



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Talent Search Program

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is issuing a notice inviting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2021 for the Talent Search Program, Assistance Listing Number 84.044A. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1840-0818.

DATES:

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

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: **[INSERT DATE 120 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 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768), and available at www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Antoinette Clark Edwards,
U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, room
2C223, Washington, DC 20202-4260. Telephone: (202) 453-
7121. Email: Antoinette.Edwards@ed.gov.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Talent Search
Program is to identify qualified individuals from
disadvantaged backgrounds with potential for education at
the postsecondary level and encourage them to complete
secondary school and undertake postsecondary education.
Talent Search projects publicize the availability of, and
facilitate the application for, student financial
assistance for persons who seek to pursue postsecondary
education, and encourage persons who have not completed
programs at the secondary or postsecondary level to enter
or reenter and complete these programs.

Priorities: This notice contains three competitive
preference priorities. Competitive Preference Priorities 1
and 2 are from the Secretary's Final Supplemental
Priorities and Definitions for Discretionary Grant Programs
(Supplemental Priorities), published in the *Federal*

Register on March 2, 2018 (83 FR 9096). Competitive Preference Priority 3 is from the Secretary's Final Administrative Priorities for Discretionary Grant Programs (Administrative Priorities) published in the *Federal Register* on March 9, 2020 (85 FR 13640).

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

Competitive Preference Priorities: For FY 2021 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are competitive preference priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), we award up to an additional six points to an application, depending on how well the application meets one or more of these priorities.

These priorities are:

Competitive Preference Priority 1 – Fostering Knowledge and Promoting the Development of Skills that Prepare Students to be Informed, Thoughtful, and Productive Individuals and Citizens (up to 2 points).

Projects that are designed to support instruction in time management, job seeking, personal organization, public and interpersonal communication, or other practical skills

needed for successful career outcomes.

Competitive Preference Priority 2 – Promoting Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math (STEM) Education, with a particular focus on Computer Science (up to 2 points).

Projects designed to improve student achievement or other educational outcomes in one or more of the following areas: Science, technology, engineering, math, or computer science (as defined in this notice). These projects must address the following priority area: Increasing access to STEM coursework, including computer science, and hands-on learning opportunities, such as through expanded course offerings, dual-enrollment, high-quality online coursework, or other innovative delivery mechanisms.

Competitive Preference Priority 3 – Applications that Demonstrate a Rationale (up to 2 points).

Under this priority, an applicant proposes a project that demonstrates a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1).

Definitions: The definitions below are from the Supplemental Priorities and 34 CFR 77.1(c).

Computer science means the study of computers and algorithmic processes and includes the study of computing principles and theories, computational thinking, computer hardware, software design, coding, analytics, and computer applications.

Computer science often includes computer programming or coding as a tool to create software, including

applications, games, websites, and tools to manage or manipulate data; or development and management of computer hardware and the other electronics related to sharing, securing, and using digital information.

In addition to coding, the expanding field of computer science emphasizes computational thinking and interdisciplinary problem-solving to equip students with the skills and abilities necessary to apply computation in our digital world.

Computer science does not include using a computer for everyday activities, such as browsing the internet; use of tools like word processing, spreadsheets, or presentation software; or using computers in the study and exploration of unrelated subjects.

Demonstrates a rationale means a key project component included in the project's logic model is informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes.

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

Note: In developing logic models, applicants may want to use resources such as the Regional Educational Laboratory Program's (REL Pacific) Education Logic Model Application, available at

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/elm.asp>,

to help design their logic models. Other sources include:

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014025.pdf,

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014007.pdf, and

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2015057.pdf.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 1070a-12.

Note: Projects must be awarded and operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in the U.S. Constitution and the Federal civil rights laws.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75 (except for §§ 75.215 through 75.221), 77, 79, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for

Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended in 2 CFR part 3474. (d) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 643. (e) The Supplemental Priorities. (f) The Administrative Priorities.

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

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

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: The Administration has requested \$950,000,000 for the Federal TRIO Programs for FY 2021, of which we intend to use an estimated \$171,000,000 for Talent Search awards. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$267,995-\$1,030,588.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$391,715.

Maximum Award:

- For an applicant that is not currently receiving a Talent Search Program grant, the maximum award amount is \$277,375. All projects must serve a minimum of 500 participants annually and have a per participant cost of no more than \$555.

- For an applicant that is currently receiving a Talent Search Program grant, the maximum award amount is the greater of (a) \$277,375 or (b) 100 percent of the applicant's base award amount for FY 2020. For example, an applicant that is eligible for, and requests, a \$550,000 grant, must propose to serve at least 990 participants. All projects must serve a minimum of 500 participants annually and have a per participant cost of no more than \$555.

Estimated Number of Awards: 473.

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

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: (a) Institutions of higher education, (b) public or private agencies or organizations, including community-based organizations with experience in serving disadvantaged youth, (c) secondary schools, and (d) combinations of such institutions, agencies, and organizations, for planning, developing, or carrying out one or more of the services identified under this program.

Note: If you are a nonprofit organization, under 34 CFR 75.51, you may demonstrate your nonprofit status by providing: (1) proof that the Internal Revenue Service currently recognizes the applicant as an organization to which contributions are tax deductible under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; (2) a statement

from a State taxing body or the State attorney general certifying that the organization is a nonprofit organization operating within the State and that no part of its net earnings may lawfully benefit any private shareholder or individual; (3) a certified copy of the applicant's certificate of incorporation or similar document if it clearly establishes the nonprofit status of the applicant; or (4) any item described above if that item applies to a State or national parent organization, together with a statement by the State or parent organization that the applicant is a local nonprofit affiliate.

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

b. Indirect Cost Rate Information: This program uses a training indirect cost rate. This limits indirect cost reimbursement to an entity's actual cost, as determined in its negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or eight percent of a modified total direct cost base, whichever amount is less. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html.

c. Administrative Cost Limitation: This program does not include any program-specific limitation on administrative expenses. All administrative expenses must be reasonable and necessary and conform to Cost Principles

described in 2 CFR part 200 subpart E of the Uniform Guidance.

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

4. Other: An applicant may submit multiple applications if each separate application describes a project that will serve a different target area or different target schools. The term "target area" is defined as a geographic area served by a project, and the term "target school" is a school designated by the applicant as a focus of project services (34 CFR 643.7).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission Instructions: Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768) and available at www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf, which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application.

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

3. Funding Restrictions: We specify unallowable costs in 34 CFR 643.31. We reference additional regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulation section of this notice.

4. Recommended Page Limit: The application narrative 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 65 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 the text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

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 one-page abstract. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative.

We recommend that any application addressing the competitive preference priorities include no more than three additional pages each for Competitive Preference Priorities 1, 2 and 3, if addressed. Applications that do not follow the page limit and formatting recommendations will not be penalized.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The following selection criteria for this program competition are from 34 CFR 643.21. We will award up to 100 points to an application under the selection criteria and up to 6 additional points to an application, depending on how well it meets the competitive preference priorities, for a total score of up to 106 points. The maximum number of points available for each criterion is indicated in parentheses.

(a) *Need for the project* (24 points). The Secretary evaluates the need for a Talent Search project in the proposed target area on the basis of the extent to which the application contains clear evidence of the following:

(1) A high number or high percentage of (i) low-income families residing in the target area; or (ii) students attending the target schools who are eligible for free or reduced priced lunch as described in sections 9(b)(1) and 17(c)(4) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (4 points).

(2) Low rates of high school persistence among individuals in the target schools as evidenced by the annual student persistence rates in the proposed target schools for the most recent year for which data are available (2 points).

(3) Low rates of students in the target school or schools who graduate high school with a regular secondary school diploma in the standard number of years for the most recent year for which data are available (4 points).

(4) Low postsecondary enrollment and completion rates among individuals in the target area and schools as evidenced by--

(i) Low rates of enrollment in programs of postsecondary education by graduates of the target schools in the most recent year for which data are available; and

(ii) A high number or high percentage of individuals residing in the target area with education completion levels below the baccalaureate degree level (6 points).

(5) The extent to which the target secondary schools do not offer their students the courses or academic support to complete a rigorous secondary school program of study or have low participation or low success by low-income or first generation students in such courses (2 points).

(6) Other indicators of need for a Talent Search project, including low academic achievement and low standardized test scores of students enrolled in the target

schools, a high ratio of students to school counselors in the target schools, and the presence of unaddressed academic or socio-economic problems of eligible individuals, including foster care youth and homeless children and youth in the target schools or the target area (6 points).

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

(1) Secondary school persistence (2 points).

(2) Secondary school graduation (regular secondary school diploma) (2 points).

(3) Secondary school graduation (rigorous secondary school program of study) (1 point).

(4) Postsecondary education enrollment (2 points).

(5) Postsecondary degree attainment (1 point).

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

(1) The plan to inform the residents, schools, and community organizations in the target area of the purpose,

objectives, and services of the project and the eligibility requirements for participation in the project (3 points).

(2) The plan to identify and select eligible project participants (3 points).

(3) The plan for providing the services delineated in 34 CFR 643.4 as appropriate based on the project's assessment of each participant's need for services (10 points).

(4) The plan to work in a coordinated, collaborative, and cost-effective manner as part of an overarching college access strategy with the target schools or school system and other programs for disadvantaged students to provide participants with access to and assistance in completing a rigorous secondary school program of study (6 points).

(5) The plan, including timelines, personnel, and other resources, to ensure the proper and efficient administration of the project, including the project's organizational structure; the time commitment of key project staff; and financial, personnel, and records management (6 points).

(6) The plan to follow former participants as they enter, continue in, and complete postsecondary education (2 points).

(d) *Applicant and community support* (16 points). The Secretary evaluates the applicant and community support for the proposed project on the basis of the extent to which

the applicant has made provision for resources to supplement the grant and enhance the project's services, including—

(1) Facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel, and other resources committed by the applicant (8 points); and

(2) Resources secured through written commitments from community partners (8 points).

(i) An applicant that is an institution of higher education must include in its application commitments from the target schools and community organizations;

(ii) An applicant that is a secondary school must include in its application commitments from institutions of higher education, community organizations, and, as appropriate, other secondary schools and the school district; and

(iii) An applicant that is a community organization must include in its application commitments from the target schools and institutions of higher education.

(e) *Quality of personnel* (9 points). (1) The Secretary evaluates the quality of the personnel the applicant plans to use in the project on the basis of the following:

(i) The qualifications required of the project director (3 points).

(ii) The qualifications required of each of the other personnel to be used in the project (3 points).

(iii) The plan to employ personnel who have succeeded in overcoming the disadvantages of circumstances like those of the population of the target area (3 points).

(2) In evaluating the qualifications of a person, the Secretary considers his or her experience and training in fields related to the objectives of the project.

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

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

(1) Are appropriate to the project's objectives;

(2) Provide for the applicant to determine, using specific and quantifiable measures, the success of the project in—

(i) Making progress toward achieving its objectives (a formative evaluation); and

(ii) Achieving its objectives at the end of the project period (a summative evaluation); and

(3) Provide for the disclosure of unanticipated project outcomes, using quantifiable measures if appropriate.

2. Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any

discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary 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 (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

For this competition, a panel of three non-Federal reviewers will review each application in accordance with the selection criteria, pursuant to 34 CFR 643.21. The individual scores assigned by the reviewers will be added and the sum divided by the number of reviewers to determine the peer reviewer score received in the review process. Additionally, in accordance with 34 CFR 643.22, the Secretary will award prior experience points to applicants that have conducted a Talent Search project during budget periods 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20, based on their documented experience. Prior experience points, if any,

will be added to the application's averaged reader score to determine the total score for each application.

Note: Tie-breaker: If there are insufficient funds for all applications with the same total scores, the Secretary will choose among the tied applications so as to serve geographical areas that have been underserved by the Talent Search Program.

3. Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions:

Consistent with 2 CFR 200.205, before awarding grants under this program the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 3474.10, the Secretary may impose specific conditions and, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

4. Integrity and Performance System: If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), under 2 CFR 200.205(a)(2) we must make a judgement 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 in 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 (GPRA), the success of the Talent Search Program will be measured by secondary school persistence and graduation rates of Talent Search participants, as well as postsecondary enrollment and completion rates. All Talent Search Program grantees will be required to submit an annual performance report documenting secondary school persistence, secondary school graduation, and postsecondary enrollment of their participants. Since students may take different amounts of

time to complete their postsecondary education, multiple years of performance report data are needed to determine the postsecondary completion rates of Talent Search Program participants. The Department will aggregate the data provided in the annual performance reports from all grantees to determine the accomplishment level.

6. Continuation Awards: In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, the performance targets in the grantee's approved application. In making a continuation grant, 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: On request to the program contact person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT, individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format.

The Department will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may include Rich Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc, or other accessible format.

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

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

Robert L. King,

Assistant Secretary for

Postsecondary Education.