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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities--Associate Degree Preservice Program Improvement Grants to Support Personnel Working with Young Children with Disabilities

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education is issuing a notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2018 for Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities--Associate Degree Preservice Program Improvement Grants to Support Personnel Working with Young Children with Disabilities, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 84.325N.

DATES:

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

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

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 12, 2018 (83 FR 6003) and available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-12/pdf/2018-02558.pdf.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Julia Martin Eile, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5175, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-5076. Telephone: (202) 245-7431. Email: Julia.Martin.Eile@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 purposes of this program are to (1) help address State-identified needs for personnel in special education, early intervention, related services, and regular education to work with children, including infants and toddlers, with disabilities; and (2) ensure that those personnel have the necessary skills and knowledge, derived from practices that have been determined through scientifically based research and experience, to be successful in serving those children.

Priorities: In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), the absolute and competitive preference priorities are from allowable activities specified in the statute (see sections 662 and 681 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); 20 U.S.C. 1462 and 1481).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2018 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is:

Associate Degree Preservice Program Improvement Grants to Support Personnel Working with Young Children with Disabilities.

Background:

The mission of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is to improve early childhood, educational, and employment outcomes and raise expectations for all people with disabilities, their families, their communities, and the Nation.

The purpose of this priority is to fund eight Associate Degree Preservice Improvement Grants and improve the quality of existing associate degree programs so that associate degree-level personnel are well prepared to work

with infants, toddlers, preschool, and early elementary school children ages birth through 8 (young children) with disabilities and their families in inclusive early childhood programs and elementary schools. Associate degree-level personnel play critical roles in the development and learning of all young children, including young children with disabilities, as child care providers, preschool teachers, assistant teachers, and paraprofessionals. In these roles, associate degree-level personnel can use evidence-based (as defined in this notice) practices (EBPs) to meaningfully include young children with disabilities in early childhood programs and classrooms, individualize interventions and accommodations, collect data to monitor progress, and collaborate with other professionals. In elementary schools, paraprofessionals are often responsible for providing direct services to children, such as small group instruction, one-on-one tutoring, and assisting with classroom management. Studies have shown, however, that associate degree programs do not adequately prepare personnel to work with young children with disabilities (Chang, Early, & Winton, 2005; Giangreco, 2010; Maxwell, Lim, & Early, 2006). This priority is consistent with two of the priorities from the Secretary's Final Supplemental

Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grant Programs, which were published in the *Federal Register* on March 2, 2018 (83 FR 9096): Priority 5--Meeting the Unique Needs of Students and Children with Disabilities and/or Those with Unique Gifts and Talents; and Priority 8--Promoting Effective Instruction in Classrooms and Schools.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) began to address the need for more qualified associate degree-level personnel in FYs 2010 and 2011 by funding projects to enhance and redesign community college programs. A number of those grantees were four-year institutions that partnered with community colleges and successfully redesigned their associate degree programs. They did this by incorporating content on serving children with disabilities and their families into courses and practicum experiences to increase the competencies of associate degree-level personnel to work with children with disabilities and their families (Catlett, Maude, & Nollsch, 2014; Catlett, Maude, & Skinner, 2016).

OSEP will build on this work by funding four-year institutions of higher education (IHEs) to partner with a minimum of three community colleges to enhance and redesign their associate degree programs to better prepare associate

degree students to meet the needs of young children with disabilities and their families.

Priority:

The purpose of this priority is to fund eight Associate Degree Preservice Program Improvement Grants to Support Personnel Working with Young Children with Disabilities to achieve, at a minimum, the following expected outcomes:

(a) Redesigned curricula and increased faculty knowledge and capacity to deliver new content in the curricula that better prepares associate degree students to work with young children with disabilities and their families and support their meaningful participation, development, and learning in early childhood programs and elementary schools;

(b) Increased competencies of associate degree students to work with young children with disabilities and their families and support their meaningful participation, development, and learning in early childhood programs and elementary schools;

(c) Increased numbers of associate degree-level personnel who have the competencies to work with young children with disabilities and their families and support

their meaningful participation, development, and learning in early childhood programs and elementary schools; and

(d) Refinement and verification of a model to effectively enhance and redesign associate degree programs to prepare associate degree-level personnel to work with young children with disabilities and their families through partnerships with four-year IHEs.

In addition to these programmatic requirements, to be considered for funding under this priority, applicants must meet the application and administrative requirements in this priority, which are:

(a) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Significance," how the proposed project will--

(1) Address the need in the field for associate degree-level personnel with the competencies to serve young children with disabilities and their families and support their meaningful participation, development, and learning in early childhood programs and elementary schools. To meet this requirement, the applicant must--

(i) Present applicable national and State data demonstrating the need to improve the competencies of associate degree-level personnel to serve young children with disabilities and their families and support their

meaningful participation, development, and learning in early childhood programs and elementary schools;

(ii) Demonstrate knowledge of the competencies that associate degree-level personnel need to effectively serve young children with disabilities and their families and support their meaningful participation, development, and learning in early childhood programs and elementary schools; and

(iii) Demonstrate knowledge of current educational issues and policy initiatives relating to the preparation of a competent early childhood workforce, especially associate degree-level personnel;

(2) Addresss the need for faculty to have the competencies to deliver content that will prepare associate degree students to serve young children with disabilities and their families and support their meaningful participation, development, and learning in early childhood programs and elementary schools. To meet this requirement, the applicant must--

(i) Present applicable national or State data demonstrating the need to improve preservice preparation at the associate degree-level to prepare students to serve young children with disabilities and their families; and

(ii) Present information about the current capacity of faculty preparing associate degree students to align the curriculum to State and national professional organization personnel standards, integrate content on serving young children with disabilities and their families, and design the curriculum utilizing adult learning principles.

(b) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of project services," how the proposed project will--

(1) Ensure equal access and treatment for members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability;

(2) Achieve its goals, objectives, and intended outcomes. To meet this requirement, the applicant must provide--

(i) Measurable intended project outcomes; and

(ii) In Appendix A, the logic model (as defined in this notice) by which the proposed project will achieve its intended outcomes that depicts, at a minimum, the goals, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes of the proposed project;

(3) Use a conceptual framework (and provide a copy in Appendix A) to develop project plans and activities,

describing any underlying concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, or theories, as well as the presumed relationships or linkages among these variables, and any empirical support for this framework;

Note: The following websites provide more information on logic models and conceptual frameworks:

www.osepideasthatwork.org/logicModel and

www.osepideasthatwork.org/resources-grantees/program-areas/ta-ta/tad-project-logic-model-and-conceptual-framework.

(4) Be based on current research and make use of EBPs. To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) The current research on adult learning principles that will inform the proposed project; and

(ii) How the proposed project will incorporate current research and EBPs in the development and delivery of curriculum enhancement and redesign;

(5) Develop or refine a process to effectively enhance and redesign associate degree programs to achieve the intended outcomes of the proposed project. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) How it proposes to develop partnerships with a minimum of three community colleges in the State to enhance

and revise the associate degree curricula within these community colleges to prepare early intervention, early childhood special education, and early childhood education personnel to serve children ages birth through age 8 with disabilities. (In States where the age range for certification of early childhood personnel is other than birth through age 8 (e.g., birth through age 3, birth through age 5, ages 3 through 5), we defer to the age range in such State's certification); and

(ii) Its proposed approach to partner with community colleges to enhance or redesign the associate degree programs' curricula by incorporating EBPs into courses and by providing at least one practicum experience in a setting that serves young children with disabilities and their families. The applicant must describe how the improved associate degree program will be--

(A) Aligned to State standards for associate degree-level personnel, or in States that do not have State standards, meet appropriate national professional organization standards for associate degree-level professions; and

(B) Designed to ensure that associate degree students receive training and develop competencies in the following areas:

(1) Collaborating and working effectively with other practitioners;

(2) Implementing instructional and intervention practices, such as the Division for Early Childhood Recommended Practices, the Council for Exceptional Children High-Leverage Practices in Special Education, or similar best practice recommendations;

(3) Supporting young children with disabilities' literacy and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) development by implementing EBPs and supporting families to understand their young children's literacy and STEM development;

(4) Supporting young children with disabilities' social, emotional, and behavioral development and implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports;

(5) Using technology to enhance children's development and access to natural learning opportunities or participation in early childhood programs;

(6) Observing and collecting data for progress monitoring;

(7) Engaging and communicating effectively with families;

(8) Assisting in the implementation of transition plans and services across settings from early intervention to preschool and preschool to elementary school; and

(9) Working with children and families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, including dual language learners with disabilities;

(iii) Its proposed approach to ensure that faculty in the community colleges have the necessary support, knowledge, skills, and competencies to enhance or redesign their associate degree program and implement the new content to prepare associate degree students to work with young children with disabilities and their families; and

(iv) Its proposed approach to using resources developed by other projects funded by the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services when partnering with community colleges to redesign or enhance their associate degree programs.

(c) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the project evaluation," how-

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(1) The applicant will use comprehensive and appropriate methodologies to evaluate how well the goals or objectives of the proposed project have been met, including the project processes and outcomes;

(2) The applicant will collect, analyze, and use data related to specific and measureable goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) How student competencies and other project processes and outcomes will be measured for formative purposes, including proposed instruments, data collection methods, and possible analysis;

(ii) How data on faculty competencies will be collected and analyzed; and

(iii) How data on the quality of the process used to enhance and redesign the associate degree program will be collected and analyzed;

(3) The methods of evaluation will produce quantitative and qualitative data for objective performance measurement that are related to the outcomes of the proposed project;

(4) The methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and allow for periodic assessment of progress towards meeting the project outcomes. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe how--

(i) Results of the evaluation will be used as a basis for improving the proposed project to prepare associate

degree-level personnel to provide evidence-based services to young children with disabilities and their families;

(ii) Results of the evaluation will be used to refine the process for enhancing and redesigning associate degree programs; and

(iii) The grantee will report the evaluation results to OSEP in its annual and final performance reports.

(d) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel," how--

(1) The proposed project will encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, as appropriate;

(2) The proposed key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors have the qualifications and experience to carry out the proposed activities and achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The applicant and any key partners have adequate resources to carry out the proposed activities; and

(4) The proposed costs are reasonable in relation to the anticipated results and benefits.

(e) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the management plan," how--

(1) The proposed management plan will ensure that the project's intended outcomes will be achieved on time and within budget. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) Clearly defined responsibilities for key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors, as applicable; and

(ii) Timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks;

(2) Key project personnel and any consultants and subcontractors will be allocated and how these allocations are appropriate and adequate to achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The proposed management plan will ensure that the project's products and services are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients; and

(4) The proposed project will benefit from a diversity of perspectives, including those of families, educators, faculty, doctoral-level students, technical assistance and professional development providers, researchers, and policy makers, among others, in its development and operation.

(f) Address the following application requirements.

The applicant must--

(1) Include, in Appendix A, personnel-loading charts and timelines, as applicable, to illustrate the management plan described in the narrative;

(2) If the project maintains a website, include relevant information about the revised program and documents in a form that meets government or industry recognized standards of accessibility;

(3) Include, in the budget, attendance at a two and one-half day project directors' conference in Washington, DC, during each year of the project period; and

(4) Provide an assurance that the project will submit the revised curriculum and syllabi for courses that are included in the improved associate degree programs to the OSEP project officer with the submission of the annual performance report during each year of the grant and make any necessary revisions required by OSEP.

Competitive Preference Priority: Within this absolute priority, we give competitive preference to applications that meet the following priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i) we award up to an additional five points to an application that meets this priority.

This priority is:

Applicants that partner with one or multiple local or State entities, such as schools (including early childhood programs), local educational agencies (LEAs) or State educational agencies (SEAs), State lead agencies, businesses, or not-for-profit organizations, to help meet the goals of the project.

Note: The Department is particularly interested in partnerships that are designed to identify and address local needs for personnel in special education, early intervention, related services, and regular education to work with children, including infants and toddlers, with disabilities; and partnerships designed to guarantee post-graduation employment opportunities for personnel who successfully complete a relevant training program with an associate degree from any partner community college.

References:

- Catlett, C., Maude, S. P., & Nollsch, M. (2014). Young Exceptional Children Monography, No. 16.
- Catlett, C., Maude, S. P., & Skinner, M. (2016, October). The blueprint process for enhancing early childhood preservice programs and courses. Unpublished manuscript.
- Chang, F., Early, D., & Winton, P. (2005). Early childhood teacher preparation in special education at

2- and 4-year institutions of higher education.

Journal of Early Intervention, 27, 110-124.

Giangreco, M. F. (2010). One-to-one paraprofessionals for students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms:

Is conventional wisdom wrong? Intellectual &

Developmental Disabilities, 48(1), 1-13.

Maxwell, K. L., Lim, C-I., & Early, D. M. (2006). Early childhood teacher preparation programs in the United States: National report. Chapel Hill: University of

North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute.

Definitions:

The following definitions are from 34 CFR 77.1:

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.

Evidence-based means the proposed project component is supported by one or more of strong evidence, moderate evidence, promising evidence, or evidence that demonstrates a rationale.

Experimental study means a study that is designed to compare outcomes between two groups of individuals (such as students) that are otherwise equivalent except for their assignment to either a treatment group receiving a project

component or a control group that does not. Randomized controlled trials, regression discontinuity design studies, and single-case design studies are the specific types of experimental studies that, depending on their design and implementation (e.g., sample attrition in randomized controlled trials and regression discontinuity design studies), can meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) standards without reservations as described in the WWC Handbook:

(i) A randomized controlled trial employs random assignment of, for example, students, teachers, classrooms, or schools to receive the project component being evaluated (the treatment group) or not to receive the project component (the control group).

(ii) A regression discontinuity design study assigns the project component being evaluated using a measured variable (e.g., assigning students reading below a cutoff score to tutoring or developmental education classes) and controls for that variable in the analysis of outcomes.

(iii) A single-case design study uses observations of a single case (e.g., a student eligible for a behavioral intervention) over time in the absence and presence of a controlled treatment manipulation to determine whether the outcome is systematically related to the treatment.

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.

Moderate evidence means that there is evidence of effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome for a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to receive that component, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

(i) A practice guide prepared by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook reporting a “strong evidence base” or “moderate evidence base” for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;

(ii) An intervention report prepared by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook reporting a “positive effect” or “potentially positive effect” on a relevant outcome based on a “medium to large” extent of evidence, with no reporting of a “negative effect” or “potentially negative effect” on a relevant outcome; or

(iii) A single experimental study or quasi-experimental design study reviewed and reported by the WWC

using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook, or otherwise assessed by the Department using version 3.0 of the WWC Handbook, as appropriate, and that--

(A) Meets WWC standards with or without reservations;

(B) Includes at least one statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect on a relevant outcome;

(C) Includes no overriding statistically significant and negative effects on relevant outcomes reported in the study or in a corresponding WWC intervention report prepared under version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook; and

(D) Is based on a sample from more than one site (e.g., State, county, city, school district, or postsecondary campus) and includes at least 350 students or other individuals across sites. Multiple studies of the same project component that each meet requirements in paragraphs (iii)(A), (B), and (C) of this definition may together satisfy this requirement.

Project component means an activity, strategy, intervention, process, product, practice, or policy included in a project. Evidence may pertain to an individual project component or to a combination of project components (e.g., training teachers on instructional

practices for English learners and follow-on coaching for these teachers).

Promising evidence means that there is evidence of the effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

(i) A practice guide prepared by WWC reporting a "strong evidence base" or "moderate evidence base" for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;

(ii) An intervention report prepared by the WWC reporting a "positive effect" or "potentially positive effect" on a relevant outcome with no reporting of a "negative effect" or "potentially negative effect" on a relevant outcome; or

(iii) A single study assessed by the Department, as appropriate, that--

(A) Is an experimental study, a quasi-experimental design study, or a well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias (e.g., a study using regression methods to account for differences between a treatment group and a comparison group); and

(B) Includes at least one statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect on a relevant outcome.

Quasi-experimental design study means a study using a design that attempts to approximate an experimental study by identifying a comparison group that is similar to the treatment group in important respects. This type of study, depending on design and implementation (e.g., establishment of baseline equivalence of the groups being compared), can meet WWC standards with reservations, but cannot meet WWC standards without reservations, as described in the WWC Handbook.

Relevant outcome means the student outcome(s) or other outcome(s) the key project component is designed to improve, consistent with the specific goals of the program.

Strong evidence means that there is evidence of the effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome for a sample that overlaps with the populations and settings proposed to receive that component, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

(i) A practice guide prepared by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook reporting a "strong

evidence base" for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;

(ii) An intervention report prepared by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook reporting a "positive effect" on a relevant outcome based on a "medium to large" extent of evidence, with no reporting of a "negative effect" or "potentially negative effect" on a relevant outcome; or

(iii) A single experimental study reviewed and reported by the WWC using version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook, or otherwise assessed by the Department using version 3.0 of the WWC Handbook, as appropriate, and that--

(A) Meets WWC standards without reservations;

(B) Includes at least one statistically significant and positive (i.e., favorable) effect on a relevant outcome;

(C) Includes no overriding statistically significant and negative effects on relevant outcomes reported in the study or in a corresponding WWC intervention report prepared under version 2.1 or 3.0 of the WWC Handbook; and

(D) Is based on a sample from more than one site (e.g., State, county, city, school district, or postsecondary campus) and includes at least 350 students or other individuals across sites. Multiple studies of the

same project component that each meet requirements in paragraphs (iii) (A), (B), and (C) of this definition may together satisfy this requirement.

What Works Clearinghouse Handbook (WWC Handbook) means the standards and procedures set forth in the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Version 3.0 or Version 2.1 (incorporated by reference, see 34 CFR 77.2). Study findings eligible for review under WWC standards can meet WWC standards without reservations, meet WWC standards with reservations, or not meet WWC standards. WWC practice guides and intervention reports include findings from systematic reviews of evidence as described in the Handbook documentation.

Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking: Under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. 553) the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed priorities and requirements. Section 681(d) of IDEA, however, makes the public comment requirements of the APA inapplicable to the priorities in this notice.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1462 and 1481.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 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 304.

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 IHES only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: \$1,200,000.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2019 from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$145,000-\$150,000.

Maximum Awards: We will not make an award exceeding \$150,000 for a single budget period of 12 months.

Estimated Number of Awards: 8.

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; nonprofit and for-profit organizations engaged in the preparation of early childhood personnel.

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

3. Subgrantees: Under 34 CFR 75.708(b) and (c) a grantee may award subgrants--to directly carry out project activities described in its application--to the following types of entities: SEAs; LEAs, including charter schools that are considered LEAs under State law; IHEs; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; freely associated States and outlying areas; Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations suitable to carry out the activities proposed in the application. The grantee may award subgrants to entities it has identified in an approved application.

4. Other General Requirements: (a) Recipients of funding under this competition must make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities (see section 606 of IDEA).

(b) Applicants for, and recipients of, funding under this competition must involve individuals with disabilities, or parents of individuals with disabilities ages birth through 26, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project (see section 682(a)(1)(A) of IDEA).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission Instructions: For information on how to submit an application please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on February 12, 2018 (83 FR 6003) and available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-12/pdf/2018-02558.pdf.

2. Intergovernmental Review: This competition is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. However, under 34 CFR 79.8(a), we waive intergovernmental review in order to make awards by the end of FY 2018.

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

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 to no more than 70 pages, and (2) 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 (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, reference citations, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger.
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the abstract (follow the guidance provided in the application package for completing the abstract), the table of contents, the list of priority requirements, the resumes, the reference list, the letters of support, or the appendices. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative, including all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.

V. Application Review Information

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

(a) Significance (10 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.

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

(i) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses; and

(ii) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

(b) Quality of project services (35 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project

participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable;

(ii) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice;

(iii) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services;

(iv) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services; and

(v) The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of training in the field.

(c) Quality of the project evaluation (20 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted by the proposed project.

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

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project;

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible; and

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(d) Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel (15 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been

underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers one or more of the following factors:

(i) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel;

(ii) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization; and

(iii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(e) Quality of the management plan (20 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;

(ii) 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;

(iii) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project;
and

(iv) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

2. Review and Selection Process: (a) 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.

(b) In addition, in making a competitive grant award,

the Secretary also requires various assurances, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

3. Additional Review and Selection Process Factors:

In the past, the Department has had difficulty finding peer reviewers for certain competitions because so many individuals who are eligible to serve as peer reviewers have conflicts of interest. The standing panel requirements under section 682(b) of IDEA also have placed additional constraints on the availability of reviewers. Therefore, the Department has determined that, for some discretionary grant competitions, applications may be separated into two or more groups and ranked and selected for funding within specific groups. This procedure will make it easier for the Department to find peer reviewers by ensuring that greater numbers of individuals who are eligible to serve as reviewers for any particular group of applicants will not have conflicts of interest. It also will increase the quality, independence, and fairness of the review process, while permitting panel members to review applications under discretionary grant competitions for which they also have submitted applications.

4. 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.

5. 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 \$150,000), 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.

5. Performance Measures: Under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, the Department has established a set of performance measures, including long-term measures, that are designed to yield information on various aspects of the effectiveness and quality of the Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program. These measures include: (1) the percentage of preparation programs that

incorporate scientifically- or evidence-based practices in their curricula; (2) the percentage of scholars completing Personnel Preparation funded training programs who are knowledgeable and skilled in evidence-based practices for children with disabilities; (3) the percentage of scholars who exit training programs prior to completion due to poor academic performance; (4) the percentage of degree/certification recipients who are working in the area(s) for which they are trained upon program completion; and (5) the Federal cost per scholar who completed the preparation program.

In addition, the Department will gather information on the following outcome measures: (1) the percentage of scholars who completed the preparation program and are employed in high-need districts; (2) the percentage of scholars who completed the preparation program and are employed in the field of special education for at least two years; and (3) the percentage of scholars who completed the preparation program and who are rated effective by their employers.

Grantees may be asked to participate in assessing and providing information on these aspects of program quality.

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) by contacting the Management Support Services Team, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5113, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-2500. Telephone: (202) 245-7363. If you use a TDD or a TTY, call the FRS, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

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Dated: July 10, 2018.

Johnny W. Collett,
*Assistant Secretary for Special
Education and Rehabilitative
Services.*

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