



U.S. Department of Labor on behalf of the
U.S. Department of Education

Career Pathways Exploration Grant Program

Assistance Listing Number: 84.424J

FY 2026 Grant Competition

Posted May 7, 2026

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Program Information

Program Purpose: The Employment and Training Administration at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is soliciting applications in support of the administration of the Career Pathways Exploration (CPE) program on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the Secretary of Education (the Secretary). The CPE program provides competitive grants to States to build their capacity to integrate career exploration into statewide career pathways and workforce readiness programs. The CPE program will help ensure access to opportunities that expose students to real-life workforce realities through a variety of career pathways programs that are aligned with State priorities.

Assistance Listing Number: 84.424J.

Program Authority: Section 4103(a)(3) of the ESEA ([20 U.S.C. 7113](#)).

OMB Control Number: 1894–0006.¹

For Further Information: Ivonne Jaime, Telephone: (202) 987-1702. Email: CareerPathways@ed.gov.

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: \$44,000,000.

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: \$1,000,000 to \$3,000,000 per year.

Maximum Award: \$3,000,000 per year.

Estimated Number of Awards: 6-15.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Application Deadline: June 9, 2026

Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking: Under the Administrative Procedure Act ([5 U.S.C. 553](#)), the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed priorities, selection criteria, definitions, application requirements, and other requirements. [Section 437\(d\)\(1\) of the General Education Provisions Act](#) (GEPA), however, allows ED to exempt from rulemaking requirements regulations governing the first grant competition under a new or substantially revised

¹ According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 60 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 and voluntary. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0006. *Note:* Please do not return completed applications to this address.

program authority. This is the first grant competition for this program under section 4103(a)(3) of the ESEA, therefore qualifies for this exemption. In order to ensure timely grant awards, ED has decided to forgo public comment on the priorities, requirements, and definitions under section 437(d)(1) of GEPA. These priorities, requirements, and definitions will apply to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 grant competition and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the

list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Note: This application notice and instructions is the official document governing the grant competition. Contingent upon the quality of applications, the Department anticipates using available funds to make awards for the full 36-month project period. ED is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Background

The CPE program supports efforts to provide elementary and secondary school students with increased career exploration opportunities that allow them to develop, expand, and prioritize the skills and knowledge needed to excel in high-demand fields. To support this goal, the CPE program provides competitive grants to States to build their capacity to integrate career exploration into statewide career pathways and workforce readiness programs. The CPE program will help ensure access to opportunities that expose students to real-life workforce realities through a variety of career pathways programs that are aligned with State workforce priorities.

In support of returning education to the States, ED believes this program is uniquely suited for State applicants. State applicants, as designated or endorsed by the Governors, are best positioned to coordinate K-12 career exploration initiatives that integrate education, workforce, and economic development systems. The CPE program is designed to allow Governors, in coordination with State agencies and their local educational agencies (LEAs), to align career exploration opportunities for schools with real-time labor market needs to create statewide opportunities for students to explore careers early, scale access to learning and employment records (LERs) and talent marketplaces, and align with local workforce boards and system partners so students can act on the knowledge gained in a meaningful way.

State applicants are encouraged to align proposed activities with the State's Unified or Combined Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan to ensure coherence with broader workforce development strategies and labor market priorities.

This program is being established with funds from the two percent reservation for technical assistance and capacity building under section 4103(a)(3) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 (ESEA), which is intended to support SEAs and LEAs in carrying out activities authorized under the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants program in title IV, part A of the ESEA through technical assistance and capacity building. Specifically, the CPE program is intended to help build the capacity of States and LEAs to provide well-rounded educational opportunities, consistent with the description of such opportunities in ESEA section 4107, through initiatives that make career pathways exploration programs broadly available to students. In support of this goal, grantees will share with other States and LEAs how career pathways exploration initiatives can be successfully implemented.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

In accordance with section 437(d)(1) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), [20 U.S.C. 1232\(d\)\(1\)](#), we are establishing that in order to receive funds under this program, an applicant must be a State (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(48)). The governor must either apply, or identify, designate, or endorse one of the following entities to apply for this program:

- (a) State educational agencies (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(49)),
- (b) State workforce development agencies,
- (c) State vocational rehabilitation agencies, or
- (d) Consortia of these entities, including the governor, as a group application under 34 CFR 75.127-129.

Note: Only one application per State is permitted. See application requirement (a) for more information.

Costs

Cost Sharing or Matching

This program does not require cost sharing or matching.

Supplement, Not Supplant

This competition involves supplement-not-supplant funding requirements. Grantees must use CPE funds to supplement, and not supplant, other non-Federal funds that would otherwise be used to pay for activities authorized under the CPE program.

Indirect Cost Rate Information

This program uses a restricted indirect cost rate. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see the [ED website](#).

Administrative Cost Limitation

In accordance with GEPA section 437(d)(1), ED is establishing an administrative cost cap for this program. Administrative costs for applicants that receive an award under this program may not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award.

Subgrantees

An eligible applicant under this competition may award subgrants to directly carry out project activities described in its application to the following types of entities: Local educational agencies (LEAs). The eligible applicant may award subgrants to LEAs it has identified in an approved application or that it selects through a competition under procedures established by the eligible applicant. However, an eligible applicant is not required to award subgrants and may instead administer the program directly. Additionally, under 34 CFR 75.708(b) and (c) subgrantees are not authorized to further subgrant. (34 CFR 75.708(b) and (c))

Submission Requirements and Deadlines

Applications Available	May 7, 2026
Application Deadline	June 9, 2026
Deadline for Intergovernmental Review	August 5, 2026

Applicants are required to follow the 2025 Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the Federal Register on August 29, 2025 (90 FR 42234) and available at [ED 2025 Common Instructions](#).

Program Description

Priorities

This competition has two absolute priorities and one competitive preference priority. The absolute priorities are from the Secretary's Notice of Final Priorities and Definitions- Secretary's Supplemental Priorities and Definitions on Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness, published in the Federal Register on April 13, 2026 ([91 FR 18780](#)) (Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness Supplemental Priority). We are establishing the competitive preference priority in accordance with section 437(d)(1) of GEPA.

Absolute Priorities: ED considers only applications that meet both absolute priorities.

Competitive Preference Priority: We award up to an additional 3 points to an application from an eligible applicant that meets the competitive preference priority.

ED will not review or award points for a competitive preference priority if an applicant fails to clearly identify in its project abstract and project narrative that it is addressing the competitive preference priority.

Priority	Required	Priority Language	Points
<i>Absolute Priority 1—</i> Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness – Career Pathways Exploration	Yes	To meet this priority, an applicant must describe how the project or proposal is designed to provide career and/or college exploration and advising opportunities to promote greater awareness of the range of postsecondary educational and career options.	Not applicable
<i>Absolute Priority 2—</i> Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness – Workforce Readiness	Yes	To meet this priority, an applicant must describe how the project or proposal is designed to do one or more of the following: (a) Support workforce development programs that are aligned with State priorities. This includes one or more of the following: (i) Coordinating activities to local workforce priorities. (ii) Activities that support alignment of workforce activities across State agencies that support workforce development (e.g., education, higher	Not applicable

Priority	Required	Priority Language	Points
		<p>education, workforce transformation, job and family services, vocational rehabilitation services including pre-employment transition services and transition services).</p> <p>(iii) Activities that support States in identifying in-demand and high-value industry-recognized credentials and/or re-evaluating existing lists of credentials.</p> <p>(iv) Providing support for the skilled trades,</p> <p>(v) Developing industry-led sector partnerships.</p> <p>(vi) Promoting the attainment by individuals of an in-demand and high-value industry-recognized postsecondary credential.</p> <p>(vii) Providing work-based learning opportunities (e.g., internships, externships, pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, and mentorships) for which a student may receive wages and/or academic credit.</p> <p>(viii) Expanding the availability of pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships, including through dual or concurrent enrollment (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(15)), by doing one or more of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Supporting apprenticeship intermediaries. (2) Creating pre-apprenticeships. (3) Creating new registered apprenticeships to include apprenticeships for in-school and out-of-school youth. <p>(b) Provide opportunities for students to use financial tools to compare the cost and benefits of the career options and educational pathways they are considering, including the long-term impact of taking out student loans on their financial security, including likely entry and mid-career earnings in fields selected by students as compared to entry and mid-career earnings in high-wage,</p>	

Priority	Required	Priority Language	Points
		<p>high-growth, and high-demand occupations in each of the career clusters.</p> <p>(c) Support the development of talent marketplaces (including credential registries, skills-based job description generators, and learning and employment records) that connect employers, students, and jobseekers by converting job descriptions and learning assertions into discrete, industry-recognized competencies.</p> <p>(d) Prioritize and expand Registered Apprenticeships in education, including Registered Apprenticeships to prepare one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Elementary educators, (ii) Secondary educators, or (iii) Special educators, including those serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers, children, or youth with disabilities by including one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Supporting the development and expansion of Registered Apprenticeship programs designed to lead to educator certification. (2) Creating targeted pathways for instructional assistants, paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, career changers, and other individuals already working in educational settings to earn teaching credentials and to become certified educators while employed. (3) Aligning secondary and postsecondary educator-registered apprenticeship programs with State educator licensure requirements and workforce shortage areas. (4) Providing technical assistance to school districts, educator preparation providers, institutions of higher education, and registered apprenticeship intermediaries to 	

Priority	Required	Priority Language	Points
		<p>establish or expand Registered Educator Apprenticeship programs.</p> <p>(5) Promoting earn-and-learn models through registered apprenticeships that reduce financial barriers and increase access to the teaching profession, particularly in high-need subject areas, including provision of:</p> <p>(A) Paid work experience in a full-time position;</p> <p>(B) A progression of wage increases; and</p> <p>(C) Coursework that leads to certification, delivered to accommodate full-time work schedules.</p>	
<p><i>Competitive Preference Priority—Talent Marketplaces</i></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Projects that are designed to strengthen career counseling activities to improve student persistence, postsecondary access and opportunity, and create a scalable data infrastructure that connects education to workforce outcomes by doing the following:</p> <p>(a) integrating learning and employment records (LER) with AI-enabled learner wallets to transform student support services into personalized, skills-based pathways to postsecondary success and employment, and</p> <p>(b) expanding access to talent marketplaces composed of credential registries (e.g. publishing education and training programs in structured, open, linked, and interoperable data formats), skills-based job description generators, LERs that connect program participants, employers, and education providers through a common currency of skills.</p>	<p>Up to 3 points</p>

Application Requirements

We are establishing these application requirements for the FY 2026 grant competition and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, in accordance with section 437(d)(1) of GEPA, [20 U.S.C. 1232\(d\)\(1\)](#).

An eligible entity must include the following in its application:

- (a) For applications not submitted by the governor of the State, the application must contain a signed letter from the governor identifying, designating, or endorsing the application on behalf of the State. Only one application per State is permitted from one of the entities described in the “Eligible Applicants” section.
- (b) Applicants must describe how they will use grant funds to support LEAs, including whether they will award subgrants to these entities to carry out project activities directly. Applicants must, if awarding subgrants through a competition, identify in their application the competition procedures that will be followed. If applicants plan to subgrant through a noncompetitive process, they must identify in their application the specific LEAs that will receive subgrant awards.
- (c) If eligible entities apply as a consortium, the lead entity must describe each entity’s role and the process for maintaining interagency communication and coordination with the Governor throughout the project. Consortium applications must also follow the group application requirements under 34 CFR 75.127-75.129.
- (d) Applicants must describe how they will share with other States and LEAs information related to project design, implementation, and lessons learned on a regular basis and how they will make the results of their grants publicly available.

Program Requirements

We are establishing these program requirements for the FY 2026 grant competition and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, in accordance with section 437(d)(1) of GEPA, [20 U.S.C. 1232\(d\)\(1\)](#).

- (a) Consistent with the purposes of ESEA Title IV, Part A, funds provided under this program must be solely for the benefit of elementary and secondary school students and their communities.
- (b) Applicants that receive an award under this program are prohibited from using program funds for: (1) gender ideology, (2) political activism, (3) racial stereotyping, or (4) hostile environments for students of particular races.

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria outline how the application will be scored. The maximum possible score an application can receive for addressing the selection criteria is 100 points. The maximum possible score for addressing each criterion is indicated in parentheses following the criterion.

When scoring applications, reviewers will be provided with and may consider the following optional scoring rubric:

Criteria	Maximum Points	Weak	Adequate	Strong
<i>Quality of Project Design</i>	30	0-10	11-22	23-30
<i>Quality of Management Plan</i>	30	0-10	11-22	23-30
<i>Adequacy of Resources</i>	20	0-7	8-15	16-20
<i>Quality of Project Evaluation</i>	20	0-7	8-15	16-20

(a) *Quality of the project design: (up to 30 points)*. The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- (1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and ambitious yet achievable within the project period, and aligned with the purposes of the grant program. (up to 20 points)
- (2) The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates that it is designed to build capacity and yield sustainable results that will extend beyond the project period. (up to 10 points)

(b) *Quality of the management plan: (up to 30 pts)*. The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

- (1) The feasibility of the management plan to achieve project objectives and goals on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (up to 15 points)

- (2) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project. (up to 15 points)
- (c) *Adequacy of resources: (up to 20 points)*. The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:
- (1) The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project and the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project. (Up to 10 points)
 - (2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served, the depth and intensity of services, and the anticipated results and benefits. (up to 10 points)
- (d) *Quality of the project evaluation or other evidence-building: (up to 20 points)*. The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation or other evidence-building of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation or other evidence-building, the Secretary considers the following factors:
- (1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation or other evidence-building are thorough, feasible, relevant, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. (up to 5 points)
 - (2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation or other evidence-building will provide performance feedback and provide formative, diagnostic, or interim data that is a periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (up to 5 points)
 - (3) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing and potential implementation in other settings. (up to 10 points)

Performance Measures

Applicants must include in the applications proposed project-specific performance measures, baseline data, and performance targets for the purposes of reporting to ED under [34 CFR 75.110\(c\)](#).

We advise applicants to consider their project-specific performance measures in developing the approach for its proposed project. Each grantee will be required to provide,

in its annual performance and final reports, data about its progress in meeting these measures.

In proposing project-specific performance measures, applicants must include the following in their applications:

- (1) A description of how each proposed project-specific performance measure would accurately measure the performance of the project and be used to inform continuous improvement of the project.
- (2) Why each proposed baseline is valid and reliable, including an assessment of the quality data used to establish the baseline; or if there are no established baseline data for a particular performance measure, an explanation of why there is no established baseline and of how and when, during the project period, the applicant would establish a valid baseline for the performance measure.
- (3) Why each proposed performance target is ambitious yet achievable compared to the baseline for the performance measure and when, during the project period, the applicant would meet the performance target(s).

We will work with successful applicants to ensure that the applicant's project-specific performance measurement plan will, if well implemented, yield quality data as defined in 34 CFR 77.1.

Application Submission Information

Competition Resources

ED will post a pre-application presentation for prospective applicants. To access the pre-application presentation, visit the CPE program webpage at: <https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/grants-birth-grade-12/school-and-community-improvement-grants/career-pathways-exploration-grant-program-aln-84424j>

Registration

To apply, you must first be registered in two systems: SAM.gov and Grants.gov. If you are already registered, make sure your registration is active and up to date.

Grants.gov registration involves several steps, including registration on [SAM.gov](https://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 apply until all registration steps are

complete. Once your SAM registration is active, it will take 24-48 hours for the information to become available in Grants.gov. For detailed information on the registration steps, please go to: [Grants.gov Applicant Registration](#). Please note that your organization will need to update its SAM registration annually.

SAM.gov

You must have an active account with SAM.gov. This includes having a Unique Entity Identifier. SAM.gov registration can take several weeks. **Begin that process early.**

To register, go to [SAM.gov](#) and click on "[Get Started](#)."

Click on the [Entity Registration Checklist](#) for the information you will need to register in SAM.gov.

If you need help, you can call 866-606-8220 or live chat with the [Federal Service Desk](#).

Grants.gov

You must also have an active account with Grants.gov.

To register, go to [Grants.gov](#) and click "[Register](#)." When ready, click on "[Get Registered Now](#)" and complete the required fields.

For more information or assistance, click on "[Applicant Registration Page](#)."

ED strongly recommends 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. If Grants.gov rejects your application, 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 Unique-Entity ID (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.

A Grants.gov applicant must apply online using Workspace, a shared environment in Grants.gov where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different web forms within an application.

Intergovernmental Review

This is subject to Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs) and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. One of the objectives of Executive Order 12372 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 developed to coordinate, and review proposed Federal financial grant applications. Grant applicants need to contact State Single Points of Contact (SPOC) for information on their State’s procedures. Multi-State applicants should follow procedures specific to each state. Further information about the [SPOC List and the official list of entities](#) can be found online.

Verify Submission

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, log in 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.

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 [Encountering Error Messages](#) webpage at Grants.gov.

For more detailed information on troubleshooting Adobe errors, you can review the [Adobe Reader Software Tip Sheet](#). 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.

Helpful Hints When Working with Grants.gov

Please go to the [Grants.gov Support Center](#) for help with Grants.gov. For additional tips related to submitting grant applications, please refer to the Grants.gov [Applicant FAQs](#) as well as [additional information on Workspace](#).

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 via email at: support@grants.gov. You may also access the [Grants.gov Self- Service Knowledge Base web portal](#).

Application Review Information

Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, ED may consider, under [34 CFR 75.217](#), information outside the rank order of applications, including: the information in each application; and any other information—

- (a) Relevant to a criterion, priority, or other requirement that applies to the selection of applications for new grants;
- (b) Concerning the applicant's performance and use of funds under a previous award under any ED program; and
- (c) Concerning the applicant's failure under any ED program to submit a performance report or its submission of a performance report of unacceptable quality.

Before making awards, ED staff will screen applications submitted in accordance with the requirements in this notice to determine whether applications have met eligibility and other requirements, including whether an application may fail to meet the “Terms and Conditions” applicable to awarded funds referenced elsewhere within this notice. This screening process may occur at various stages of the review and selection process. Applicants that are determined to be ineligible will not receive a grant, regardless of whether the application was included in the peer review process. Applications not selected for funding will be informed of ED's decision in accordance with [34 CFR 75.218](#).

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

Definitions

We are establishing the following definitions for the FY 2026 grant competition and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition. The definition of “State workforce development agency” is established in accordance with section 437(d)(1) of GEPA, [20 U.S.C. 1232\(d\)\(1\)](#). The definitions of “credential registry,” “in-demand industry sector or occupation,” “learning and employment record,” “recognized postsecondary credential,” “skills-based job description generator,” “talent marketplace,” and “work-based learning,” are from the Career Pathways and Workforce Readiness Supplemental Priority. The definitions of “educational service agency,” “local educational agency,” “State,” and “State educational agency” are from 20 U.S.C. 7801. The definitions of “ambitious” and “baseline” are from 34 CFR 77.1(c).

Ambitious means promoting continued, meaningful improvement for program participants or for other individuals or entities affected by the grant, or representing a significant advancement in the field of education research, practices, or methodologies. When used to describe a performance target, whether a performance target is ambitious depends upon the context of the relevant performance measure and the baseline for that measure.

Baseline means the starting point from which performance is measured and targets are set.

Credential registry, with respect to a component of a Talent Marketplace, means a digital repository and database, maintained by a State or State Workforce Agency, as defined at 29 U.S.C. 3225a(a)(8).

Educational service agency means a regional public multiservice agency authorized by State statute to develop, manage, and provide services or programs to local educational agencies.

In-demand industry sector or occupation, as defined in section 3(23) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), means (i) an industry sector that has a substantial current or potential impact (including through jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) on the State, regional, or local economy, as appropriate, and that contributes to the growth or stability of other supporting businesses, or the growth of other industry sectors; or (ii) an occupation that currently has or is projected to have a number of positions (including positions that lead to economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement) in an industry sector so as to have a significant impact on the State, regional, or local economy, as appropriate.

Learning and employment record, with respect to a Talent Marketplace, means a digital tool maintained by a State or State Workforce Agency, as defined at 29 U.S.C. 3225a(a)(8).

Local educational agency means a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or of or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

- (1) The term includes any other public institution or agency having administrative control and direction of a public elementary school or secondary school.
- (2) The term includes an elementary or secondary school funded by the Bureau of Indian Education but only to the extent that including the school makes the school

eligible for programs for which specific eligibility is not provided to the school in another provision of law and the school does not have a student population that is smaller than the student population of the LEA receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA) with the smallest student population, except that the school shall not be subject to the jurisdiction of any SEA other than the Bureau of Indian Education.

(3) The term includes educational service agencies and consortia of those agencies.

(4) The term includes the SEA in a State in which the SEA is the sole educational agency for all public schools.

Recognized postsecondary credential means a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State involved or Federal Government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree, as defined in section 3(53) of the WIOA.

Skills-based job description generator, with respect to a Talent Marketplace, means a digital tool, maintained by a State or a State Workforce Agency, as defined at 29 U.S.C. 3225a(a)(8).

State means each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and each of the outlying areas.

State educational agency means the agency primarily responsible for the State supervision of public elementary schools and secondary schools.

State workforce development agency means the lead State agency identified in the State's approved Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Plan under section in 29 U.S.C. 3112, which administers the State's core workforce development program.

Talent marketplace means a digital, interconnected system of technologies maintained by a State or State Workforce Agency, as defined at 29 U.S.C. 3225a(a)(8), that

(a) is publicly available;

(b) includes an integrated:

(i) Learning and Employment Record;

(ii) Credential Registry; and

(iii) Skill-Based Job Description generator;

(c) utilizes artificial intelligence to enable learners and jobseekers, employers, and education and training providers to transform, transcribe, and transact earned learning assertions, job descriptions, and degree and non-degree credentials into discrete competency statements; and

- (d) may be curated into interoperable individual records of achievement and learning and employment recommendations

Work-based learning is used in accordance with 20 U.S.C. 2302(55), to mean sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that foster in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.

Award Requirements

Terms and Conditions

If you are awarded a grant under this competition, you must ensure and may be required to demonstrate that federal funds will not be used under this project in any manner that violates the United States Constitution, Title VI or Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.](#) or [42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.](#)), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ([20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.](#)), section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act ([29 U.S.C. 794](#)), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 ([42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.](#)), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ([42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.](#)), the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001 ([20 U.S.C. 7905](#)), section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (), or other applicable federal law. To the extent that a grantee uses grant funds for such unallowable activities, ED may take appropriate enforcement action including the potential recovery of funds or may pursue termination or non-continuation. The Grant Award Notification document accompanying your award may contain further terms and conditions, as necessary, to ensure grantee compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and administrative priorities.

Please note the provisions of Executive Orders 14151, 14168, 14173, and 14190 as well as the U.S. Department of Justice’s July 29, 2025, non-regulatory [“Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination,”](#) which clarifies the application of federal antidiscrimination laws to programs or initiatives that may involve discriminatory practices, including those labeled as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (“DEI”) programs.

Such activities may risk violating federal civil rights laws and may jeopardize federal funding. This includes any discriminatory equity ideology in violation of a Federal anti-discrimination law. A definition of “discriminatory equity ideology” is contained in Section 2(b) of Executive Order 14190. To the extent that any entity receiving grant funds under this grant uses those grant funds for such unallowable activities, ED reserves the right to

take appropriate enforcement actions, including the recovery of grant funds or may pursue termination or non-continuation.

Applicable Regulations

(a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of ED 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 ED in 2 CFR part 3474. (d) Career Pathways and Workforce Development Supplemental Priority.

Continuation Awards

In making a continuation award determination under [34 CFR 75.253](#), ED 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; if ED has established performance measurement requirements, whether the grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the performance targets in the grantee's approved application; and whether the grant continues to be in the best interest of the federal government.

In making a continuation award determination, ED also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the terms and conditions specified elsewhere in this notice and 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 ED ([34 CFR 100.4](#), [104.5](#), [106.4](#), [108.8](#), and [110.23](#)). In making any continuation award determination, ED may consider all relevant information.

Application Checklist

The application will require you to fill out several forms, which are listed and linked in grants.gov. See below for a description of forms and sections:

1. Standard Documents

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- ED Supplemental Information for SF-424

2. Budget Information

- Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)

3. Abstract Form

- Project Abstract

4. Project Narrative

- Application Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form)

5. Budget Narrative

- Budget Narrative (Budget Narrative Attachment Form)

6. Other Attachment Forms

- Individual Resumes for Project Director & Key Personnel
- Documentation of Nonprofit Status

7. Assurances and Certifications

- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Standard Form LLL)
- Grants.gov Lobbying Form

Part 1: Standard Documents

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)
- ED Supplemental Information for SF 424 ([Instructions](#))

These forms require basic identifying information about the applicant and the application. Please provide all requested applicant information (including name, address, e-mail address and UEI). **When applying electronically via Grants.gov, you will need to ensure that the UEI on your application is the same as the UEI your organization used when it registered with the System for Award Management.**

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

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

Part 2: Budget Information

Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)

The SF-424A Budget Information Form is required. This part of your application contains information about the Federal funding you are requesting. The form requires total funding requests for each year of the project, but only requires detailed information for Year 1 of the project. You will provide information on all years of the project, including an itemized budget breakdown for each year of the proposed project, in your Budget Narrative. Specific instructions for completing the Budget Narrative are provided within this application notice and instructions under Budget Narrative. Budget Narrative attachments are not included in the page count.

Instructions for completing SF-424A:

The SF-424A has six sections (A-F). While the form includes several sections and boxes, please use the information below to complete only the necessary sections.

Section A – Budget Summary

- *Section A-Budget Summary:* Enter the name of the grant program for which you are requesting funds in 1(a).
- *Section A-Budget Summary:* 1(b): Enter the Assistance Listing Number (84.424J).
- *Section A-Budget Summary:* 1(e) “Federal”: Include the total amount requested for the entire performance period. The amount you enter here will auto populate in 5 (e).
- *Section A-Budget Summary:* 1(f) “Non-Federal”: Only include an amount in this section if you propose to include non-Federal financial resources as part of this project, including any non-Federal funds to meet any program cost sharing requirements. If not including non-Federal financial resources, leave this blank or include 0.

- *Section A-Budget Summary: 1(g):* If using Grants.gov form, the total amount included here will be auto-calculated based on what is included in 1(e) and 1(f).

Section B – Budget Categories

Section B-Budget Categories:

- *Line 6. Object Class Categories:* The categories listed here (a-k) are the categories you will need to further describe in the Budget Narrative. For this section, only include the total amount by category for Year 1 of the project. You will provide a breakdown by category for each year of the project in the Budget Narrative. If using Grants.gov, line 6 column (1) will be auto-populated with the name of the program for which you are requesting funding.
 - *Personnel (line 6a):* Enter project personnel salaries and wages only. Include fees and expenses for consultants on line 6f or 6h.
 - *Fringe Benefits (line 6b):* The organization’s normal fringe benefits contribution may be charged to the program. Leave this line blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of the indirect cost.
 - *Travel (line 6c):* Indicate the travel costs of employees and participants only. Include travel of persons such as consultants on line 6f or 6h.
 - *Equipment (line 6d):* Indicate the cost of tangible, non-expendable personal property that has a usefulness greater than one year and acquisition costs that are the lesser of the capitalization level established by the applicant entity for financial statement purposes or \$10,000 per article. Lower limits may be established to maintain consistency with the applicant’s policy.
 - *Supplies (line 6e):* Show all tangible, expendable personal property. Direct supplies and materials differ from equipment in that they are consumable, expendable, and of a relatively low unit cost. Supplies purchased with grant funds should directly benefit the grant project and be necessary for achieving the goals of the project.
 - *Contractual (line 6f):* The contractual category should include all costs specifically incurred with actions that the applicant takes in conjunction with an established internal procurement system. Include consultant fees, expenses, and travel costs in this category if the consultant’s services are obtained through a written binding agreement or contract.

- *Construction (line 6g):* Construction funds are not authorized.
 - *Other (line 6h):* Indicate all direct costs not covered on lines 1-6. For example, include costs such as space rental, required fees, honoraria and travel (where a contract is not in place for services), training, and communication and printing costs. If applicable, include stipends under other. Do not include stipends when calculating the indirect cost. Do not include costs that are included in the indirect cost rate.
 - *Total Direct Costs (line 6i):* The sum of lines 6a-6h. If using Grants.gov, this number is auto-calculated.
 - *Indirect Costs (line 6j):* Enter the amount of indirect cost in accordance with the Costs section of these instructions, negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or the 15% de minimis rate. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. For more information, please see the grantor agency requirements. If not applicable, leave blank.
 - *Total Cost (line 6i and 6j):* This number should be equal to sum of lines 6i-6j (total of direct costs + indirect costs). If using Grants.gov, this number is auto-calculated. The sum for column one, labeled Project Year 6 (1), should also be equal to item 15a on the application cover sheet (SF Form 424).
- *Line 7. Program Income:* You may leave this field blank.

Section C – Non-Federal Resources

This section should only be completed if you are proposing a cost share or if the program for which you are applying requires a Non-Federal cost share. If the program includes a cost share, provide a breakdown by including the dollars that will come from the applicant, State, and other sources, as applicable.

Section D – Forecasted Cash Needs

- *Line 13. Federal:* The total for 1st Year column will automatically calculate based on the funding amounts included in Quarters 1-4. These quarters apply to **Year One ONLY**. Enter the forecasted cash needs from Federal sources for each quarter of the first program year. The amount entered for each quarter will be used to auto-calculate the amount in line 15 and is your forecasted needs. You will have an opportunity to provide updates to these quarterly amounts in post-award.
- *Line 14. Non-Federal:* The total for 1st year column will automatically calculate based on the funding amounts included in Quarters 1-4. These quarters apply to

Year One ONLY. Leave this blank for each quarter if you are not including any Non-Federal Funds. If including non-Federal funds, enter the forecasted cash needs from non-Federal sources for the first quarter of the first program year. If not applicable, leave blank.

- *Line 15. (sum of lines 13 and 14):* If using Grants.gov, the total is auto-calculated.

Section E – Budget Estimates of Federal Funds Needed for Balance of the Project

This section collects information for future funding periods. While the columns are labeled First (b) through Fourth (e), this is the section where you will include the **total** amount of Federal funds requested for Years 2-5, for five-year projects. You are only including the **total** amount of Federal funds requested for the outyears beyond Year 1. The total amount in Section D. line 13 plus the total amount in the outyears should match the project total requested in Section A line 5 (e).

- *Line 16 Column (a) Grant Program:* If using Grants.gov, this box will be auto-populated with the name of the program you included in Section A Line 1.
- *Line 16 Column (b) First:* Include the total amount requested for the first outyear. **Year 2 of the project.** Ensure this amount matches what is in your Budget Narrative.
- *Line 16 Column (c) Second:* Include the total amount requested for the second outyear. **Year 3 of the project.** Ensure this amount matches what is in your Budget Narrative.
- *Line 16 Column (d) Third:* Include the total amount requested for the third outyear. **Year 4 of the project.** Ensure this amount matches what is in your Budget Narrative.
- *Line 16 Column (e) Fourth:* Include the total amount requested for the fourth outyear. **Year 5 of the project.** Ensure this amount matches what is in your Budget Narrative.

Section F – Other Budget Information

- *Line 21. Direct Charges:* You may leave this field blank.
- *Line 22. Indirect Charges:* Enter the type of indirect rate (provisional, predetermined, final or fixed) or 15% de minimis rate that will be in effect during the funding period, the estimated amount of the base to which the rate is applied, and the total indirect expense.
- *Line 23. Remarks:* You may leave this field blank.

Part 3: Abstract Form

The project abstract should not exceed two double spaced pages and should include a concise description of the following information:

- Project objectives and activities

- Absolute Priority(ies)
- Competitive Preference Priority(ies), if applicable
- Proposed project outcomes
- Proposed project partners, if applicable

Ensure that you only attach the ED approved file types detailed in the [2025 Common Instructions](#)

Part 4: Project Narrative

This section should be attached as a single document to the Project Narrative Attachment Form in accordance with these instructions and should be organized in the following manner and include the following parts in order to expedite the review process.

Ensure that you only attach the ED approved file types detailed in the [2025 Common Instructions](#). When attaching files, applicants should limit the size of their file names.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents shows where and how the important sections of your proposal are organized and should not exceed one double-spaced page.

Application Narrative

ED encourages applicants to limit this section of the application to the equivalent of no more than 15 pages. The recommended page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; or the project abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, or the letters of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to the **Project Narrative**.

Part 5: Budget Narrative

This section should be attached as a single document to the Budget Narrative Attachment Form. It should be organized in the following manner and include the following parts in order to expedite the review process. Ensure that you attach the ED approved file types detailed in the [2025 Common Instructions](#).

Each application must also provide a Budget Narrative for requested Federal funds. The Budget Narrative for requested Federal funds should provide a justification of how the money requested for each budget item will be spent, and the total amounts for each project year should match the total amounts in Section E – Budget Estimates of Federal Funds Needed for Balance of the Project in SF-424A.

This section requires an itemized budget breakdown for each project year and the basis for estimating the costs of personnel salaries, benefits, project staff travel, materials and supplies, consultants and subcontracts, indirect costs and any other projected expenditures. Be sure to complete an itemized budget breakdown and narrative for each year of the proposed project. Below is a breakdown of the categories to be included in the Budget Narrative for each project year:

- *Personnel:* List all staff positions by title including roles and responsibilities. For each position give the annual salary, the percentage of time devoted to the project, and the amount of each position's salary funded by the grant.
- *Fringe Benefits:* The institution's normal fringe benefits contribution may be charged to the program. Leave this line blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of the indirect cost.
- *Travel:* For grantee staff only, specify the purpose, number of staff traveling, mileage, per diem, estimated number of in-state and out-of-state trips, and other estimated costs for each type of travel.
- *Equipment:* Identify each item of equipment you expect to purchase that has an estimated acquisition cost of \$10,000 or more per unit (or if your capitalization level is less than \$10,000, use your capitalization level) and a useful lifetime of more than one year (see [2 CFR Part 200.1](#) for the definition of Equipment). List the item, quantity, and the unit cost per item.
- *Supplies:* Identify the cost of supplies (e.g., general office supplies, desk/chairs, laptops/printers, other specialty items) in the detailed budget per category. Except for general office supplies, list the item, quantity, and the unit cost per item. Supplies include all tangible personal property other than "equipment" (see [2 CFR Part 200.1](#) for the definition of Supplies). Items with a unit cost of less than \$10,000 are supplies, not "equipment."
- *Contractual:* The contractual category should include all costs specifically incurred with actions that the applicant takes in conjunction with an established internal procurement system. Include consultant fees, expenses, and travel costs in this category if the consultant's services are obtained through a written binding agreement or contract.
- *Construction:* Construction funds are not authorized.
- *Other:* Indicate all direct costs not covered elsewhere. For example, include such costs as space rental, required fees, honoraria and travel (where a contract is not in

place for services), training, and communication and printing costs. List items, such as stipends or incentives, not covered elsewhere. Do not include costs that are included in the indirect cost rate.

- *Indirect Costs:* Enter the amount of indirect cost in accordance with the Costs section of these instructions, negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or the 15% de minimis rate. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. For more information, please see the grantor agency requirements. If not applicable, leave blank.
- *Total Cost:* This number should be total direct costs + indirect costs.

The Budget Narrative provides an opportunity for the applicant to identify the nature and amount of the proposed expenditures. The applicant should provide sufficient detail to enable reviewers and project staff to understand how requested funds will be used, how much will be expended, and the relationship between the requested funds and project activities and outcomes.

In accordance with [34 CFR 75.232](#), ED staff perform a cost analysis of each recommended project to ensure that costs relate to the activities and objectives of the project, are reasonable, allowable and allocable. ED may delete or reduce costs from the budget during this review.

Note: Applicants are encouraged to review the Cost Principles described in 2 CFR part 200 subpart E 2 of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements For Federal Awards.

Part 6: Other Attachment Forms

Attach one or more documents to the Other Attachments Form. You may provide all of the required information in a single document, or in multiple documents.

Ensure that you only attach the ED approved file types detailed in the [2025 Common Instructions](#).

Suggested order:

- Resumes/Vitae
- Letters
- Supplementary Information
- Other Appendices

Part 7: Assurances and Certifications

Be certain to complete all required assurances and certifications and include all required information in the appropriate place on each form. The assurances and certifications required for this application are:

- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**
- Grants.Gov Lobbying Form – “Certification Regarding Lobbying”**

Note: While it is required to submit the lobbying form that best meets an applicants’ situation, the two forms are classified as “optional” in Grants.gov to avoid submission errors when only one lobbying form is submitted.

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 Portable Document Format (PDF). ED recommends 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 for review.
- 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.