdf).

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 20 U.S.C. 1070a-14.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 75 (except for 75.215 through 75.221), 77, 79, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98 and 99.

(b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies

on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474. (d) The regulations for this program in [34 CFR part 646](#). (e) The Supplemental Priorities.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian tribes.

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

## II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: We intend to use an estimated \$313,849,000 for new SSS awards under this competition. Note: The President's Budget for FY 2020 requested \$950,000,000 for the Administration's proposal to reform the Federal TRIO programs. The actual level of funding and changes to the program, if any, depend on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for the Federal TRIO Programs. Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in

subsequent years from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$149,482 - \$1,595,544.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$311,977.

Maximum Award: The maximum award varies based on whether the applicant is currently receiving an SSS grant, as well as the type of project and number of students served.

For applicants not currently receiving an SSS Program grant, the maximum awards are as follows:

Type of Proposal	Maximum Amount*
Regular SSS Proposal Serving a Minimum of 140 Student Participants	\$253,032
Regular SSS Proposal Serving a Minimum of 100 Student Participants who are Students with Disabilities	\$253,032
English as a Second Language (ESL) SSS Proposal Serving a Minimum of 140 Student Participants	\$253,032
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Health Science SSS Proposal Serving a Minimum of 120 Student Participants	\$253,032
Teacher Preparation SSS Proposal Serving a Minimum of 140 Student Participants	\$253,032

Veterans SSS Proposal Serving a Minimum of 120 Student Participants	\$253,032
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For applicants proposing to serve fewer than the minimum number of student participants specified in the above table, the maximum award is an amount equal to: \$1,807 per student participant for Regular, ESL, and Teacher Preparation proposals; \$2,530 per student participant for projects serving Students with Disabilities (SWD proposals); and \$2,109 per student participant for STEM (including Health Science) and Veterans proposals.

For applicants currently receiving an SSS program grant, the maximum award amount is the greater of (a) \$253,032 or (b) 100 percent of the applicant's base award amount for FY 2019.

For any currently funded applicant that proposes to serve fewer students than it served in FY 2019, the maximum award is the amount that corresponds with the cost per participant previously established for the project in FY 2019.

Estimated Number of New Awards: 1,069.

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

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

### III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: IHEs or combinations of IHEs.
2. Cost Sharing or Matching: Section 402D(d)(4) of the

HEA requires that all successful applicants that use SSS Program funds to provide grant aid to students pursuant to section 402D(d)(1) of the HEA must provide matching funds, in cash, from non-Federal funds, in an amount that is not less than 33 percent of the total amount of the SSS Program funds used for this aid. This matching requirement does not apply to a grant recipient that is an IHE eligible to receive funds under part A or part B of title III or under title V of the HEA.

3. Subgrantees: A grantee under this competition may not award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application.

4. Other: An applicant may submit multiple applications if each separate application describes a project that will serve a different campus or a different population (section 402A(c)(5) of the HEA).

Under section 402A(h)(1) of the HEA, the term "different campus" means a site of an IHE that--(a) is geographically apart from the main campus of the institution; (b) is permanent in nature; and (c) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential.

Under section 402A(h)(2) of the HEA, the term "different population" means a group of individuals that an eligible entity desires to serve through an SSS grant that is separate and distinct from any other population that the entity has applied



to serve using Federal TRIO Program funds, or, while sharing some of the same needs as another population that the eligible entity has applied to serve using Federal TRIO Program funds, has distinct needs for specialized services. To implement the requirement in section 402A(h)(2) of the HEA for this competition, the Secretary is designating the populations to be served as: participants who meet the specific requirements for SSS services, participants who are students with disabilities, participants who need ESL services, participants receiving services in the STEM fields, participants receiving Teacher Preparation Services, and participants who have served in the armed forces. These different populations need different types of services. Accordingly, the Secretary has determined that projects serving these different populations should be subject to different standards for the minimum number of participants. An applicant may submit more than one application as long as each application proposes to serve a different population. For project types other than a regular SSS project, an applicant must propose to serve 100 percent of the students in the specific project type.

#### IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission Instructions: Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768), and

available at [www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf](http://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf), which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application.

2. Intergovernmental Review: This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this program.

3. Funding Restrictions: We specify unallowable costs in 34 CFR 646.31. We reference additional regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

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

4. Recommended 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. We recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative, which includes the budget narrative, to no more than 65 pages and (2) use the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins.
- Double space all text in the application

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

- Use a 12-point font.
- Use an easily readable font such as Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended 65-page limit does not apply to Part I, the Application for Federal Assistance cover sheet (SF 424); Part II, the Budget Information Summary form (ED Form 524); Part III-A, the SSS Program Profile form; Part III-B, the one-page Project Abstract form; or Part IV, the assurances and certifications. The recommended page limit also does not apply to a table of contents, which you should include in the application narrative. You must include your complete response to the selection criteria in the application narrative.

We recommend that any application addressing the competitive preference priorities include no more than three additional pages each for priorities 1 and 2, if addressed.

Applications that do not follow the page limit and formatting recommendations will not be penalized.

## V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 646.21 and 34 CFR 75.210.

We will award up to 105 points to an application under the selection criteria and up to 5 additional points to an

application under the competitive preference priorities, for a total score of up to 110 points. The maximum number of points available for each criterion is indicated in parentheses.

(a) *Need for the project* (24 points). The Secretary evaluates the need for an SSS project proposed at the applicant institution on the basis of the extent to which the application contains clear evidence of—

(1) A high number or percentage, or both, of students enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the applicant institution who meet the eligibility requirements of 34 CFR 646.3 (8 points);

(2) The academic and other problems that eligible students encounter at the applicant institution (8 points); and

(3) The differences between eligible SSS students compared to an appropriate group, based on the following indicators:

(i) Retention and graduation rates.

(ii) Grade point averages.

(iii) Graduate and professional school enrollment rates (four-year colleges only).

(iv) Transfer rates from two-year to four-year institutions (two-year colleges only) (8 points).

(b) *Objectives* (8 points). The Secretary evaluates the quality of the applicant's proposed objectives in the following areas on the basis of the extent to which they are both ambitious, as related to the need data provided under paragraph

(a) of this section, and attainable, given the project's plan of operation, budget, and other resources.

(1) Retention in postsecondary education (3 points).

(2) In good academic standing at grantee institution (2 points).

(3) Two-year institutions only. (i) Certificate or degree completion (1 point); and (ii) Certificate or degree completion and transfer to a four-year institution (2 points).

(4) Four-year institutions only. Completion of a baccalaureate degree (3 points).

(c) *Plan of operation* (30 points). The Secretary evaluates the quality of the applicant's plan of operation on the basis of the following:

(1) The plan to inform the institutional community (students, faculty, and staff) of the goals, objectives, and services of the project and the eligibility requirements for participation in the project (3 points).

(2) The plan to identify, select, and retain project participants with academic need (3 points).

(3) The plan for assessing each individual participant's need for specific services and monitoring his or her academic progress at the institution to ensure satisfactory academic progress (4 points).

(4) The plan to provide services that address the goals and objectives of the project (10 points).

(5) The applicant's plan to ensure proper and efficient administration of the project, including the organizational placement of the project; the time commitment of key project staff; the specific plans for financial management, student records management, and personnel management; and, where appropriate, its plan for coordination with other programs for disadvantaged students (10 points).

(d) *Institutional commitment* (16 points). The Secretary evaluates the institutional commitment to the proposed project on the basis of the extent to which the applicant has—

(1) Committed facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel, and other resources to supplement the grant and enhance project services (6 points);

(2) Established administrative and academic policies that enhance participants' retention at the institution and improve their chances of graduating from the institution (6 points);

(3) Demonstrated a commitment to minimize the dependence on student loans in developing financial aid packages for project participants by committing institutional resources to the extent possible (2 points); and

(4) Assured the full cooperation and support of the Admissions, Student Aid, Registrar and data collection and analysis components of the institution (2 points).

(e) *Quality of personnel* (9 points). To determine the quality of personnel the applicant plans to use, the Secretary

looks for information that shows–

(1) The qualifications required of the project director, including formal education and training in fields related to the objectives of the project, and experience in designing, managing, or implementing SSS or similar projects (3 points);

(2) The qualifications required of other personnel to be used in the project, including formal education, training, and work experience in fields related to the objectives of the project (3 points); and

(3) The quality of the applicant's plan for employing personnel who have succeeded in overcoming barriers similar to those confronting the project's target population (3 points).

(f) *Budget* (5 points). The Secretary evaluates the extent to which the project budget is reasonable, cost-effective, and adequate to support the project.

(g) *Evaluation plan* (8 points). The Secretary evaluates the quality of the evaluation plan for the project on the basis of the extent to which–

(1) The applicant's methods for evaluation–

(i) Are appropriate to the project and include both quantitative and qualitative evaluation measures (2 points); and

(ii) Examine in specific and measurable ways, using appropriate baseline data, the success of the project in improving academic achievement, retention and graduation of project participants (2 points); and

(3) The applicant intends to use the results of an evaluation to make programmatic changes based upon the results of project evaluation (4 points).

(h) *Quality of the project design* (5 points). In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale (as defined in this notice).

Note: Under the "Objectives" selection criterion in paragraph (b) above, applicants must address the standardized objectives in 34 CFR 646.21(b)(1) through (4) related to the participants' academic achievements, including retention, good academic standing, graduation, and transfer rates. The graduation objective should be measured by cohorts of students who become SSS Program participants in each year of the project and should be compared to a relevant and valid comparison group. The graduation, certificate, and transfer rates for two-year institutions should be measured over a four-year period and that of four-year institutions should be measured over a six-year period.

2. Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant



conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

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

For this competition, a panel of non-Federal reviewers will review each application in accordance with the selection criteria in 34 CFR 646.21, 34 CFR 75.210, and the competitive preference priorities. The individual scores of the reviewers will be added and the sum divided by the number of reviewers to determine the peer review score received in the review process. Additionally, in accordance with 34 CFR 646.22, the Secretary will award prior experience points to applicants that have conducted an SSS Program project within the last three Federal government fiscal years, based on their documented experience. Prior experience points, if any, will be added to the application's averaged reader score to determine the total score for each application. If there are insufficient funds for all applications with the same total scores, the Secretary will choose among the tied applications so as to serve geographical areas that have been underserved by the SSS Program.

3. Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions: Consistent with 2 CFR 200.205, before awarding grants under this competition, the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 3474.10, the Secretary may impose specific 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.

4. Integrity and Performance System: If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), under 2 CFR 200.205(a)(2), we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards--that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant--before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through the System for Award Management. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

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

#### VI. Award Administration Information

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

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

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

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

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

4. Reporting: (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multiyear award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the

most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to [www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html](http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).

(c) Under 34 CFR 75.250(b), the Secretary may provide a grantee with additional funding for data collection analysis and reporting. In this case the Secretary establishes a data collection period.

5. Performance Measures: The success of the SSS Program is measured by the percentage of SSS participants that complete a program of postsecondary education. The following performance measures have been developed to track progress toward achieving program success:

(a) The percentage of first-time, full-time freshmen SSS Program participants who are still enrolled at the beginning of the next academic year or have earned a degree at a two-year grantee institution or transferred from a two-year to a four-year institution.

(b) The percentage of first-time, full-time freshmen SSS participants at four-year institutions who received a bachelor's degree from the grantee institution (Note: The Department will calculate this measure based both on 100 percent and 150 percent of normal completion time).

(c) The percentage of first-time, full-time SSS

participants at two-year institutions who received an associate's degree and/or transferred to a four-year institution (Note: The Department will calculate this measure based both on 100 percent and 150 percent of normal completion time).

(d) The cost per successful outcome.

All SSS Program grantees are required to submit an annual performance report documenting the persistence and degree attainment of their participants. Since students take different amounts of time to complete their degrees, multiple years of performance report data are needed to determine the degree completion rates of SSS Program participants. The Department will aggregate the data provided in the annual performance reports from all grantees to determine the overall program accomplishment level.

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

In making a continuation award, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those

applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

#### VII. 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.

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

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

Dated:

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_

Robert L. King,

*Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.*



## AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

The SSS Program is authorized by the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008. An electronic version of the HEOA's amendments to the HEA may be found at the Department's website at the following address: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/statute-trio-gu.pdf>.

Please note that the official compilation of Federal law is the United States Code which is available from the Government Printing Office.

### **The Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008**

#### **Title IV Student Assistance**

#### **Subpart 2—Federal Early Outreach and Student Services Programs**

#### **CHAPTER 1—FEDERAL TRIO PROGRAMS Sec. 403 (U.S. Code 1070a)**

(a) GRANTS AND CONTRACTS AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary shall, in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, carry out a program of making grants and contracts designed to identify qualified individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, to prepare them for a program of postsecondary education, to provide support services for such students who are pursuing programs of postsecondary education, to motivate and prepare students for doctoral programs, and to train individuals serving or preparing for service in programs and projects so designed.

(b) RECIPIENTS, DURATION, AND SIZE.—

(1) RECIPIENTS.— For the purposes described in subsection (a), the Secretary is authorized, without regard to section 3709 of the Revised Statutes (41 U.S.C. 5), to make grants to, and contracts with, institutions of higher education, public and private agencies and organizations, including community-based organizations with experience in serving disadvantaged youth, combinations of such institutions, agencies and organizations, and secondary schools, for planning, developing, or carrying out one or more of the services assisted under this chapter.

(2) DURATION.— Grants or contracts made under this chapter shall be awarded for a period of 5 years, except that—

(A) in order to synchronize the awarding of grants for programs under this chapter, the Secretary may, under such terms as are consistent with the purposes of this chapter, provide a one-time, limited extension of the length of such an award;

(B) grants made under section 402G shall be awarded for a period of 2 years; and

(C) grants under section 402H shall be awarded for a period determined by the Secretary.

(3) MINIMUM GRANTS.— Unless the institution or agency requests a smaller amount, an individual grant authorized under this chapter shall be awarded in an amount that is not less than \$200,000, except that an individual grant authorized under section 402G shall be awarded in an amount that is not less than \$170,000.

(c) PROCEDURES FOR AWARDING GRANTS AND CONTRACTS.—

(1) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.— An eligible entity that desires to receive a grant or contract under this chapter shall submit an application to the Secretary in such manner and form, and containing such information and assurances, as the Secretary may reasonably require.

(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—

(A) PRIOR EXPERIENCE.—In making grants under this chapter, the Secretary shall consider each applicant's prior experience of "high quality service delivery," as determined under subsection (f), under the particular program for which funds are sought. The level of consideration given the factor of prior experience shall not vary from the level of consideration given such factor during fiscal years 1994 through 1997, except that grants made under section 402H shall not be given prior experience consideration.

(B) PARTICIPANT NEED.— In making grants under this chapter, the Secretary shall consider the number, percentages, and needs of eligible participants in the area, institution of higher education, or secondary school to be served to aid such participants in preparing for, enrolling in, or succeeding in postsecondary education, as appropriate to the particular program for which the eligible entity is applying.

(3) ORDER OF AWARDS; PROGRAM FRAUD.—

(A) Except with respect to grants made under sections 402G and 402H and as provided in subparagraph the Secretary shall award grants and contracts under this chapter in the order of the scores received by the application for such grant or contract in the peer review process required under paragraph (4) and adjusted for prior experience in accordance with paragraph (2) of this subsection.

(B) The Secretary shall not provide assistance to a program otherwise eligible for assistance under this chapter, if the Secretary has determined that such program has involved the fraudulent use of funds under this chapter.

(4) PEER REVIEW PROCESS.—

(A) The Secretary shall ensure that, to the extent practicable, members of groups underrepresented in higher education, including African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, and Native American Pacific Islanders (including Native Hawaiians), are represented as readers of applications submitted under this chapter. The Secretary shall also ensure that persons from urban and rural backgrounds are represented as readers.

(B) The Secretary shall ensure that each application submitted under this chapter is read by at least three readers who are not employees of the Federal Government (other than as readers of applications).

(5) NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS AND CONTRACTS.—

The Secretary shall not limit the number of applications submitted by an entity under any program authorized under this chapter if the additional applications describe programs serving different populations or different campuses.

(6) COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS.—

The Secretary shall encourage coordination of programs assisted under this chapter with other programs for disadvantaged students operated by the sponsoring institution or agency, regardless of the funding source of such programs. The Secretary shall not limit an entity's eligibility to receive funds under this chapter because such entity sponsors a program similar to the program to be assisted under this chapter, regardless of the funding source of such program. The Secretary shall permit the Director of a program receiving funds under this chapter to administer one or more additional programs for disadvantaged students operated by the sponsoring institution or agency, regardless of the funding sources of such programs. The Secretary shall, as appropriate, require each applicant for funds under the programs authorized by this chapter to identify and make available services under such program, including mentoring, tutoring, and other services provided by such program, to foster care youth (including youth in foster care and youth who have left foster care after reaching age 13) or to homeless children and youths as defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

(7) APPLICATION STATUS.— The Secretary shall inform each entity operating programs under this chapter regarding the status of their application for continued funding at least 8 months prior to the expiration of the grant or contract. The Secretary, in the case of an entity that is continuing to operate a successful program under this chapter, shall ensure that the startup date for a new grant or contract for such program immediately follows the termination of the preceding grant or contract so that no interruption of funding occurs for such successful applicants. The Secretary shall inform each entity requesting assistance under this chapter for a new program regarding the status of their application at least 8 months prior to the proposed startup date of such program.

(8) REVIEW AND NOTIFICATION BY THE SECRETARY—

(A) GUIDANCE.— Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, the Secretary shall issue Non regulatory guidance regarding the rights and responsibilities of applicants with respect to the application and evaluation process for programs and projects assisted under this chapter, including applicant access to peer review comments. The guidance shall describe the procedures for the submission, processing, and scoring of applications for grants under this chapter, including--

- (i) the responsibility of applicants to submit materials in a timely manner and in accordance with the processes established by the Secretary under the authority of the General Education Provisions Act;
- (ii) steps the Secretary will take to ensure that the materials submitted by applicants are processed in a proper and timely manner;

- (iii) steps the Secretary will take to ensure that prior experience points for high quality service delivery are awarded in an accurate and transparent manner;
- (iv) steps the Secretary will take to ensure the quality and integrity of the peer review process, including assurances that peer reviewers will consider applications for grants under this chapter in a thorough and complete manner consistent with applicable Federal law; and
- (v) steps the Secretary will take to ensure that the final score of an application, including prior experience points for high quality service delivery and points awarded through the peer review process, is determined in an accurate and transparent manner.

(B) UPDATED GUIDANCE.— Not later than 45 days before the date of the commencement of each competition for a grant under this chapter that is held after the expiration of the 180-day period described in subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall update and publish the guidance described in such subparagraph.

(C) REVIEW.—

- (i) IN GENERAL.— With respect to any competition for a grant under this chapter, an applicant may request a review by the Secretary if the applicant—
  - (I) administrative, or scoring error made by the Department, an agent of the Department, or a peer reviewer, with respect to the scoring or has evidence of a specific technical, processing of a submitted application; and
  - (II) has otherwise met all of the requirements for submission of the application.
- (ii) TECHNICAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE ERROR.— In the case of evidence of a technical or administrative error listed in clause (i) (I), the Secretary shall review such evidence and provide a timely response to the applicant. If the Secretary determines that a technical or administrative error was made by the Department or an agent of the Department, the application of the applicant shall be reconsidered in the peer review process for the applicable grant competition.
- (iii) SCORING ERROR.— In the case of evidence of a scoring error listed in clause (i)(I), when the error relates to either prior experience points for high quality service delivery or to the final score of an application, the Secretary shall—
  - (I) review such evidence and provide a timely response to the applicant; and
  - (II) if the Secretary determines that a scoring error was made by the Department or a peer reviewer, adjust the prior experience points or final score of the application appropriately and quickly so as not to interfere with the

timely awarding of grants for the applicable grant competition.

(iv) ERROR IN PEER REVIEW PROCESS.

(I) REFERRAL TO SECONDARY REVIEW.— In the case of a peer review process error listed in clause (i)(I), if the Secretary determines that points were withheld for criteria not required in Federal statute, regulation, or guidance governing a program assisted under this chapter or the application for a grant for such program, or determines that information pertaining to selection criteria was wrongly determined missing from an application by a peer reviewer, then the Secretary shall refer the application to a secondary review panel.

(II) TIMELY REVIEW; REPLACEMENT SCORE.— The secondary review panel described in subclause (I) shall conduct a secondary review in a timely fashion, and the score resulting from the secondary review shall replace the score from the initial peer review.

(III) COMPOSITION OF SECONDARY REVIEW PANEL.— The secondary review panel shall be composed of reviewers each of whom—

(aa) did not review the application in the original peer review;

(bb) is a member of the cohort of peer reviewers for the grant program that is the subject of such secondary review; and

(cc) to extent practicable, has conducted peer reviews in not less than two previous competitions for the grant program that is the subject of such secondary review.

(IV) FINAL SCORE.— The final peer review score of an application subject to a secondary review under this clause shall be adjusted appropriately and quickly using the score awarded by the secondary review panel, so as not to interfere with the timely awarding of grants for the applicable grant competition.

(V) QUALIFICATION FOR SECONDARY REVIEW.— To qualify for a secondary review under this clause, an applicant shall have evidence of a scoring error and demonstrate that—

(aa) points were withheld for criteria not required in statute, regulation, or guidance governing the Federal TRIO programs or the application for a grant for such programs; or

(bb) information pertaining to selection criteria was wrongly determined to be missing from the application.

(v) FINALITY.—

(I) GENERAL.— A determination by the Secretary under clause (i),(ii), or (iii) shall not be reviewable by any officer or employee of the Department.

(II) SCORING.— The score awarded by a secondary review panel under clause (iv) shall not be reviewable by any officer or employee of the Department other than the Secretary.

(vi) FUNDING OF APPLICATIONS WITH CERTAIN ADJUSTED SCORES.— To the extent feasible based on the availability of appropriations, the Secretary shall fund applications with scores that are adjusted upward under clauses (ii), (iii), and (iv) to equal or exceed the minimum cut off score for the applicable grant competition.

(d) OUTREACH.—

(1) IN GENERAL.— The Secretary shall conduct outreach activities to ensure that entities eligible for assistance under this chapter submit applications proposing programs that serve geographic areas and eligible populations which have been underserved by the programs assisted under this chapter.

(2) NOTICE.— In carrying out the provisions of paragraph (1), the Secretary shall notify the entities described in subsection (b) of the availability of assistance under this subsection not less than 120 days prior to the deadline for submission of applications under this chapter and shall consult national, State, and regional organizations about candidates for notification.

(3) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.— The Secretary shall provide technical training to applicants for projects and programs authorized under this chapter. The Secretary shall give priority to serving programs and projects that serve geographic areas and eligible populations which have been underserved by the programs assisted under this chapter. Technical training activities shall include the provision of information on authorizing legislation, goals and objectives of the program, required activities, eligibility requirements, the application process and application deadlines, and assistance in the development of program proposals and the completion of program applications. Such training shall be furnished at conferences, seminars, and workshops to be conducted at not less than 10 sites throughout the United States to ensure that all areas of the United States with large concentrations of eligible participants a reserved.

(4) SPECIAL RULE.— The Secretary may contract with eligible entities to conduct the outreach activities described in this subsection.

(e) DOCUMENTATION OF STATUS AS A LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUAL.—

(1) Except in the case of an independent student, as defined in section 480(d),

documentation of an individual's status pursuant to subsection (h)(4) shall be made by providing the Secretary with—

- (A) A signed statement from the individual's parent or legal guardian;
- (B) Verification from another governmental source;
- (C) A signed financial aid application; or
- (D) A signed United States or Puerto Rico income tax return.

(2) In the case of an independent student, as defined in section 480(d), documentation of an individual's status pursuant to subsection (h)(4) shall be made by providing the Secretary with—

- (A) A signed statement from the individual;
- (B) Verification from another governmental source;
- (C) A signed financial aid application; or
- (D) A signed United States or Puerto Rico income tax return.

(3) Notwithstanding this subsection and subsection (h)(4), individuals who are foster care youth (including youth in foster care and youth who have left foster care after reaching age 13),\* or homeless children and youths as defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, shall be eligible to participate in programs under sections 402B, 402C, 402D, and 402F.

*\*appears to be a typographical error -- that the Congress intended to include youth who left foster care after reaching age 18.*

(f) OUTCOME CRITERIA.—

(1) USE FOR PRIOR EXPERIENCE DETERMINATION.— For competitions for grants under this chapter that begin on or after January 1, 2009, the Secretary shall determine

an eligible entity's prior experience of high quality service delivery, as required under subsection (c)(2), based on the outcome criteria described in paragraphs (2) and (3).

(2) DISAGGREGATION OF RELEVANT DATA.— The outcome criteria under this subsection shall be disaggregated by low-income students, first generation college students, and individuals with disabilities, in the schools and institutions of higher education served by the program to be evaluated.

(3) CONTENTS OF OUTCOME CRITERIA.— The outcome criteria under this subsection shall measure, annually and for longer periods, the quality and effectiveness of programs authorized under this chapter and shall include the following:

- (A) For programs authorized under section 402B, the extent to which the eligible entity met or exceeded the entity's objectives established in the entity's application for such program regarding—
  - (i) the delivery of service to a total number of students served by the program;
  - (ii) the continued secondary school enrollment of such students;
  - (iii) the graduation of such students from secondary school with a regular secondary school diploma in the standard number of years;
  - (iv) the completion by such students of a rigorous secondary school program of study that will make such students eligible for programs such as the Academic Competitiveness Grants Program;
  - (v) the enrollment of such students in an institution of higher

education; and

(vi) to the extent practicable, the postsecondary education completion of such students.

(B) For programs authorized under section 402C, the extent to which the eligible entity met or exceeded the entity's objectives for such program regarding—

(i) the delivery of service to a total number of students served by the program, as agreed upon by the entity and the Secretary for the period;

(ii) such students school performance, as measured by the grade point average or its equivalent;

(iii) such student's academic performance, as measured by standardized tests, including tests required by the students State;

(iv) the retention in, and graduation from, secondary school of such students;

(v) the completion by such students of a rigorous secondary school program of study that will make such students eligible for programs such as the Academic Competitiveness Grants Program;

(vi) the enrollment of such students in an institution of higher education; and

(vii) to the extent practicable, the postsecondary education completion of such students.

(C) For programs authorized under section 402D—

(i) the extent to which the eligible entity met or exceeded the entity's objectives regarding the retention in postsecondary education of the students served by the program;

(ii)(I) in the case of an entity that is an institution of higher education offering a baccalaureate degree, the extent to which the entity met or exceeded the entity's objectives regarding the percentage of such students completion of the degree programs in which such students were enrolled; or

(II) in the case of an entity that is an institution of higher education that does not offer a baccalaureate degree, the extent to which such students met or exceeded the entity's objectives regarding—

(aa) the completion of a degree or certificate by such students; and

(bb) the transfer of such students to institutions of higher education that offer baccalaureate degrees;

(iii) the extent to which the entity met or exceeded the entity's objectives regarding the delivery of service to a total number of students, as agreed upon by the entity and the Secretary for the period; and

(iv) the extent to which the entity met or exceeded the entity's objectives regarding the students served under the program who remain in good academic standing.

(D) For programs authorized under section 402E, the extent to which the entity met or exceeded the entity's objectives for such program regarding—

(i) the delivery of service to a total number of students served by the



program, as agreed upon by the entity and the Secretary for the period;

(ii) the provision of appropriate scholarly and research activities for the students served by the program;

(iii) the acceptance and enrollment of such students in graduate programs; and

(iv) the continued enrollment of such students in graduate study and the attainment of doctoral degrees by former program participants.

(E) For programs authorized under section 402F, the extent to which the entity met or exceeded the entity's objectives for such program regarding—

(i) the enrollment of students without a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, who were served by the program, in programs leading to such diploma or equivalent;

(ii) the enrollment of secondary school graduates who were served by the program in programs of postsecondary education;

(iii) the delivery of service to a total number of students served by the program, as agreed upon by the entity and the Secretary for the period; and

(iv) the provision of assistance to students served by the program in completing financial aid applications and college admission applications.

(4) MEASUREMENT OF PROGRESS.—In order to determine the extent to which each outcome criterion described in paragraph (2) or (3) is met or exceeded, the Secretary shall compare the agreed upon target for the criterion, as established in the eligible entity's application approved by the Secretary, with the results for the criterion, measured as of the last day of the applicable time period for the determination for the outcome criterion.

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.— For the purpose of making grants and contracts under this chapter, there are authorized to be appropriated \$900,000,000 for fiscal year 2009 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the five succeeding fiscal years. Of the amount appropriated under this chapter, the Secretary may use no more than one half of 1 percent of such amount to obtain additional qualified readers and additional staff to review applications, to increase the level of oversight monitoring, to support impact studies, program assessments and reviews, and to provide technical assistance to potential applicants and current grantees. In expending these funds, the Secretary shall give priority to the additional administrative requirements provided in the Higher Education Amendments of 1992, to outreach activities, and to obtaining additional readers.

(h) DEFINITIONS.—For the purpose of this chapter:

(1) FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT.— The term “first generation college student” means—

(A) An individual both of whose parents did not complete a baccalaureate degree; or

(B) In the case of any individual who regularly resided with and received support from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree.

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

(3) **DIFFERENT CAMPUS.**— The term ‘different campus’ means a site of an institution of higher education that—

(A) is geographically apart from the main campus of the institution;

(B) is permanent in nature ;and

(C) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential.

(4) **DIFFERENT POPULATION.**— The term ‘different population’ means a group of individuals that an eligible entity desires to serve through an application for a grant under this chapter, and that –

(A) is separate and distinct from any other population that the entity has applied for a grant under this chapter to serve;

or

(B) while sharing some of the same needs as another population that the eligible entity has applied for a grant under this chapter to serve, has distinct needs for specialized services.

(5) **VETERAN ELIGIBILITY.**— No veteran shall be deemed ineligible to participate in any program under this chapter by reason of such individual’s age who —

(A) served on active duty for a period of more than 180 days, and was discharged or released there from under conditions other than dishonorable;

(B) served on active duty, and was discharged or released there from because of a service connected disability;

(C) was a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces called to active duty for a period of more than 30 days; or

(D) was a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of a contingency operation (as that term is defined in section 101(a)(13) of title 10, United States Code) on or after September 11, 2001.

\* \* \*

## **Sec. 402D HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 20 U.S.C. 1070a–14 STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **(a) Program authority**

The Secretary shall carry out a program to be known as student support services which shall be designed—

(1) to increase college retention and graduation rates for eligible students;

(2) to increase the transfer rates of eligible students from 2-year to 4-year institutions;

(3) to foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, students with disabilities, students who are homeless

children and youths (as such term is defined in section 11434a of title 42), students who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system, or other disconnected students; and

- (4) to improve the financial literacy and economic literacy of students, including—
  - (A) basic personal income, household money management, and financial planning skills; and
  - (B) basic economic decision-making skills.

**(b) Required services**

A project assisted under this section shall provide—

- (1) academic tutoring, directly or through other services provided by the institution, to enable students to complete postsecondary courses, which may include instruction in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, science, and other subjects;
- (2) advice and assistance in postsecondary course selection;
- (3)(A) information on both the full range of Federal student financial aid programs and benefits (including Federal Pell Grant awards and loan forgiveness) and resources for locating public and private scholarships; and
  - (B) assistance in completing financial aid applications, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid described in section 1090(a) of this title;
- (4) education or counseling services designed to improve the financial literacy and economic literacy of students, including financial planning for postsecondary education;
- (5) activities designed to assist students participating in the project in applying for admission to, and obtaining financial assistance for enrollment in, graduate and professional programs; and
- (6) activities designed to assist students enrolled in two-year institutions of higher education in applying for admission to, and obtaining financial assistance for enrollment in, a four-year program of postsecondary education.

**(c) Permissible services**

A project assisted under this section may provide services such as—

- (1) individualized counseling for personal, career, and academic matters provided by assigned counselors;
- (2) information, activities, and instruction designed to acquaint students participating in the project with the range of career options available to the students;
- (3) exposure to cultural events and academic programs not usually available to disadvantaged students;
- (4) mentoring programs involving faculty or upper class students, or a combination thereof;
- (5) securing temporary housing during breaks in the academic year for—
  - (A) students who are homeless children and youths (as such term is defined in section 11434a of title 42) or were formerly homeless children and youths; and
  - (B) students who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system; and
- (6) programs and activities as described in subsection (b) or paragraphs (1) through (4) of this subsection that are specially designed for students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in

postsecondary education, students with disabilities, students who are homeless children and youths (as such term is defined in section 11434a of title 42), students who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system, or other disconnected students.

**(d) Special rule**

**(1) Use for student aid**

A recipient of a grant that undertakes any of the permissible services identified in subsection (c) may, in addition, use such funds to provide grant aid to students. A grant provided under this paragraph shall not exceed the Federal Pell Grant amount, determined under section 1070a(b)(2)(A) of this title, for which a student is eligible, or be less than the minimum Federal Pell Grant amount described in section 1070a(b)(4) of this title, for the current academic year. In making grants to students under this subsection, an institution shall ensure that adequate consultation takes place between the student support service program office and the institution's financial aid office.

**(2) Eligible students**

For purposes of receiving grant aid under this subsection, eligible students shall be current participants in the student support services program offered by the institution and be—

(A) students who are in their first 2 years of postsecondary education and who are receiving Federal Pell Grants under subpart 1 of part A of this subchapter; or

(B) students who have completed their first 2 years of postsecondary education and who are receiving Federal Pell Grants under subpart 1 of part A of this subchapter if the institution demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that

- (i) these students are at high risk of dropping out; and
- (ii) it will first meet the needs of all its eligible first- and second-year students for services under this paragraph.

**(3) Determination of need**

A grant provided to a student under paragraph (1) shall not be considered in determining that student's need for grant or work assistance under this subchapter and part C of subchapter I of chapter 34 of title 42, except that in no case shall the total amount of student financial assistance awarded to a student under this subchapter exceed that student's cost of attendance, as defined in section 1087ll of this title.

**(4) Matching required**

A recipient of a grant who uses such funds for the purpose described in paragraph (1) shall match the funds used for such purpose, in cash, from non-Federal funds, in an amount that is not less than 33 percent of the total amount of funds used for that purpose. This paragraph shall not apply to any grant recipient that is an institution of higher education eligible to receive funds under part A or B of subchapter III or subchapter V of this chapter.

**(5) Reservation**

In no event may a recipient use more than 20 percent of the funds received under this section for grant aid.

**(6) Supplement, not supplant**

Funds received by a grant recipient that are used under this subsection shall be used to supplement, and not supplant, non-Federal funds expended for student support services programs.

**(e) Requirements for approval of applications**

In approving applications for projects under this section for any fiscal year, the Secretary shall—

(1) require an assurance that not less than two-thirds of the persons participating in the project proposed to be carried out under any application—

(A) be individuals with disabilities; or

(B) be low-income individuals who are first generation college students;

(2) require an assurance that the remaining students participating in the project proposed to be carried out under any application be low-income individuals, first generation college students, or individuals with disabilities;

(3) require an assurance that not less than one-third of the individuals with disabilities participating in the project be low-income individuals;

(4) require that there be a determination by the institution, with respect to each participant in such project, that the participant has a need for academic support in order to pursue successfully a program of education beyond secondary school;

(5) require that such participants be enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the institution which is the recipient of the grant or contract; and

(6) consider, in addition to such other criteria as the Secretary may prescribe, the institution's effort, and where applicable past history, in—

(A) providing sufficient financial assistance to meet the full financial need of each student in the project; and

(B) maintaining the loan burden of each such student at a manageable level.

## SSS PROGRAM REGULATIONS

### TITLE 34—EDUCATION CHAPTER VI—OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

#### PART 646—STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

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**Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 1070a-14, unless otherwise noted.**

**Source: 61 FR 38537, July 24, 1996, unless otherwise noted.**

## **Subpart A—General**

### **§646.1 What is the Student Support Services Program?**

The Student Support Services Program provides grants for projects designed to—

- (a) Increase the college retention and graduation rates of eligible students;
- (b) Increase the transfer rate of eligible students from two-year to four-year institutions; and
- (c) Foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, individuals with disabilities, homeless children and youth, foster care youth, or other disconnected students; and
- (d) Improve the financial and economic literacy of students in areas such as—
  - (1) Basic personal income, household money management, and financial planning skills; and
  - (2) Basic economic decision-making skills.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 1070a-14)

[61 FR 38537, July 24, 1996, as amended at 75 FR 65790, Oct. 26, 2010]

### **§646.2 Who is eligible to receive a grant?**

An institution of higher education or a combination of institutions of higher education is eligible to receive a grant to carry out a Student Support Services project.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-14)

### **§646.3 Who is eligible to participate in a Student Support Services project?**

A student is eligible to participate in a Student Support Services project if the student meets all of the following requirements:

- (a) Is a citizen or national of the United States or meets the residency requirements for Federal student financial assistance.
- (b) Is enrolled at the grantee institution or accepted for enrollment in the next academic term at that institution.
- (c) Has a need for academic support, as determined by the grantee, in order to pursue successfully a postsecondary educational program.
- (d) Is—
  - (1) A low-income individual;
  - (2) A first generation college student; or
  - (3) An individual with disabilities. (Authority: 20

U.S.C.1070a-14)

### **§646.4 What activities and services does a project provide?**

- (a) A Student Support Services project must provide the following services:
  - (1) Academic tutoring, directly or through other services provided by the institution, to enable students to complete postsecondary courses, which may include instruction in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, science, and other subjects.
  - (2) Advice and assistance in postsecondary course selection.
  - (3)(i) Information on both the full range of Federal student financial aid programs and benefits (including Federal Pell Grant awards and loan forgiveness) and resources for locating public and private scholarships; and
  - (ii) Assistance in completing financial aid applications, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
  - (4) Education or counseling services designed to improve the financial and economic literacy of students, including financial planning for postsecondary education.



(5) Activities designed to assist participants enrolled in four-year institutions of higher education in applying for admission to, and obtaining financial assistance for enrollment in, graduate and professional programs.

(6) Activities designed to assist students enrolled in two-year institutions of higher education in applying for admission to, and obtaining financial assistance for enrollment in, a four-year program of postsecondary education.

(b) A Student Support Services project may provide the following services:

(1) Individualized counseling for personal, career, and academic matters provided by assigned counselors.

(2) Information, activities, and instruction designed to acquaint students participating in the project with the range of career options available to the students.

(3) Exposure to cultural events and academic programs not usually available to disadvantaged students.

(4) Mentoring programs involving faculty or upper class students, or a combination thereof.

(5) Securing temporary housing during breaks in the academic year for—

(i) Students who are homeless children and youths or were formerly homeless children and youths; and

(ii) Foster care youths.

(6) Programs and activities as described in paragraph (a) of this section or paragraphs (b)(1) through (b)(4) of this section that are specially designed for students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, students who are individuals with disabilities, students who are homeless children and youths, students who are foster care youth, or other disconnected students.

(7) Other activities designed to meet the purposes of the Student Support Services Program in §646.1.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-14)

[75 FR 65790, Oct. 26, 2010]

#### **§646.5 How long is a project period?**

A project period under the Student Support Services program is five years.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11)

[75 FR 65790, Oct. 26, 2010]

#### **§646.6 What regulations apply?**

The following regulations apply to the Student Support Services Program:

(a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75 (except for §§75.215 through 75.221), 77, 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99.

(b) The regulations in this part 646.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 1070a-

14)

[61 FR 38537, July 24, 1996, as amended at 75 FR 65790, Oct. 26, 2010]

#### **§646.7 What definitions apply?**

(a) *Definitions in EDGAR.* The following terms used in this part are defined in 34 CFR

77.1: Applicant

Application

Award

Budget

Budget Period

Department

EDGAR

Equipment

Facilities

Fiscal year

Grant

Grant Period

Grantee

Project

Project period

Public

Secretary

Supplies

(b) *Other definitions.* The following definitions also apply to this part:

*Academic need* with reference to a student means a student whom the grantee determines needs one or more of the services stated under §646.4 to succeed in a postsecondary educational program.

*Combination of institutions of higher education* means two or more institutions of higher education that have entered into a cooperative agreement for the purpose of carrying out a common objective, or an entity designated or created by a group of institutions of higher education for the purpose of carrying out a common objective on their behalf.

*Different campus* means a site of an institution of higher education that—

- (1) Is geographically apart from the main campus of the institution;
- (2) Is permanent in nature; and
- (3) Offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential.

*Different population* means a group of individuals that an eligible entity desires to serve through an application for a grant under the Student Support Services program and that—

- (1) Is separate and distinct from any other population that the entity has applied for a grant to serve; or
- (2) While sharing some of the same needs as another population that the eligible entity has applied for a grant to serve, has distinct needs for specialized services.

*Financial and economic literacy* means knowledge about personal financial decision-making, which may include but is not limited to knowledge about—

- (1) Personal and family budget planning;
- (2) Understanding credit building principles to meet long-term and short-term goals (*e.g.*, loan to debt ratio, credit scoring, negative impacts on credit scores);
- (3) Cost planning for postsecondary or postbaccalaureate education (*e.g.*, spending, saving, personal budgeting);
- (4) College cost of attendance (*e.g.*, public vs. private, tuition vs. fees, personal costs);
- (5) Financial assistance (*e.g.*, searches, application processes, differences between private and government loans, assistanceships); and
- (6) Assistance in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

*First generation college student* means—

- (1) A student neither of whose natural or adoptive parents received a baccalaureate degree;
- (2) A student who, prior to the age of 18, regularly resided with and received support from only one parent and whose supporting parent did not receive a baccalaureate degree; or
- (3) An individual who, prior to the age of 18, did not regularly reside with or receive support from a natural or an adoptive parent.

*Foster care youth* means youth who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system.

*Homeless children and youth* means persons defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 1143a).

*Individual with a disability* means a person who has a disability, as that term is defined in section 12102 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*).

*Institution of higher education* means an educational institution as defined in sections 101 and 102 of the Act.

*Limited English proficiency* with reference to an individual, means a person whose native language is other than English and who has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to deny that individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms in which English is the language of instruction.

*Low-income individual* means an individual whose family's taxable income did not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level amount in the calendar year preceding the year in which the individual initially participated in the project. The poverty level amount is determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

*Participant* means an individual who—

- (1) Is determined to be eligible to participate in the project under §646.3; and
- (2) Receives project services that the grantee has determined to be sufficient to increase the individual's chances for success in a postsecondary educational program.

*Sufficient financial assistance* means the amount of financial aid offered a Student Support Services student, inclusive of Federal, State, local, private, and institutional aid which, together with parent or student contributions, is equal to the cost of attendance as determined by a financial aid officer at the institution.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 1070a-14)

[61 FR 38537, July 24, 1996, as amended at 75 FR 65790, Oct. 26, 2010]

### **Subpart B—How Does One Apply for an Award?**

Source: 75 FR 65791, Oct. 26, 2010, unless otherwise noted.

#### **§646.10 How many applications may an eligible applicant submit and for what different populations may an eligible application be submitted?**

- (a) An eligible applicant may submit more than one application as long as each application describes a project that serves a different campus or a designated different population.
- (b) For each grant competition, the Secretary designates, in the Federal Register notice inviting applications and other published application materials for the competition, the different populations for which an eligible entity may submit a separate application.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 1070a-14; 20 U.S.C. 1221e-3)

#### **§646.11 What assurances and other information must an applicant include in an application?**

- (a) An applicant must assure the Secretary in the application that—
  - (1) Not less than two-thirds of the project participants will be—
    - (i) Low-income individuals who are first generation college students; or
    - (ii) Individuals with disabilities;
  - (2) The remaining project participants will be low-income individuals, first generation college students, or individuals with disabilities; and
  - (3) Not less than one-third of the individuals with disabilities served also will be low-income individuals.

(b) The applicant must describe in the application its efforts, and where applicable, past history, in—

(1) Providing sufficient financial assistance to meet the full financial need of each student in the project; and

(2) Maintaining the loan burden of each student in the project at a manageable level.

(c) The applicant must assure the Secretary in the application that a student will not be served by more than one SSS project at any one time and that the SSS project will collaborate with other SSS and McNair projects and other State and institutional programs at the grantee-institution so that more students can be served.

(d) The applicant must assure the Secretary in the application that the institution's financial aid office will consult with the SSS project with respect to which SSS participants should receive grant aid and the amount of the grant aid awards.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-14)

### **Subpart C—How Does the Secretary Make a Grant?**

#### **§646.20 How does the Secretary decide which new grants to make?**

(a) The Secretary evaluates an application for a new grant as follows:

(1)(i) The Secretary evaluates the application on the basis of the selection criteria in §646.21.

(ii) The maximum score for all the criteria in §646.21 is 100 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses with the criterion.

(2)(i) If an application for a new grant proposes to continue to serve substantially the same population and campus that the applicant is serving under an expiring grant, the Secretary evaluates the applicant's prior experience of high quality service delivery under the expiring grant on the basis of the outcome criteria in §646.22.

(ii) The maximum total score for all the criteria in §646.22 is 15 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses with the criterion.

(iii) The Secretary evaluates the PE of an applicant for each of the three project years that the Secretary designates in the Federal Register notice inviting applications and the other published application materials for the competition.

(iv) An applicant may earn up to 15 PE points for each of the designated project years for which annual performance report data are available.

(v) The final PE score is the average of the scores for the three project years assessed.

(b) The Secretary makes new grants in rank order on the basis of the applications' total scores under paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this section.

(c) If the total scores of two or more applications are the same and there is insufficient money available to fully fund them both after funding the higher-ranked applications, the Secretary chooses among the tied applications so as to serve geographic areas that have been underserved by the Student Support Services Program.

(d) The Secretary does not make a new grant to an applicant if the applicant's prior project involved the fraudulent use of program funds.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 1070a-14)

[61 FR 38537, July 24, 1996, as amended at 75 FR 65791, Oct. 26, 2010]

### **§646.21 What selection criteria does the Secretary use to evaluate an application?**

The Secretary uses the following criteria to evaluate an application for a new grant:

(a) *Need for the project* (24 points). The Secretary evaluates the need for a Student Support Services project proposed at the applicant institution on the basis of the extent to which the application contains clear evidence of—

(1) (8 points) A high number or percentage, or both, of students enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the applicant institution who meet the eligibility requirements of §646.3;

(2) (8 points) The academic and other problems that eligible students encounter at the applicant institution; and

(3) (8 points) The differences between eligible Student Support Services students compared to an appropriate group, based on the following indicators:

(i) Retention and graduation rates.

(ii) Grade point averages.

(iii) Graduate and professional school enrollment rates (four-year colleges only).

(iv) Transfer rates from two-year to four-year institutions (two-year colleges only).

(b) *Objectives* (8 points). The Secretary evaluates the quality of the applicant's proposed objectives in the following areas on the basis of the extent to which they are both ambitious, as related to the need data provided under paragraph (a) of this section, and attainable, given the project's plan of operation, budget, and other resources.

(1) (3 points) Retention in postsecondary education.

(2) (2 points) In good academic standing at grantee institution.

(3) Two-year institutions only. (i) (1 point) Certificate or degree completion; and

(ii) (2 points) Certificate or degree completion and transfer to a four-year institution.

(4) Four-year institutions only. (3 points) Completion of a baccalaureate degree.

(c) *Plan of operation* (30 points). The Secretary evaluates the quality of the applicant's plan of operation on the basis of the following:

(1) (3 points) The plan to inform the institutional community (students, faculty, and staff) of the goals, objectives, and services of the project and the eligibility requirements for participation in the project.

(2) (3 points) The plan to identify, select, and retain project participants with academic need.

(3) (4 points) The plan for assessing each individual participant's need for specific services and monitoring his or her academic progress at the institution to ensure satisfactory academic progress.

(4) (10 points) The plan to provide services that address the goals and objectives of the project.

(5) (10 points) The applicant's plan to ensure proper and efficient administration of the project, including the organizational placement of the project; the time commitment of key project staff; the specific plans for financial management, student records management, and personnel management; and, where appropriate, its plan for coordination with other programs for disadvantaged students.

(d) *Institutional commitment* (16 points). The Secretary evaluates the institutional commitment to the proposed project on the basis of the extent to which the applicant has—

(1) (6 points) Committed facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel, and other resources to supplement the grant and enhance project services;

(2) (6 points) Established administrative and academic policies that enhance participants' retention at the institution and improve their chances of graduating from the institution;

(3) (2 points) Demonstrated a commitment to minimize the dependence on student loans in developing financial aid packages for project participants by committing institutional resources to the extent possible; and

(4) (2 points) Assured the full cooperation and support of the Admissions, Student Aid, Registrar and data collection and analysis components of the institution.

(e) *Quality of personnel* (9 points). To determine the quality of personnel the applicant plans to use, the Secretary looks for information that shows—

(1) (3 points) The qualifications required of the project director, including formal education and training in fields related to the objectives of the project, and experience in designing, managing, or implementing Student Support Services or similar projects;



(2) (3 points) The qualifications required of other personnel to be used in the project, including formal education, training, and work experience in fields related to the objectives of the project; and

(3) (3 points) The quality of the applicant's plan for employing personnel who have succeeded in overcoming barriers similar to those confronting the project's target population.

(f) *Budget* (5 points). The Secretary evaluates the extent to which the project budget is reasonable, cost-effective, and adequate to support the project.

(g) *Evaluation plan* (8 points). The Secretary evaluates the quality of the evaluation plan for the project on the basis of the extent to which—

(1) The applicant's methods for evaluation—

(i) (2 points) Are appropriate to the project and include both quantitative and qualitative evaluation measures; and

(ii) (2 points) Examine in specific and measurable ways, using appropriate baseline data, the success of the project in improving academic achievement, retention and graduation of project participants; and

(2) (4 points) The applicant intends to use the results of an evaluation to make programmatic changes based upon the results of project evaluation.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-14)

[61 FR 38537, July 24, 1996, as amended at 75 FR 65791, Oct. 26, 2010]

#### **§646.22 How does the Secretary evaluate prior experience?**

(a) In the case of an application described in §646.20(a)(2)(i), the Secretary—

(1) Evaluates the applicant's performance under its expiring Student Support Services project;

(2) Uses the approved project objectives for the applicant's expiring Student Support Services grant and the information the applicant submitted in its annual performance reports (APRs) to determine the number of prior PE points; and

(3) May adjust a calculated PE score or decide not to award PE points if other information such as audit reports, site visit reports, and project evaluation reports indicates the APR data used to calculate PE points are incorrect.

(b) The Secretary does not award PE points for a given year to an applicant that does not serve at least 90 percent of the approved number of participants. For purposes of this section, the approved number of participants is the total number of participants the project would serve as agreed upon by the grantee and the Secretary.

(c) The Secretary does not award PE points for the criterion specified in paragraph (e)(1) of this section (Number of participants) if the applicant did not serve at least the approved number of participants.

(d) The Secretary uses the approved number of participants, or the actual number of participants served in a given year if greater than the approved number of participants, as the denominator for calculating whether the applicant has met its approved objectives related to paragraph (e)(2) of this section (Postsecondary retention) and paragraph (e)(3) of this section (Good academic standing).

(e) For purposes of the PE evaluation of grants awarded after January 1, 2009, the Secretary evaluates the applicant's PE on the basis of the following outcome criteria:

(1) (3 points) *Number of participants*. Whether the applicant provided services to no less than the approved number of participants.

(2) (4 points) *Postsecondary retention*. Whether the applicant met or exceeded its objective regarding the participants served during the project year who continue to be enrolled in a program of postsecondary education from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or who complete a program of postsecondary education at the grantee institution during the academic year or transfer from a two-year institution to a four-year institution during the academic year.

(3) (4 points) *Good academic standing*. Whether the applicant met or exceeded its objective regarding the participants served during the project year who are in good academic standing at the grantee institution.

(4) (4 points) *Degree completion (for an applicant institution of higher education offering primarily a baccalaureate or higher degree)*. Whether the applicant met or exceeded its objective regarding the current and prior participants receiving a baccalaureate degree at the grantee institution within the specified number of years.

(5) *Degree completion and transfer (for an applicant institution of higher education offering primarily an associate degree)*. Whether the applicant met or exceeded its objectives regarding the current and prior participants at the grantee institution who—

(i) (2 points) Complete a degree or certificate within the number of years specified in the approved objective; and

(ii) (2 points) Transfer within the number of years specified in the approved objective to institutions of higher education that offer baccalaureate degrees.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11; 1070a-14)

[75 FR 65792, Oct. 26, 2010]

**§646.23 How does the Secretary set the amount of a grant?**

- (a) The Secretary sets the amount of a grant on the basis of—
  - (1) 34 CFR 75.232 and 75.233, for new grants; and
  - (2) 34 CFR 75.253, for the second and subsequent years of a project period.
- (b) If the circumstances described in section 402A(b)(3) of the HEA exist, the Secretary uses the available funds to set the amount of the grant at the lesser of—
  - (1) \$200,000; or
  - (2) The amount requested by the

applicant. (Authority: 20 U.S.C.1070a-11)

[61 FR 38537, July 24, 1996, as amended at 75 FR 65792, Oct. 26, 2010]

**§646.24 What is the review process for unsuccessful applicants?**

- (a) *Technical or administrative error for applications not reviewed.* (1) An applicant whose grant application was not evaluated during the competition may request that the Secretary review the application if—
  - (i) The applicant has met all of the application submission requirements included in the Federal Register notice inviting applications and the other published application materials for the competition; and
  - (ii) The applicant provides evidence demonstrating that the Department or an agent of the Department made a technical or administrative error in the processing of the submitted application.
- (2) A technical or administrative error in the processing of an application includes—
  - (i) A problem with the system for the electronic submission of applications that was not addressed in accordance with the procedures included in the Federal Register notice inviting applications for the competition;
  - (ii) An error in determining an applicant's eligibility for funding consideration, which may include, but is not limited to—
    - (A) An incorrect conclusion that the application was submitted by an ineligible applicant;
    - (B) An incorrect conclusion that the application exceeded the published page limit;
    - (C) An incorrect conclusion that the applicant requested funding greater than the published maximum award; or

(D) An incorrect conclusion that the application was missing critical sections of the application; and

(iii) Any other mishandling of the application that resulted in an otherwise eligible application not being reviewed during the competition.

(3)(i) If the Secretary determines that the Department or the Department's agent made a technical or administrative error, the Secretary has the application evaluated and scored.

(ii) If the total score assigned the application would have resulted in funding of the application during the competition and the program has funds available, the Secretary funds the application prior to the re-ranking of applications based on the second peer review of applications described in paragraph (c) of this section.

(b) *Administrative or scoring error for applications that were reviewed.* (1) An applicant that was not selected for funding during a competition may request that the Secretary conduct a second review of the application if—

(i) The applicant provides evidence demonstrating that the Department, an agent of the Department, or a peer reviewer made an administrative or scoring error in the review of its application; and

(ii) The final score assigned to the application is within the funding band described in paragraph (d) of this section.

(2) An administrative error relates to either the PE points or the scores assigned to the application by the peer reviewers.

(i) For PE points, an administrative error includes mathematical errors made by the Department or the Department's agent in the calculation of the PE points or a failure to correctly add the earned PE points to the peer reviewer score.

(ii) For the peer review score, an administrative error is applying the wrong peer reviewer scores to an application.

(3)(i) A scoring error relates only to the peer review process and includes errors caused by a reviewer who, in assigning points—

(A) Uses criteria not required by the applicable law or program regulations, the Federal Register notice inviting applications, the other published application materials for the competition, or guidance provided to the peer reviewers by the Secretary; or

(B) Does not consider relevant information included in the appropriate section of the application.

(ii) The term “scoring error” does not include—

(A) A peer reviewer's appropriate use of his or her professional judgment in evaluating and scoring an application;

(B) Any situation in which the applicant did not include information needed to evaluate its response to a specific selection criterion in the appropriate section of the application as stipulated in the Federal Register notice inviting applications or the other published application materials for the competition; or

(C) Any error by the applicant.

(c) *Procedures for the second review.* (1) To ensure the timely awarding of grants under the competition, the Secretary sets aside a percentage of the funds allotted for the competition to be awarded after the second review is completed.

(2) After the competition, the Secretary makes new awards in rank order as described in §646.20 based on the available funds for the competition minus the funds set aside for the second review.

(3) After the Secretary issues a notification of grant award to successful applicants, the Secretary notifies each unsuccessful applicant in writing as to the status of its application and the funding band for the second review and provides copies of the peer reviewers' evaluations of the applicant's application and the applicant's PE score, if applicable.

(4) An applicant that was not selected for funding following the competition as described in paragraph (c)(2) of this section and whose application received a score within the funding band as described in paragraph (d) of this section, may request a second review if the applicant demonstrates that the Department, the Department's agent, or a peer reviewer made an administrative or scoring error as provided in paragraph (b) of this section.

(5) An applicant whose application was not funded after the first review as described in paragraph (c)(2) of this section and whose application received a score within the funding band as described in paragraph (d) of this section has at least 15 calendar days after receiving notification that its application was not funded in which to submit a written request for a second review in accordance with the instructions and due date provided in the Secretary's written notification.

(6) An applicant's written request for a second review must be received by the Department or submitted electronically to the designated e-mail or Web address by the due date and time established by the Secretary.

(7) If the Secretary determines that the Department or the Department's agent made an administrative error that relates to the PE points awarded, as described in paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section, the Secretary adjusts the applicant's PE score to reflect the correct number of PE points. If the adjusted score assigned to the application would have resulted in funding of the application during the competition and the program has funds available, the Secretary funds the application prior to the re-ranking of applications based on the second peer review of applications described in paragraph (c)(9) of this section.

(8) If the Secretary determines that the Department, the Department's agent or the peer reviewer made an administrative error that relates to the peer reviewers' score(s), as described in paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section, the Secretary adjusts the applicant's peer reviewers' score(s) to correct the error. If the adjusted score assigned to the application would have resulted in funding of the application during the competition and the program has funds available, the Secretary funds the application prior to the re-ranking of applications based on the second peer review of applications described in paragraph (c)(9) of this section.

(9) If the Secretary determines that a peer reviewer made a scoring error, as described in paragraph (b)(3) of this section, the Secretary convenes a second panel of peer reviewers in accordance with the requirements in section 402A(c)(8)(C)(iv)(III) of the HEA.

(10) The average of the peer reviewers' scores from the second peer review are used in the second ranking of applications. The average score obtained from the second peer review panel is the final peer reviewer score for the application and will be used even if the second review results in a lower score for the application than that obtained in the initial review.

(11) For applications in the funding band, the Secretary funds these applications in rank order based on adjusted scores and the available funds that have been set aside for the second review of applications.

(d) *Process for establishing a funding band.* (1) For each competition, the Secretary establishes a funding band for the second review of applications.

(2) The Secretary establishes the funding band for each competition based on the amount of funds the Secretary has set aside for the second review of applications.

(3) The funding band is composed of those applications—

(i) With a rank-order score before the second review that is below the lowest score of applications funded after the first review; and

(ii) That would be funded if the Secretary had 150 percent of the funds that were set aside for the second review of applications for the competition.

(e) *Final decision.* (1) The Secretary's determination of whether the applicant has met the requirements for a second review and the Secretary's decision on re-scoring of an application are final and not subject to further appeal or challenge.

(2) An application that scored below the established funding band for the competition is not eligible for a second review.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11)

[75 FR 65792, Oct. 26, 2010]

## **Subpart D—What Conditions Must Be Met by a Grantee?**

### **§646.30 What are allowable costs?**

The cost principles that apply to the Student Support Services Program are in 34 CFR 74.27, 75.530, and 80.22, as applicable. Allowable costs include the following if they are reasonably related to the objectives of the project:

- (a) Cost of remedial and special classes if—
  - (1) These classes are not otherwise available at the grantee institution;
  - (2) Are limited to eligible project participants; and
  - (3) Project participants are not charged tuition for classes paid for by the project.
- (b) Courses in English language instruction for students of limited English proficiency if these classes are limited to eligible project participants and not otherwise available at the grantee institution.
- (c) In-service training of project staff.
- (d) Activities of an academic or cultural nature, such as field trips, special lectures, and symposiums, that have as their purpose the improvement of the participants' academic progress and personal development.
- (e) Transportation and, with the prior approval of the Secretary, meals and lodging for participants and staff during approved educational and cultural activities sponsored by the project.
- (f) Purchase, lease, or rental of computer hardware, software, and other equipment, service agreements for such equipment, and supplies for participant development, project administration, or project recordkeeping.
- (g) Professional development travel for staff if directly related to the project's overall purpose and activities, except that these costs may not exceed four percent of total project salaries. The Secretary may adjust this percentage if the applicant demonstrates to the Secretary's satisfaction that a higher percentage is necessary and reasonable.
- (h) Project evaluation that is directly related to assessing the project's impact on student achievement and improving the delivery of services.

(i) Grant aid to eligible students who—

(1) Are in their first two years of postsecondary education and who are receiving Federal Pell Grants under subpart 1 of part A of title IV of the Act; or

(2) Have completed their first two years of postsecondary education and who are receiving Federal Pell Grants under subpart 1 of part A of title IV of the Act if the institution demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that—

(i) These students are at high risk of dropping out; and

(ii) It will first meet the needs of all its eligible first- and second-year students for services under this paragraph.

(j) Temporary housing during breaks in the academic year for—

(1) Students who are homeless children and youths or were formerly homeless children and youths; and

(2) Students who are foster care

youth. (Authority: 20 U.S.C.1070a-

14)

[61 FR 38537, July 24, 1996, 75 FR 65793, Oct. 26, 2010]

### **§646.31 What are unallowable costs?**

Costs that may not be charged against a grant under the Student Support Services Program include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) Costs involved in recruiting students for enrollment at the institution.

(b) Tuition, fees, stipends, and other forms of direct financial support, except for Grant aid under §646.30(i) for staff or participants.

(c) Research not directly related to the evaluation or improvement of the project.

(d) Construction, renovation, or remodeling of any

facilities. (Authority: 20 U.S.C.1070a-14)

[61 FR 38537, July 24, 1996, as amended at 75 FR 65794, Oct. 26, 2010]



### **§646.32 What other requirements must a grantee meet?**

(a) *Number of Participants.* For each year of the project period, a grantee must serve at least the number of participants that the Secretary identifies in the Federal Register notice inviting applications for a competition. Through this notice, the Secretary also provides the minimum and maximum grant award amounts for the competition.

(b) *Eligibility of participants.* (1) A grantee shall determine the eligibility of each participant in the project when the individual is selected to participate. The grantee does not have to revalidate a participant's eligibility after the participant's initial selection.

(2) A grantee shall determine the low-income status of an individual on the basis of the documentation described in section 402A(e) of the Act.

(c) *Recordkeeping.* A grantee must maintain participant records that show—

(1) The basis for the grantee's determination that each participant is eligible to participate in the project under §646.3;

(2) The grantee's basis for determining the academic need for each participant;

(3) The services that are provided to each participant;

(4) The performance and progress of each participant by cohort for the duration of the participant's attendance at the grantee institution; and

(5) To the extent practicable, any services the participant receives during the project year from another Federal TRIO program or another federally funded program that serves populations similar to those served under the SSS program.

(d) *Project director.* (1) A grantee must employ a full-time project director unless—

(i) The director is also administering one or two additional programs for disadvantaged students operated by the sponsoring institution or agency; or

(ii) The Secretary grants a waiver of this requirement.

(2) The grantee must give the project director sufficient authority to administer the project effectively.

(3) The Secretary waives the requirements in paragraph (d)(1) of this section if the applicant demonstrates that the project director will be able to effectively administer more than three programs and that this arrangement would promote effective coordination between the program and other Federal TRIO programs (sections 402B through 402F of the HEA) or similar programs funded through other sources.

(e) *Project coordination.* (1) The Secretary encourages grantees to coordinate project services with other programs for disadvantaged students operated by the grantee institution provided the Student Support Services grant funds are not used to support activities reasonably available to the general student population.

(2) To the extent practical, the grantee may share staff with programs serving similar populations provided the grantee maintains appropriate records of staff time and effort and does not commingle grant funds.

(3) Costs for special classes and events that would benefit Student Support Services students and participants in other programs for disadvantaged students must be proportionately divided among the benefiting projects.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 1070a)

[61 FR 38537, July 24, 1996, as amended at 75 FR 65794, Oct. 26, 2010]

**§646.33 What are the matching requirements for a grantee that uses Student Support Services program funds for student grant aid?**

(a) Except for grantees described in paragraph (b) of this section, a grantee that uses Student Support Services program funds for grant aid to eligible students described in §646.30(i) must—

(1) Match the Federal funds used for grant aid, in cash, from non-Federal funds, in an amount that is not less than 33 percent of the total amount of Federal grant funds used for Grant aid; and

(2) Use no more than 20 percent of the Federal program funds awarded the grantee each year for grant aid.

(b) A grant recipient that is an institution of higher education eligible to receive funds under part A or B of title III or title V of the HEA, as amended, is not required to match the Federal funds used for grant aid.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-

11) [75 FR 65794, Oct. 26,

2010]

## FEDERAL TRIO PROGRAMS 2021 ANNUAL LOW INCOME LEVELS

(Effective **January 12, 2022** until further notice)

Size of Family Unit	48 Contiguous States, D.C., and Outlying Jurisdictions	Alaska	Hawaii
<b>1</b>	\$20,385	\$25,485	\$23,445
<b>2</b>	\$27,465	\$34,335	\$31,590
<b>3</b>	\$34,545	\$43,185	\$39,735
<b>4</b>	\$41,625	\$52,035	\$47,880
<b>5</b>	\$48,705	\$60,885	\$56,025
<b>6</b>	\$55,785	\$69,735	\$64,170
<b>7</b>	\$62,865	\$78,585	\$72,315
<b>8</b>	\$69,945	\$87,435	\$80,460

For family units with more than eight members, add the following amount for each additional family member: \$7,080 for the 48 contiguous states, the District of Columbia and outlying jurisdictions; \$8,850 for Alaska; and \$8,145 for Hawaii.

The term "low-income individual" means an individual whose family's taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level amount.

The figures shown under family income represent amounts equal to 150 percent of the family income levels established by the Census Bureau for determining poverty status. The poverty guidelines were published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the [Federal Register](#) on January 21, 2022 and are effective as of January 12, 2022.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

### EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372

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

The process for doing this requires grant applicants to contact State Single Points of Contact for information on how this works. Multi-state applicants should follow procedures specific to each state.

Further information about the State Single Point of Contact process and a list of names by State can be found at:

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

Absent specific State review programs, applicants may submit comments directly to the Department. All recommendations and comments must be mailed or hand-delivered by the date indicated in the actual application Notice to the following address: The Secretary, EO 12372--CFDA# 84.042A, 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.**

## SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

The following supplements the information provided in the “Dear Applicant” letter and the Notice.

**1. Estimated Funding**

- Estimated Available Funds for New FY TBD Awards: \$XXXXXXXXXX
- Estimated Range of Awards: \$149,482 - \$1,595,544 per year
- Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$311,977
- Estimated Number of New Awards: XXXX
- The Department is not bound by these estimates.

**2. Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs**

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

Applicants must contact the appropriate State Single Point of Contact to find out about, and to comply with, the State’s process under Executive Order 12372. A listing of the Single Point of Contact for each State may be viewed at:

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

**3. Length of New Award**

Applicants for new awards may apply for five years (60 months) of funding.

**4. SSS Program Assurances**

All applications must comply with the SSS Program statutory and regulatory requirements. The assurances are included in the application package. By submitting a SSS Program application, an applicant certifies that it has read the assurances and will fully comply with the requirements.

**5. SSS Program Profile**

All applicants must provide the information requested on this form. The SSS Program Profile form contains the standardized objectives. Applicants are required to propose the percentage at which each of the standardized objectives will be attained. On the SSS Profile form, you must fill in the blanks indicating the percentage level of achievement for each of the objectives. An applicant should complete either standardized objective three or four, whichever applies to the sector designation of its respective institution. **You may not modify, amend or delete any of these objectives.**

Applicants must copy and paste the SSS Program Profile form into a separate document, or otherwise recreate the page exactly as it appears. Complete the form, save it to your computer and attach it to the *Other Attachments Form* as a .pdf document. Do not modify or amend the language on the form in any way.

## **6. Evaluation of Applications for Awards**

A panel of three non-federal reviewers will evaluate each application in accordance with the selection criteria. Each reviewer will prepare a written evaluation of the information presented in the project narrative section of the application and assign points for each selection criterion.

All applications for grants under the SSS Program will be evaluated as new submissions according to the selection criteria listed in the program regulations (34 CFR 646.21).

## **7. Selection Criteria**

The selection criteria in 34 CFR Part 646 are used to evaluate applications. The selection criteria and maximum possible points are included in the application package.

## **8. Applicant Funding**

Applicants should pay close attention to the “Maximum Award” section of the Notice.

## **9. Prior Experience**

In accordance with 34 CFR 646.22, the Secretary will award prior experience points to applicants that have conducted a TRIO SSS Program project during these fiscal years: **TBD**. Based on the applicant’s documented experience set forth in the annual performance reports, up to 15 prior experience points will be added to the application’s averaged reader score to determine the total score for each application and the total score will be used in funding decisions as described in the Notice.

## **10. Selection of Grantees**

The Secretary will select an application for funding in rank order, based on the application’s total score for the selection criteria plus any prior experience points earned, pursuant to 34 CFR sections 646.20 through 646.22. If there are insufficient funds for all applications with the same total scores, the Secretary will choose among the tied applications so as to serve geographical areas that have been underserved by the SSS Program.

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

**11. Expectations of Successful Grantees**

Currently funded projects with remaining outyears on an expiring grant are required to start implementing their new objectives upon receipt of the grant.

The Department reserves the right to request modified measurement objectives for those projects that serve "different populations" to measure the progress of the specific subgroup designated in the project application after the grant award has been made.

**12. Notice to Unsuccessful Applicants**

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

**13. Second Review Process**

To implement the statutory requirements for a second review of unsuccessful applications, the Department has adopted a two-slate process. After the peer review of applications and the awarding of PE points, as applicable, the Department will rank all the applications. The Department then will establish a funding band to determine the percentage of the total funds allotted for the competition that will be set aside for the second review. The determination of the percentage of funds to be reserved for the second review and the applications to be included in the funding band will be based on the distribution of application scores. The funding band will include all of the applications with a rank-order score that is 1) below the lowest score of applications funded after the first review and 2) that would be funded if the Secretary had 150 percent of the funds that were set aside for the second review.

Only applicants whose applications scored within the funding band will be eligible for the second review. In addition, those applicants deemed eligible for the second review will have to provide evidence demonstrating that the Department, an agent of the Department, or a peer reviewer made an administrative or scoring error (as defined in the regulations) in the review of its application. The guidelines and criteria for the second review process are included in the SSS Regulations (646.24).

**14. Annual Performance Report Requirements**

If you receive a FY 20XX new grant award, you will be required to submit annual performance reports during the five-year funding cycle using the Department’s on-line function. This on-line system collects data about funded projects to enable program specialists to determine if a grantee is making substantial progress toward meeting approved project objectives.

**15. Contact Information**

**For SSS Program-related questions and assistance, please contact:**

Program Specialist: Lavelle Wright  
Address: Student Service, Federal TRIO Programs  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4260  
Telephone: (202) 453-7739  
E-mail Address: [lavelle.wright@ed.gov](mailto:lavelle.wright@ed.gov)

and/or

Program Specialist: TBD  
Address: Student Service, Federal TRIO  
Programs  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4260  
Telephone: (202) 453-XXXX  
E-mail Address: [XXXXXX@ed.gov](mailto:XXXXXX@ed.gov)

Division Director: James Davis  
Address: Student Service, Federal TRIO Programs  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW Room 2B215  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4260  
Telephone: (202) 453-7814  
E-mail Address: [james.davis@ed.gov](mailto:james.davis@ed.gov)



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

Support Desk: Grants.gov Support Desk

Telephone:(800) 518-4726

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

Email: support@grants.gov

## SSS PROGRAM PROFILE FORM

**Instructions: All applicants must complete this form.** The completed form must be attached to the Other Attachments Form in the application package in Grants.gov (as a .pdf document). **DO NOT MODIFY OR AMEND THE CONTENTS OR LANGUAGE CONTAINED ON THIS FORM.**

1. Applicants currently funded under the Student Support Services Program (FY **TBD**) must provide their current grant award number. This can be found in Block 5 of the Grant Award Notification.

New applicants should leave this item blank.

PR/Award Number (Current Grantees Only): P042A (20)(21)(22)\_\_\_\_\_

2. Institution (Legal Name): \_\_\_\_\_  
(If this application is from an institution with multiple campuses, the name of the specific applying campus must be provided on the line above.)

3. All applicants must indicate the address where this project will be physically located.

Project Address:

Street Address, City, State, Zip Code

4. Applicants that propose to serve multiple campuses under a single grant award must provide the names and locations of all campuses/locations that will be involved in this project. Please list each service area site:

Campuses/Locations:

#1  
Name\_\_\_\_\_

City, County, State and Zip Code +4\_\_\_\_\_

#2  
Name\_\_\_\_\_

City, County, State and Zip Code +4\_\_\_\_\_

#3  
Name\_\_\_\_\_

City, County, State and Zip Code +4\_\_\_\_\_

5. All applicants must indicate the type of project they are proposing to conduct. Check only one. There can be no combinations of project types.

\_\_\_\_ Regular

\_\_\_\_ Disabled Only

\_\_\_\_ English as a Second Language (ESL)

\_\_\_\_ Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), including Health Science

\_\_\_\_ Teacher Preparation K-12

\_\_\_\_ Veterans

(See below for a description of the types of projects that may be applied for under the SSS Program.)

#### SSS Project Types

These project types are provided to inform the needs of eligible applicants serving regular, disabled and “different populations”<sup>7</sup> under a separate and distinct application for specialized services. The types of specialized services may include: (1) English as a Second Language (ESL), (2) Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), including Health Sciences (3) Teacher Preparation K-12, and (4) Veterans. As noted above, you may only check one line for a single project type to be served for each grant application.

Regular SSS Program: projects provide services to low-income, first-generation and/or disabled students, which may include students from the different populations of students.<sup>11</sup>

Disabled Only SSS Program: projects provide services only to students with disabilities, one third of whom must also be low-income students.

English as a Second Language “ESL” SSS Program: projects provide services only to low-income, first-generation students or individuals with disabilities for whom English is a second language and/or who are of limited English proficiency.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and Health Science SSS Program: projects

<sup>11</sup> *Different population* means a group of individuals that an eligible entity desires to serve through an application for a grant under the Student Support Services program and that—  
(1) Is separate and distinct from any other population that the entity has applied for a grant to serve; or  
(2) While sharing some of the same needs as another population that the eligible entity has applied for a grant to serve, has distinct needs for specialized services.

provide services only to low-income, first-generation students or individuals with disabilities pursuing disciplines in the following areas as well as other related fields including: physical sciences, engineering, life sciences, math (e.g., number properties and operations, measurement, geometry, data analysis and probability, and algebra), and technology, including technology literacy, hands on workshops, technological innovations, scientific research, biotechnology, electronics, health sciences, communications and health research.

Teacher Preparation K-12 SSS Program: projects provide services only to low-income, first-generation students or individuals with disabilities pursuing disciplines in the following areas as well as other related fields:

Test preparation to meet the teaching credential for certification and license; internships to learn effective teaching practices; mentoring to experience on-the-job training; technology to enable integration of technology into classroom instruction; diversity training to meet the needs of students (e.g. students who lack proficiency in English and culturally diverse students); methodology to increase the level of implementation of student performance assessment techniques and implementing state and district curriculum and performance standards; and teaching practices to affect special behavior problems.

Veterans Program: projects provide services to low-income, first-generation and disabled veterans/students only.

6. Grant Aid to Students. There is no separate funding for grant aid to students. Providing grant aid to students is not a program requirement for submitting an application under the SSS Program competition. However, successful applicants may use up to 20% of the total budget to cover the cost of grant aid. Applicants that plan to offer grant aid must provide the amount of funds they propose to use for grant aid to students (consistent with the information provided on the proposed grant aid funding and methods for its distribution as discussed in the selection criteria under the Plan of Operation).

Note: Once an applicant has elected to participate in grant aid to students, the Department will expect continued participation for the duration of the grant award cycle at the rate established at the time of initial funding.

Grant Aid to Students: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional Match (33% - if required): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Not Applicable

If you are not required to match the grant aid to students, please indicate the reason:

Eligible, at the time of the submission date of this application, to receive funds under --

Title III-Part A--Strengthening Institutions Program

Title III-Part B--Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Title V--Strengthening Hispanic-Serving Institutions

7. All applicants must provide the number of students they propose to serve each year.

Total number of proposed student participants to be served per year: \_\_\_\_\_

Breakdown of the number of students to be served in each category out of the proposed total number of participants:

- A. Low-Income and First-Generation \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Low-Income \_\_\_\_\_
- C. First-Generation \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Disabled \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Low-Income and Disabled \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Two-thirds of the participants served in a special focus SSS project must also be low-income, first-generation or disabled students, of whom 1/3 must also be low-income.)

8. Program Objectives:

Please fill in the proposed percent for each objective.

Each applicant must enter targets for each of the standard project objectives listed below based on the institution's sector. Please note that the standard program objectives for the SSS program are different for two-year and four-year institutions. Therefore, please review the guidance below regarding how you should designate the sector of your institution for the SSS grant and then complete the appropriate section.

These same objectives should be referenced in the Part III Project Narrative section of your application and should not be revised in your narrative discussion of the proposed objectives or proposed evaluation. In addition, the Department reserves the right to request modified measurement objectives for those projects that serve "different populations" to measure the progress of the specific subgroup designated in the project application after the grant award.

**Sector of Grantee Institution: (Check applicable option)**

Please note that the applicant's sector designation for the purposes of completing the SSS Program Profile sheet may differ from the designation contained in the Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). If you do not know your institution's designation, please see "**How to determine your institution's sector**" below.

2-year public \_\_\_\_\_

2-year private \_\_\_\_\_

4-year public \_\_\_\_\_

4-year private \_\_\_\_\_

## How to Determine Your Institution's Sector

Even though IPEDS may have your institution designated as a 4-year institution, your institution may qualify as a 2-year institution (for the purposes of the SSS Program) if your institution predominantly awards associate's degrees or certificates. To determine your institution's sector, do the following:

- Click on the link: <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>.
- Under “**Name of School**” enter your institution's name and click on the button “Show Results.”
- On the right-hand side, click on your institution's name.
- If in the **General Information** section under “**Type**” the words “*primarily associate's*” appear, your institution predominantly awards associate degrees or certificates; therefore, your institution primarily enrolls students in 2-year programs or less.
- If you are still not certain how to designate your institution's sector, follow steps 1, 2, and 3 above.
- Scroll down and select “**Programs/Majors.**”
- If the **Bachelor's Degree** column (if applicable) represents less than 10 percent of all undergraduate awards including certificates, your institution predominantly awards associate degrees or certificates.

Please be advised that your sector designation on this profile sheet will be used to calculate your Prior Experience (PE) points for the persistence and graduation/transfer objectives for the FY **TBD** funding cycle; therefore, you need to choose between 2-year and 4-year based upon the types of academic programs (e.g., 2-year versus 4-year) students at your institution are pursuing.

### Project Objectives for applicants designated as 2-year institutions

A. **Persistence Rate** (2-year institution): \_\_\_\_% of all participants served<sup>12</sup> in the reporting year by the SSS project will persist from one academic year<sup>13</sup> to the beginning of the next academic year or earn an associate degree or certificate at the grantee institution and/or transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year institution by the fall term of the next academic year.

B. **Good Academic Standing Rate** (2-year institution): \_\_\_\_% of all enrolled<sup>14</sup> SSS participants served will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee institution.

<sup>12</sup> For the persistence and good academic standing objectives, the Department defines participants served as those students that received project services during the reporting year.

<sup>13</sup> **Academic year means** the 12-month academic year of the grantee institution; it is not the budget period. For example, the **TBD** academic year is roughly August/September 20XX through August 20XX while the budget/project year for most SSS grants is September 1, 20XX, through August 31, 20XX.

<sup>14</sup> **Enrolled** means a student who has met the minimum standards to matriculate at an institution on either a full-time or part-time basis. However, it does not include new summer participants served during the summer preceding the participant's first academic year who did not earn college credits during the period (i.e., summer session) in which they were served.

**C. Graduation and Transfer Rates (2-year institutions only):**

1 . \_\_\_\_% of new participants<sup>15</sup> served each year will graduate from the grantee institution with an associate degree or certificate within four (4) years;

AND

2 . \_\_\_\_% of new participants served each year will receive an associate degree or certificate from the grantee institution and transfer to a four-year institution within four (4) years.

**Note:** In setting the achievement rates for the graduation and transfer objectives, it is important to understand which SSS participants are counted and the four-year point of measurement. For example, new participants (e.g., those first served by SSS during the 20XX-XX academic year) constitute the denominator for the graduation and transfer objectives. The numerator for the graduation only objective (i.e., number “1” above) includes those new participants in 20XX-XX that received an associate degree or certificate from the grantee institutions within four years (by the end of the 20XX-XX academic year). The numerator for the graduation and transfer objective (i.e., number “2” above) includes those new participants that received an associate degree or certificate from the grantee institutions by the end of the 20XX-XX academic year and transferred to a four-year institution by the fall term of 20XX.

**Project Objectives for applicants designated as 4-year institutions**

**A. Persistence Rate (4-year institution):** \_\_\_\_% of all participants served<sup>16</sup> by the SSS project will persist from one academic year<sup>13</sup> to the beginning of the next academic year or will have earned a bachelor’s degree at the grantee institution during the academic year.

**B. Good Academic Standing Rate (4-year institution):** \_\_\_\_% of all enrolled<sup>17</sup> SSS participants being served will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee institution.

**C. Graduation Rate (4-year institutions only):**  
\_\_\_\_% of new participants<sup>18</sup> served each year will graduate from the grantee institution with a bachelor’s degree or equivalent within six (6) years.

<sup>15</sup> A **new participant** is an individual who was served by the SSS project for the **first time** in the project year under consideration and who meets the definition of a participant as specified in 34 CFR 646.7(c) of the SSS program regulations.

<sup>16</sup> For the persistence and good academic standing objectives, the Department defines participants served as those students that received project services during the reporting year.

<sup>17</sup> **Enrolled** means a student who has met the minimum standards to matriculate at an institution on either a full-time or part-time basis. However, it does not include new summer participants served during the summer preceding the participant’s first academic year who did not earn college credits during the period (i.e., summer session) in which they were served.

<sup>18</sup> A **new participant** is an individual who was served by the SSS project for the **first time** in the project year under consideration and who meets the definition of a participant as specified in 34 CFR 646.7(c) of the SSS program regulations.

**Note: Please indicate if you will address the competitive preference priorities. Be advised, as stated in the Notice, the maximum competitive preference priority points an application can receive under this competition is up to X points:**

**CPPs TBD**



## STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM ASSURANCES

Attach this Assurance form to the “Other Attachments Form” in the Grants.gov system. Applicants must copy and paste this page into a separate document or recreate the page exactly as it appears. Then complete the page, save it to your computer and attach it to the “Other Attachments Form” as a .pdf document. **Do not modify or amend the language of this form in any way.**

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant will comply with the following statutory requirements:

1. The applicant assures that at least two-thirds of the students who will participate in the project will be individuals with disabilities and/or low-income individuals who are also first-generation college students; and that at least one-third of the student participants who are individuals with disabilities also will be low-income individuals.
2. The applicant assures that the remaining students participating in the project will be either low-income individuals, first-generation college students, or individuals with disabilities.
3. The applicant assures that students served under the Student Support Services project at this institution shall receive or be offered all of the mandated required SSS services either directly from the SSS project or from other institutional-based resources.
4. The applicant must describe in the application its efforts, and where applicable, past history, in—
  - o Providing sufficient financial assistance to meet the full financial need of each student in the project; and
  - o Maintaining the loan burden of each student in the project at a manageable level.
5. The applicant assures that students will not be served by more than one SSS project at any one time and that the SSS project will collaborate with other SSS and McNair projects and other State and institutional programs at the grantee-institution so that more students can be served; and
6. The applicant assures that the institution's financial aid office will consult with the SSS project with respect to which SSS participants should receive grant aid and the amount of the grant aid awards should the project choose to offer grant aid.

The person whose signature appears below is authorized to sign this application and to commit the applicant to the above provisions.

Signature of Authorized Certifying Official

Printed Name and Title of Authorized Certifying Official

Applicant Organization/Date Signed

## PRIOR EXPERIENCE

### Prior Experience Objectives and Calculations for SSS Projects Operating in Project Years 20XX- XX, 20XX-XX and 20XX-XX

Prior experience is based on the criteria contained in 34 CFR Part 646.22 Prior Experience (PE). PE points will be awarded under the FY 20XX competition to SSS projects that operated during the 20XX-XX, 20XX-XX and 20XX-XX program years. All information will be taken from the annual performance report (APR) submission for each project year under consideration.

The SSS PE criteria and point allocations are as follows for each year under consideration:

1. Persistence (maximum of 4 points)
2. Good academic standing (maximum of 4 points)
3. Graduation/transfer (maximum of 4 points)
4. Administrative requirements (maximum of 3 points)

Total (maximum of 15 points)

Note: SSS grantees may earn up to a maximum of 15 points for each year assessed. The final PE score is the average of the scores for the three years assessed.

1. Persistence (maximum 4 points) - The extent to which project participants persisted toward completion of the academic program in which they were enrolled at the grantee institution.

Calculation:

- The denominator is the greater of the actual number served or funded number to be served.
- The numerator is the number enrolled at the grantee institution in the Fall of the next academic year or graduated and/or transferred from a 2-year to a 4-year institution at the end of the reporting period.

2. Good academic standing (maximum 4 points) - The extent to which project participants met academic performance levels required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee institution.

Calculation:

- The denominator is the greater of the actual number served or funded number to be served.
- The numerator is the number in good academic standing, which is based on the responses in the Academic Standing field.

**NOTE: Two rates will be calculated based on whether: (1) the grantee served new summer only participants and (2) the grantee tracked and provided information on academic standing. The greater of the two rates is used to determine prior experience.**

3. Graduation/transfer completion at grantee institution (maximum 4 points).

**For two-year institutions only:** This rate is determined by the extent to which project participants graduated from the grantee institution and/or transferred to a four-year institution (within four years of first entering the SSS program).

**Calculation for Graduation Completion:**

The denominator is the number of new participants ONLY. The numerator is the number of participants who graduated from the grantee institution with an associate degree and/or certificate within four years of first entry into the SSS project.

**Calculation for Transfer:**

*For 2-year institutions ONLY.* The denominator is the number of new participants ONLY. The numerator is the number of participants who graduated with an associate degree and/or certificate from the grantee institution and transferred from a 2-year to a 4-year institution or transferred from a 2-year to a 4-year institution without an associate degree or certificate within four years of first entry into the SSS project.

**NOTES: PE calculations for all years under the previous competition have been completed. No changes/modifications or appeals will be accepted at this time.**

**Because grantees often provided conflicting information in the degree code, multiple fields were used depending on the APR year.**

**In addition to using the degree code and Transfer field (for 2015-16 and beyond), to ascertain degree completion and/or transfer, fields containing information related to degree completion and transfer status such as Current Grade Level, End of Year Enrollment, etc., will also be used.**

OR

**For four-year institutions only:** This rate is determined by the extent to which project participants graduated (within six-years of first entering the SSS project).

**Calculation for Graduation Completion:**

For 4-year institutions the denominator is the number of new participants ONLY. The numerator is the number of participants who graduated with a bachelor's degree or equivalent, from the grantee institution, within six years of first entering the SSS project.

**NOTE: Because grantees often provided conflicting information in the degree code, multiple fields were used depending on the APR year.**

**In addition to using the degree code to ascertain degree completion, fields containing information related to degree completion such as Current Grade Level, End of Year Enrollment, etc., will also be used.**

4. Administrative requirements (maximum 3 points) - The extent to which the project has met the administrative requirements at the grantee institution. The conditions for the administrative requirements are as follows:

- The project served the approved funded number of participants (i.e., actual number served must be greater than or equal to the number to be served),
- At least two-thirds of project participants served were low-income and first-generation students, students with disabilities, and/or students with disabilities who are also low-income, and
- At least one-third of project participants with disabilities were also low-income individuals.

Calculation:

- If the grantee did not serve any disabled students, then the grantee must meet the first two criteria.
- If the grantee served at least one disabled student, then the grantee must meet all three criteria.
- Fields used: Participant Status and Eligibility.

**The due date for submitting performance reports for these years has passed. No changes or modifications to the information on file with the Department will be accepted.**

Please note that the prior experience assessment for applicants successful under the FY 20XX competition will be based on the outcome criteria outlined in section 402A(f)(3)(c) of the HEA. The new outcome criteria for the SSS Program are captured in the standardized objectives included on the SSS Program Profile.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION PACKAGE

The SSS 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) form 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 & B  
(NOTE: Section C – Budget Narrative must be included as part of the Project Narrative Attachment Form, located in Part III.)

### **Part III: Attachments**

ED Abstract Form  
Project Narrative Attachment Form – includes a Table of Contents  
Other Attachments Form – includes the Program Assurances page and the SSS Program Profile form

The Department of Education Abstract Form is where you attach the one-page SSS project abstract.

The Project Narrative Attachment Form is where you attach the responses addressing the program selection criteria that will be used to evaluate applications submitted for this competition. We recommend that you limit the application narrative to the equivalent of no more than 65 pages, excluding a *Table of Contents* and other items outlined in the Notice.

**Please see the Notice for detailed information on recommended page limits and formatting requirements.** You should include a Table of Contents for your application as the first page of this section. **You must also include your budget narrative in this section as part of the selection criteria, which is counted as part of the recommended 65 pages.** The budget should demonstrate and justify that all costs are reasonable and necessary to accomplish the proposed project activities.

The Other Attachments Form is where you attach the SSS Program Profile form and the SSS Program Assurances page and the Competitive Preference Priorities Narrative.

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

**Part IV: Assurances and Certifications**

ED-GEPA Section 427 Requirement  
Grants.gov Lobbying Form (formerly ED Form 80-0013)  
Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR PROJECT NARRATIVE – SELECTION CRITERIA

The following information supplements the information provided in the “Dear Applicant” letter, “Competition Highlights,” and the Notice.

The Part III -- Project Narrative is to be attached to the **Project Narrative Attachment Form** in the Grants.gov application.

Before preparing the Part III -- Project Narrative, applicants should review the “Dear Applicant” letter, Competition Highlights, Notice, program statute, and program regulations for specific guidance and requirements. Note that applications will be evaluated according to the specific selection criteria specified in the Notice and this package.

The Secretary evaluates an application on the basis of the broad selection criteria in 34 CFR 646.21 of the SSS Program regulations as identified in this application (see the Authorizing Legislation and Regulations). The Part III -- Project Narrative should provide, in detail, the information that addresses the selection criteria. The maximum possible score for each category of the selection criteria is indicated in parenthesis below.

We recommend that you limit the application narrative to the equivalent of no more than 65 pages, double-space all text in the application narrative, and single-space titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs. Use an easily readable font such as Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial. Use a font that is either 12-point or larger and number the pages consecutively. The narrative should be written concisely. Only the required information should be submitted. Please refer to the notice (see Content and Form of Application Submission) for additional application submission requirements.

To facilitate the review of the application, provide responses to each of the following selection criteria in the following order:

### 1. SELECTION CRITERIA

A. Need (34 CFR 646.21(a))	(24 points)
B. Objectives (34 CFR 646.21(b))	( 8 points)
C. Plan of Operation (34 CFR 646.21(c))	(30 points)
D. Institutional Commitment (34 CFR 646.21(d))	(16 points)
E. Quality of Personnel (34 CFR 646.21(e))	( 9 points)
F. Budget (34 CFR 646.21(f))	( 5 points)
G. Evaluation Plan (34 CFR 646.21(g))	( 8 points)
H. Quality of Project Design (34 CFR 75.210)	<u>( 5 points)</u>
Total Maximum Score for Selection Criteria	105 points



## Formatting

We recommend that you use the following standards: A “page” is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Double-space all text in the application narrative, and single-space titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs. Use a 12-point font. Use an easily readable font such as Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial. Page numbers and an identifier may be within the 1" margin. Each page on which there is text or graphics will be counted as one full page.

The Application Narrative will include the discussion of the selection criteria. We recommend that you limit the application narrative to the equivalent of no more than 65 pages for the FY **20XX** SSS competition.

The recommended page limit does not apply to:

- Application Face Sheet (Application for Federal Assistance Form – SF424)
- Table of Contents
- Project Abstract
- Budget Summary Form (ED Form 524)
- SSS Program Profile
- SSS Program Assurances and Certifications
- ED GEPA 427

In the Part III -- Project Narrative, the applicant should address the selection criteria in the below order (A-H) because this is the order in which the Technical Review Form is organized. The Technical Review Form is used by the peer reviewers to evaluate applications.

### **The following guidance may assist you in addressing each of the selection criteria:**

(A) **Need:** In responding to this criterion, you must provide data to define the target population in terms of the academic, financial and other problems encountered by eligible project participants which prevent their completing undergraduate programs. Also, you must provide data to demonstrate that the proposed target population has an academic need for project services and is first-generation and low-income or individuals with disabilities.

(B) **Objectives:** All applicants must include the three appropriate standardized objectives as listed on the SSS Program Profile form. On the Profile form, you must fill in the blanks indicating the percentage level of achievement for each of these objectives. An applicant should complete the standardized objectives as appropriate to the selected sector designation of its respective institution. **These objectives may not be rewritten, restated or reworded.**

In the Project Narrative, you must address each of the appropriate objectives, and explain how these objectives are ambitious and attainable. Applicants should use comparative data to show why the proposed percentages are ambitious based on information provided in the Need section of the Project Narrative and attainable based on information provided in the Plan of Operation and the resources available to the project. Applicants may add additional objectives, but are not required to do so. Applicants will not receive additional points or penalties for proposing additional objectives.

(C) **Plan of Operation:** This criterion contains five sub-criteria, and applicants must address all five sub-criteria. The application should provide information on who, what, when and how the project will provide services to meet its goals and objectives. In addition, if you are planning grant aid to students, you should include information on the planned coordination between the project office and the Financial Aid Office or Business Office at your institution to assure correctness in the distribution of monies to eligible project participants.

(D) **Institutional Commitment:** Applicants must address all four sub-criteria. In addressing this criterion, the applicant must provide information on its administrative and academic policies, the commitment of facilities, equipment, personnel and other resources; and the planned cooperation and support of key departments such as Admissions, Registrar, data collection and Student Financial Aid. The applicant must also address the financial plan for carrying out the project, including the applicant's proposed commitment of institutional resources to the SSS participants to minimize the dependence on student loans in developing financial aid packages for project participants by committing institutional resources.

(E) **Quality of Personnel:** Applicants must address all three of the sub-criteria under this criterion. Applicants must identify key personnel and must provide the minimum qualifications for all these key positions. The minimum educational qualifications must include the type of degree required and the acceptable field(s) of study. The type and minimum amount of work-related experience should also be described for each position. In addressing this criterion, you should not provide the qualifications of current staff, but rather; detail the qualifications required for each position. Please note that if you choose to submit resumes or job descriptions in the application, they will count against the recommended 65 pages. The "plan to employ personnel who have succeeded in overcoming barriers similar to the target population to be served" must be specific. The inclusion of an equal employment opportunity statement and/or a non-discriminatory employment practices policy alone is not an adequate response to this sub-criterion.

(F) **Budget:** In responding to this criterion, applicants must provide a detailed, itemized budget (Form 524) and a detailed budget narrative for the first year (20XX-20XX) budget period only. The budget narrative is a part of the Project Narrative (Part III) to be attached under the budget selection criterion (F). Additional budget instructions are cited in the instructions entitled "First Year Budget and Budget Summary Form (ED Form 524) Instructions" on the following pages. (Note: The budget narrative is counted as part of the recommended 65 pages for Part III.) If the applicant includes a non-Federal financial contribution, please know that the Department expects the non-Federal financial contribution, at least at the level indicated for the first year, to continue for the entire length of the grant award (up to five years). This section should provide information that shows that the proposed budget will provide the resources necessary to successfully carry out the proposed project.

Applicants should demonstrate here how the proposed resources would enable them to carry out the proposed project in the most cost-effective manner possible.

(G) **Evaluation Plan:** A strong evaluation plan should be included and should be used, as appropriate, to shape the development of the project from the beginning of the grant period. The evaluation plan should include benchmarks to monitor progress toward meeting specific project objectives based on the program's performance indicators. The plan should describe the evaluation design, indicating: (1) what types of data will be collected; (2) when various types of data will be collected; (3) what methods will be used; (4) what instruments will be developed and when; (5) how the data will be analyzed; (6) when reports and outcomes will be available; and (7) how the applicant will use the information collected through evaluation to monitor the progress of the funded project and to provide accountability information about the success of the project. The use of an outside evaluator is not required.

(H) **Quality of Project Design:** In responding to this criterion applicants should address how the design of the project demonstrates a rationale utilizing a logic model to demonstrate theoretical and operational relationships among the key project components and desired outcomes. Applicants should also address how they will achieve their intended goals and the ongoing efforts to examine the effects of the project components.

## LIST OF STANDARD FORMS

- **Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)**
- **Department of Education Supplemental Form for the SF-424**
- **Definitions for Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF-424**
- **Department of Education Budget Summary Form (ED-524) and Itemized Budget**
- **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)**
- **General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)**
- **Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)**

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

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BUDGET SUMMARY AND ITEMIZED LINE ITEM BUDGET (ED FORM 524)

**NOTE:** Applicants must submit: (1) budget information that categorizes the requested funds (ED Form 524), **AND** (2) a detailed budget narrative for the first 12-month budget period.

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

**The budget narrative, for the first 12-month budget period only**, is to be included in the *Application Narrative* (recommend that you limit the application narrative to the equivalent of no more than 65 pages)

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

The federal and any non-federal shares are to be included on the Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524), and in the Budget selection criterion discussion in the *Application Narrative*.

The Department is requesting that you complete the Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524) for ONLY the **20XX-20XX** year. Please provide **a comprehensive and detailed budget narrative for the first 12-month budget period, only**.

It is not necessary to provide a budget summary for the total five-year grant period requested. The funding level for the first year is stipulated based on the Maximum Award Section of the Notice, and the Department will determine the funding levels for the subsequent years of the grant award cycle.

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

1. **Personnel:** On line 1 (ED Form 524), enter only the project personnel salaries and wages. [Fees and expenses for consultants should be included on line 8.] The budget should include the total commitment of time and the total salary to be charged to the project for each key staff member. You should provide a breakdown of project personnel that includes: the position titles; the percent of time and number of months committed to the project for each key staff member; the salary for each key staff member; and the total salary costs to be charged to the grant.

2. Fringe Benefits: On line 2 (ED Form 524), enter the amount of fringe benefits. The institution or agency's normal fringe benefit contribution may be charged to the program. Leave this blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of the indirect costs. In the budget, include an explanation and appropriate justification if the institution or agency's normal fringe benefit contribution exceeds 20 percent of salaries.
  
3. Travel: On line 3 (ED Form 524), provide the costs for project personnel. [Consultants' travel should be included on line 8.] In the budget, you should detail the proposed travel costs – for each trip explain the purpose and objective of the travel and provide the number of persons traveling. Transportation costs should not exceed tourist class airfare. For automobile mileage, the established institution or agency rate should be used. Reimbursement is allowed for taxicab, bus, train, or limousine transportation. Per diem at the established institution or agency rate is permitted when an individual is away from home overnight on official project business (see Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Programs- §200.474). No foreign travel will be authorized under the grant.

The Federal TRIO Programs have developed the following guidelines for recommending approval of travel. All travel must be related to the project's overall purpose and proposed activities.

Project Director's Travel – Per Year One National Conference;  
One Regional Meeting;  
One State Meeting; **and**  
Travel for participation in **one** professional staff development training opportunity under the TRIO Training Program.

Full-time Professional Staff Travel – Per Year One National, Regional, **or** State Meeting; **and**  
Travel for participation in **one** professional staff development training opportunity under the TRIO Training Program.

4. Equipment: On line 4 (ED Form 524), indicate the cost of equipment -- non-expendable personal property, which has a usefulness of greater than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. [Consistent with an applicant's policy, a lower dollar amount may be used to define equipment.] In the budget, explain why the requested equipment is necessary to carry out project activities, and include a list of all equipment in the following format: item, quantity, cost per unit, and total cost.
  
5. Supplies: On line 5 (ED Form 524), include the costs of all tangible personal property that was not included as "equipment" on line 4. In the budget, provide an itemized list of the supplies.

6. Contractual: Not applicable. Leave blank.
7. Construction: Not applicable. Leave blank.
8. Other: On line 8 (ED Form 524), indicate all direct costs not covered on lines 1 through 5. The costs/fees for consultants and consultants' travel should be included here. Examples of "other" costs are equipment rental, required fees, communication costs, rental of space, utilities, custodial services, and printing costs. In the budget, provide a breakdown of all direct costs not clearly covered by other budget categories.

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

9. Total Direct Costs: On line 9 (ED Form 524), provide the total direct costs requested – the sum of lines 1 through 8.
10. Indirect Costs: On line 10 (ED Form 524), provide the amount of indirect costs that you propose to charge against the grant.

All grants awarded under the Student Support Services Program (84.042A) are designated as training grants. The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) limits 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)])

**§200.68 Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC).**

*MTDC* means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). *MTDC* excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

Grantees charging indirect costs to a Department grant are required to have a negotiated rate with their *cognizant agency* (i.e., either the Federal agency from which it has received the most direct funding that is subject to indirect

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

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

11. Training Stipends: On line 11, include any grant funds that you propose to use for Grant Aid to Students (subject to the limitation of 20% of the total grant) on both sections A and B (ED 524). This amount should also be specified in the budget narrative.
12. Total Costs: On line 12 (ED Form 524), provide the total amount that you are requesting – the sum of lines 9 and 10. Note: This amount should also be the same as that shown in 18g on the application face sheet (SF 424) and on the detailed budget narrative in Part III.



## 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 prepared a strategic plan for **20XX-20XX**. This plan reflects the Department's priorities and integrates them with its mission and program authorities and describes how the Department will work to improve education for all children and adults in the U.S. The Department's goals, as listed in the plan, are:

**Goal 1:** Support state and local efforts to improve learning outcomes for all P-12 students in every community.

**Goal 2:** Expand postsecondary educational opportunities, improve outcomes to foster economic opportunity and promote an informed, thoughtful and productive citizenry.

**Goal 3:** Strengthen the quality, accessibility and use of education data through better management, increased privacy protections and transparency.

**Goal 4:** Reform the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of the Department.

### What are the performance indicators for the SSS Program?

The performance indicators for the Student Support Services Program are part of the Department's plan for meeting Goal 2. The SSS Program is part of the Federal TRIO Programs. The overarching goal of the Federal TRIO Programs is "to increase the percentage of low-income and first-generation college students who successfully pursue postsecondary education opportunities."

The specific performance indicator for the Student Support Services Program is as follows:

The success of the Student Support Services Program will be measured by the postsecondary persistence and degree completion rates of SSS participants that remain at the grantee institution. All SSS grantees will be required to submit an annual performance report documenting the persistence and degree attainment of their participants. Since, on average, students take four years to complete an associate degree and six years to complete a bachelor's degree, multiple years of performance report data are needed to determine the degree completion rates of SSS participants. The Department of Education will aggregate the data provided in the annual performance reports

from all grantees to determine the accomplishment level.

**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 as a condition of the award. The reports will document the extent to which project goals and objectives are met.

The most recent version of this program's annual performance report can be viewed at <https://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html>.

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

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

- Part I- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- Part I- Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF-424
- Part II- Department of Education Budget Summary Information–Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524)–Sections A&B
- Part III- *Project Narrative*–The total recommended page limit for the project narrative portion of the application for the FY 20XX SSS Program competition is 65 pages. Attach the *Project Narrative* document to the Project Narrative Attachment Form in the Grants.gov application.
- Part III- Other Attachments–Attach the following documents to the Other Attachments Form in the Grants.gov application.
  - SSS Program Profile Form
  - SSS Program Assurance
- Part III- ED Abstract-one-page limit–Attach this document to the ED Abstract Form in the Grants.gov application. This one-page abstract, which may be single-spaced, will not count against the recommended 65 pages you are allowed for your response to the selection criteria.
- Part IV- Assurances and Certifications
  - GEPA Section 427 Requirement
  - Lobbying Form (formerly ED Form 80-0013)
  - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF LLL)

**NOTE: Please do not attach any narratives, supporting files, or application components to the Standard Form (SF 424). Although this form accepts attachments, the Department of Education will only review materials/files attached to the Grants.gov Attachment Forms listed above.**

## 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 1840-0017. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 34 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2, Section 402D of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA) and 34 CFR part 646 SSS Program for Federal TRIO Programs). If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this application, please contact Student Service, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-4260 or [TRIO@ed.gov](mailto:TRIO@ed.gov) directly. [Note: Please do not return the completed application to this address.]