



## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; School-Based Mental Health  
Services grant program

**AGENCY:** Office of Elementary and Secondary Education,  
Department of Education.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Education (Department) is  
issuing a notice inviting applications for new awards for  
fiscal year (FY) 2025 funds for the School-Based Mental  
Health Services Grant program (SBMH).

**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].

The Department will post a preapplication presentation for  
prospective applicants. To access the preapplication  
presentation, visit the SBMH webpage at  
<https://www.ed.gov/grants-and-programs/grants-birth-grade-12/safe-and-supportive-schools/school-based-mental-health-services-grant-program>.

**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 August 29,

2025 (90 FR 42234) and available at

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/29/2025-16571/common-instructions-and-information-for-applicants-to-department-of-education-discretionary-grant>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Amy Banks, U.S.

Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW,  
Washington, DC 20202-6450. Telephone: (202) 987-1780.

Email: Amy.Banks@ed.gov.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability and wish to access telecommunications relay services, please dial 7-1-1.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Full Text of Announcement*

I. Funding Opportunity Description

*Purpose of Program:* The SBMH program provides competitive grants to State educational agencies (SEAs) (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(49)), local educational agencies (LEAs) (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(30)), and consortia of LEAs to increase the number of credentialed school-based mental health services providers delivering mental health services to students in high-need LEAs.

*Assistance Listing Number:* 84.184H.

*OMB Control Number:* 1894-0006

*Eligible Applicants:* SEAs, as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(49), or LEAs, as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(30), including consortia of LEAs.

*Application Requirements:* These requirements are from the Notice of Final Priorities, Requirements, and Definitions (NFP) published elsewhere in this issue of the *Federal Register*. Application requirement (a) applies to SEAs only; and application requirement (b) applies to LEAs only. Application requirement (c) applies to all applicants.

(a) SEA applicants must identify in their applications the specific high-need LEAs that will benefit from the grant or how they will identify and select the high-need LEAs designated to benefit from the grant.

(b) LEA applicants must describe how they and each LEA in the consortium, if applicable, meets the definition of high-need LEA.

(c) Applicants must include in their applications the most recently available data on the number of credentialed school psychologists delivering services in the high-need LEA(s) and the projected number of credentialed school psychologists that will be hired and retained to deliver services in high-need LEA(s) for each year of the project using funds from this grant.

## II. Award Information

*Type of Award:* Discretionary grants.

*Estimated Available Funds:* \$180,000,000

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:* \$1,250,000 - \$1,750,000.

*Estimated Average Size of Awards:* \$1,500,000.

*Estimated Number of Awards:* 25-35.

*Note:* The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice. Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, the Department anticipates making awards for the full 48-months using available appropriations.

*Project Period:* Up to 48 months.

*Background:* Our Nation's schools should be safe and secure settings where children can learn and grow to their full potential. However, over the last several years the decline of children and youth mental health has become a serious concern for our Nation. Given the importance of improving child and youth mental health, this notice includes four priorities to increase the number of available school psychologists. These priorities will provide funding to SEAs and LEAs to increase the number of available school psychologists to improve mental or behavioral health services provision for students.

*Note:* The provision of medical services by such services providers is not an allowable use of funds under this grant.

*Priorities:*

This competition has three absolute priorities and two competitive preference priorities. Absolute priorities 1, 2, and 3 are from the NFP for the SBMH Program published elsewhere in this issue of the *Federal Register*.

Competitive preference priority 1 is from the NFP and competitive preference priority 2 is from 34 CFR 75.227.

*Absolute Priorities:* For FY 2025 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are absolute priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet Absolute Priorities 1 and 3, or applications that meet Absolute Priorities 2 and 3.

The Secretary intends to create two funding slates for SBMH applications, one slate for applications that meet Absolute Priorities 1 and 3 and a second slate for applications that that meet Absolute Priorities 2 and 3. As a result, the Secretary may fund applications out of the overall rank order.

These priorities are:

*Priority 1--SEAs proposing to increase the number of credentialed school psychologists employed in high-need LEAs.*

To meet this priority, an SEA must propose a plan to recruit and retain credentialed school psychologists for employment in high-need LEAs.

*Priority 2--LEAs proposing to increase the number of credentialed school psychologists employed in high-need LEAs.*

To meet this priority, a high-need LEA or a consortium of high-need LEAs must propose a plan to recruit and retain credentialed school psychologists for employment in high-need LEAs.

*Priority 3--SEAs or LEAs increasing the number of credentialed school psychologists delivering early intervention and intensive mental health services in high-need LEAs.*

To meet this priority, applicants must propose to increase the number of credentialed school psychologists who will engage in the following:

(a) Providing intensive mental health services and supports to individual students most in need of those services,

(b) Providing early intervention mental health services to address acute concerns and determine if intensive mental health services are needed, and

(c) Building necessary capacity and local support to ensure the provision of intensive mental health services beyond the life of the grant.

*Competitive Preference Priorities:* For FY 2025 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 3 points to an application from an SEA that meets Competitive Preference Priority 1. We award an additional 3 points to an application from an SEA, LEA, or consortium of LEAs, that meets Competitive Preference Priority 2.

The total number of competitive preference points an SEA applicant may compete for is 6. The total number of competitive preference points an LEA or consortium of LEAs applicant may compete for is 3. As stated previously, these entities will not be competing against one another.

An applicant must clearly identify in the project abstract and the project narrative section of its application the competitive preference priority or priorities it wishes the Department to consider for purposes of earning competitive preference priority points.

These priorities are:

*Competitive Preference Priority 1— SEAs proposing respecialization for existing professionals to become credentialed school psychologists. (up to 3 points)*

To meet this priority, an SEA must propose to increase the number of credentialed school psychologists employed in high-need LEAs by implementing a respecialization plan. The respecialization plan must support professionals who hold, at a minimum, a degree in a related field (e.g., special education, clinical

psychology, community counseling) to obtain a license or certification from the SEA or relevant State regulatory body as a school psychologist.

*Competitive Preference Priority 2— Rural Applicants.*

(0 or 3 points)

Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate the following:

(a) The applicant proposes to serve a community that is served by one or more LEAs—

(i) With a National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43; or

(ii) With a NCES locale code of 41, 42, or 43.

*Program Requirements:*

These program requirements are from the NFP published elsewhere in this issue of the *Federal Register*.

(a) Eligible Applicants for this program are one or both of SEAs, as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(49), or LEAs, as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(30), including consortia of LEAs.

(b) Administrative costs for SEA applicants that receive an award under this program may not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. Administrative costs for LEA applicants that receive an award under this program may not exceed 5 percent of the annual grant award.

(c) Applicants that receive an award under this program must use grant funds to supplement, and not



supplant, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be available for activities funded under this program.

(d) 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.

(e) Applicants that receive an award under this program must ensure that school psychologists funded by this grant begin delivering services to students as soon as possible, but not later than 270 days from award.

(f) Applicants that receive an award under this program must ensure that any school psychologist hired under this grant, including any services provider that offers telehealth services (as defined in this notice), is credentialed to work in an elementary school (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(19)) or secondary school (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(45)).

(g) Applicants that receive an award under the program must comply with section 4001(a) of part A of Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA). In carrying out the Informed Written Consent requirements described in paragraph (a)(1), the exception in (a)(2)(B)(i) only applies after the applicant has made multiple repeated attempts through various communication methods to obtain parent consent.

Subsequently, where parent consent is not obtained under (a)(2), not including the provisions in (B)(ii), the parent of a child participating in such services will be provided notice of initial and subsequent service delivery.

(h) Applicants that receive an award under this program must ensure that any school psychologist offering services (including telehealth services) does so in a manner consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as all other applicable Federal, State, and local laws.

*Selection Criteria:*

The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210. The points assigned to each criterion are indicated in the parentheses next to the criterion. An applicant may earn up to a total of 100 points based on the selection criteria. Non-Federal peer reviewers will evaluate and score each application program narrative against the following selection criteria:

(a) *Need for the Project:* (Up to 20 points)

The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.

(1) In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the specific nature and magnitude of gaps or challenges are identified

and the extent to which these gaps or challenges will be addressed by the services, supports, infrastructure, or opportunities described in the proposed project.

(b) *Quality of the Project Design:* (Up to 30 points)

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

(i) 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)

(ii) 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)

(c) *Adequacy of resources.* (Up to 30 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 one or more of the following factors:

(i) 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 20 points)

(ii) 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 management plan.* (Up to 20 points)

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 one or more of the following factors:

(i) 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 10 points)

(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. (Up to 10 points)

*Performance Measures:* For the purpose of Department reporting under 34 CFR 75.110, we have established the following performance measures for the School-Based Mental Health Services Grant Program:

(a) The unduplicated, cumulative number of new school psychologists hired for each high-need LEA as a result of the grant.

(b) The unduplicated, cumulative number of school psychologists retained in high-need LEAs as a result of the grant.

(c) The ratio of students to school psychologist for each high-need LEA served by the grant, and the numbers of school psychologists and students used to calculate the ratio.

These measures constitute the Department's indicators of success for this program. Consequently, we advise an applicant for a grant under this program to give careful consideration to these measures in conceptualizing the approach for its proposed project plan. Each grantee will be required to provide, in its annual performance and final reports, data about its progress in meeting these measures. *Performance measure targets:* The applicant must propose annual targets for the measures listed above in their application. Applicants must also provide the following information as directed under 34 CFR 75.110(b) and (c):

(1) An explanation of how each proposed performance target is ambitious (as defined in this notice) yet achievable compared to the baseline (as defined in this notice) for the performance measure.

(2) An explanation of the data collection and reporting methods the applicant would use and why those methods are likely to yield reliable, valid, and meaningful performance data.

(3) An explanation of the applicant's capacity to collect and report reliable, valid, and meaningful performance data, as evidenced by high-quality data collection, analysis, and reporting in other projects or research.

*Note:* If the applicant does not have experience with collection and reporting of performance data through other projects or research, the applicant should provide other evidence of capacity to successfully carry out data collection and reporting for its proposed project.

The reviewers of each application will score related selection criteria on the basis of how well an applicant has considered these measures in conceptualizing the approach and evaluation of the project.

All grantees must submit an annual performance report and final performance report with information that is responsive to these performance measures.

*Definitions:*

The definitions of "credentialed," "early intervention mental health services," "high-need LEA," "intensive mental health services," "recruit or recruitment," "respecialization," "retain or retention," and "telehealth" are from the NFP published elsewhere in this issue of the *Federal Register*. The definitions of "local educational agency" and "State educational agency" are from 20 U.S.C. 7801.

*Credentialed* means an individual who possesses a valid license or certificate from the SEA or relevant regulatory body as a school psychologist approved by the State to provide services aligned with the practice of school psychology.

*Early intervention mental health services* mean services for students who are exhibiting signs of distress or impairment or are at heightened risk of needing mental health services. Based on current best practices in school psychology for serving an individual student, early intervention mental health services may include, for example, screening and referrals, small group services, or brief individualized interventions.

*High-need LEA* means an LEA that has a significant need for additional school psychologists based on:

(a) (1) a ratio of students to school psychologists that exceeds a ratio of 500 students to 1 school psychologist and (2) high rates of school violence, poverty, substance use, suicide, trafficking, or other adverse childhood experiences;

(b) having received a Project School Emergency Response to Violence (SERV) grant from the U.S. Department of Education since October 1, 2020; or

(c) having experienced a traumatic event since January 1, 2025, and did not receive a Project School

Emergency Response to Violence (SERV) grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

*Intensive mental health services* mean services for students with identified mental health needs that limit engagement throughout the school day. Based on the best clinical approach to serving an individual student, intensive mental health services may include, for example, individual, group, or family therapy services, or coordination of services with providers serving the student in a non-school setting.

*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.

*Recruit or Recruitment* means strategies that help attract and hire credentialed school psychologists, including by doing at least one of the following:

(1) Providing an annual salary or stipend to newly hired school psychologists.

(2) Creating pathways to grant cross-State credentialing reciprocity for school psychologists.

(3) Providing hiring incentives and supports, for example, increasing pay; offering monetary incentives for relocation to serve in high-need LEAs; providing services via telehealth; creating hybrid roles that allow for leadership, academic, or research opportunities; and offering service scholarship programs, such as those that

provide grants in exchange for a commitment to serve in the LEA for a minimum number of years.

*Respecialization* means strategies that provide opportunities for professional retraining and alternative pathways to obtain a State-license or State-certification as a school psychologist for individuals who hold, at a minimum, a degree in a related field (e.g., special education, clinical psychology, community counseling). Strategies include one or more of the following:

(1) Revising, updating, or streamlining requirements for such individuals so that additional training or other requirements focus only on the training needed to obtain a credential as a school psychologist.

(2) Providing a stipend or making a payment to support the training needed to obtain a credential as a school psychologist.

(3) Offering flexible options for completing training needed to obtain a credential as a school psychologist.

(4) Offering other meaningful activities that result in such individuals obtaining a credential as a school-psychologist.

*Retain or Retention* means strategies to help ensure that credentialed school psychologists stay in their position to avoid gaps in service and unfilled positions, including by—

(1) Providing opportunities for advancement or leadership, such as career pathways programs, recognition and award programs, and mentorship programs; and

(2) Offering incentives and supports to help mitigate shortages, for example, increasing pay; offering monetary incentives for relocation to serve in high-need LEAs; providing services via telehealth; offering service scholarship programs, such as those that provide grants in exchange for a commitment to serve in a high-need LEA for a minimum number of years; and developing paid internship programs.

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

*Telehealth* means the use of electronic information and telecommunication technologies to support and promote long-distance clinical mental health care, patient and professional mental health-related education, and administration. Technologies include videoconferencing, the internet, store-and-forward imaging, streaming media, and landline and wireless communications.

*Program Authority:* Section 4631(a)(1)(B) of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7281(a)(1)(B)).

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

*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 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 NFP.

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

b. *Supplement-Not-Supplant:* This competition's supplement, supplant requirement is described in the Program Requirements section of this notice.

c. *Indirect Cost Rate Information:* This program uses an unrestricted indirect cost rate. 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](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html).

d. *Administrative Cost Limitation:* This program's Administrative Cost Limitation is described above in the Program Requirements section of this notice.

2. *Subgrantees:* Under 34 CFR 75.708(b) and (c) an SEA grantee under this competition may award subgrants to

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

### III. 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 August 29, 2025 (90 FR 42234) and available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/08/29/2025-16571/common-instructions-and-information-for-applicants-to-department-of-education-discretionary-grant>, which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application.

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

34 CFR 79.8(a), we waive intergovernmental review in order to make an award by the end of FY 2025.

3. *Funding Restrictions:* Section 4001(b) prohibits the use of funds for medical services or drug treatment or rehabilitation, except for integrated student supports, specialized instructional support services, or referral to treatment for impacted students, which may include students who are victims of, or witnesses to, crime or who illegally use drugs. This prohibition does not preclude the use of funds to support mental health counseling and support services, including those provided by a mental health services provider outside of school, so long as such services are not medical.

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 15 pages and (2) follow the formatting standards described in the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs.

The recommended page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; the one-page abstract, resumes, bibliography, charts with timelines and milestones, or letters of support. However, the

recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative.

#### IV. 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, 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](http://www.govinfo.gov). At this site you can view this document, as well as all other Department documents 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 Department documents published in the *Federal Register* by using the article search feature at [www.federalregister.gov](http://www.federalregister.gov). Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

**Hayley B. Sanon,**

*Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.*

[FR Doc. 2025-18895 Filed: 9/26/2025 8:45 am; Publication Date: 9/29/2025]