Discretionary Grantmaking at ED

Answers to Your Questions About the Discretionary Grants Process

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Note to Readers

This publication provides a nontechnical summary of ED's discretionary grants process and the statutes and regulations that govern it. The reader should not rely on it as the sole source of information about matters of discretionary grant application, review, award, administration, closeout, or audit at ED. Specific rules that apply to ED's programs are contained in the appropriate statutes, notices, application information, and guidance issued by ED for each program, and in the regulations in *Title 2* and *Title 34* of the *Code of Federal Regulations*. Nothing in this document is intended to create specific rights for applicants or grantees.

This document is intended for individuals and organizations that are interested in applying to ED for discretionary grants and cooperative agreements, have received an award, or would like to know more about ED's discretionary grants process.

It describes how grant programs that are created by Congress are administered by ED, and how the public goes about applying for and receiving discretionary grants.

This document does not contain information about programs of ED that provide ***student financial assistance*** or funding through ***formula grant*** programs. Please see "Other Information" at the end of this publication to locate information on these types of assistance.

Note: Terms that appear in ***bold italics***, with the exception of headings, the first time they appear throughout the chapters are defined in the Glossary. Embedded links are provided to resources throughout this document and will be updated periodically. Links appear [underlined in blue](#), the first time they appear on a section.

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This section describes the way ED's discretionary *grant programs* are organized and how you can find the grant opportunities that are available to you.

What is a discretionary grant?

A *discretionary grant* is an award made by ED in which ED has discretion in determining the applicants that will receive funding. Virtually all of ED's discretionary grants are made as a result of a **competitive review process** in which ED reviews applications based on the legislative and regulatory requirements, and on application requirements and criteria established for a discretionary grant program. An applicant chosen to receive an award becomes a *grantee*.

A grantee's awards will go through 3 distinct stages:

- Pre-award: Activities that take place before grant performance period begins
- Award: Activities that take place during the performance period of an award
- Post-award: Activities that take place after the end of an award's performance period

What is a cooperative agreement?

A *cooperative agreement* is a type of discretionary grant that ED awards when it determines it must have substantial involvement with the grantee throughout the project to meet the objectives of the grant. Substantial involvement could include ED's ongoing participation in the project, very close collaboration with the grantee, and possible intervention or direct operational involvement in the review and approval of the successive stages of project activities.

For the purposes of this publication, whenever the term "grant" is used, it includes the cooperative agreements. The statutes, regulations, policies, and requirements referenced in this document apply to discretionary grants and cooperative agreements, unless program statutes or regulations specify otherwise.

How does ED establish discretionary grant programs?

The federal discretionary grantmaking process begins long before ED holds a competition for applicants to submit applications. Congress usually creates discretionary grant programs by drafting and approving an *authorizing statute* and provides funding for the programs through the annual *appropriations statute* and other related directives. Occasionally, Congress creates a grant program in the annual appropriations statute.

Congressional appropriation legislation authorizes ED to expend federal grant funds. Under authorization statue programmatic elements are established for each program, and it is under an actual appropriation that ED can expend funds. Authorizing statues reference the issues and goals the legislation intends to address and include a statement with funding directions that guide program administrators on how the funds should be expended.

ED may establish **program regulations** based on information obtained from congressional committee hearings that informed the authorizing statute and administrative procedures. The regulations describe how programs are to be administered and might include criteria for application review. ED does not publish general administrative regulations for each discretionary grant program. Instead, these programs are administered according to **administrative regulations** found in the *Education Department General Administrative Regulations ([EDGAR](#))*, the requirements published in *Title 2* of the *Code of Federal Regulations ([CFR](#))*, and the *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards ([2 CFR part 200](#))*.

How are ED's programs organized?

There are six **principal offices** in ED that are responsible for the administration of discretionary grant programs. Each office is responsible for overseeing programs established by Congress and administered by ED. [ED's Operating Structure](#) shows how each office fits within the agency.

Each principal office has **program offices** and **program staff** that administer the discretionary grant programs. Program staff publishes the **Notice Inviting Applications (NIA)**, coordinates application reviews, makes funding recommendations, and awards grants to successful applicants. Upon grant awards, the program staff monitors grants and provides technical assistance to promote sound grants administration and grantees' success in achieving program objectives.

The following principal offices are responsible for making discretionary grants:

[*Institute of Education Sciences (IES)*](#), an independent and non-partisan program office, is the statistics, research, and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Education. IES has a mission to provide scientific evidence on which to ground education practice and policy and to share this information in formats that are useful and accessible to educators, parents, policymakers, researchers, and the public.

[*Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE)*](#) administers and coordinates programs that are related to adult education and literacy, career and technical education, and community colleges. OCTAE's two operational divisions are

The Division of Adult Education and Literacy and The Division of Academic and Technical Education. OCTAE also provides national leadership to strengthen the role of community colleges in expanding access to postsecondary education for youth and adults and advancing workforce development.

[Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA)](#) provides national leadership to help ensure that English Learners and immigrant students attain English proficiency and achieve academic success. In addition to preserving heritage languages and cultures, OELA is committed to prompting opportunities for biliteracy or multiliteracy skills for all students.

[Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE](#)) programs are designed to empower States, districts, and other organizations to meet the diverse needs of every student by providing leadership, technical assistance, and financial support. OESE directs, coordinates, and recommends policy for programs designed to: 1) help State and local agencies to improve the achievement of preschool, elementary, and secondary school students, 2) support equal access to services to help every child achieve, with particular attention to students who have been marginalized, 3) advance educational improvement at the State and local levels, and 4) provide financial assistance to local educational agencies whose local revenues are affected by Federal activities.

[Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE)](#) works to strengthen the capacity of colleges and universities to promote reform, innovation, and improvement in postsecondary education, promote and expand access to postsecondary education and increase college completion rates for America's students, and broaden global competencies that drive the economic success and competitiveness of our Nation.

[Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS](#)) supports programs that serve millions of children, youth, and adults with disabilities to address the many challenges that these individuals and their families face. OSERS' responsibilities are administered through the Office of the Assistant Secretary (OAS), and two main components: the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

How do I obtain information about ED's discretionary grant programs?

There are several ways that you can get more information about the discretionary grant programs at ED:

- **ED's Website:** There are several areas of the website that you may find especially helpful.

- **Grants Homepage:** ED's grants homepage allows you to explore potential funding opportunities, check your eligibility for ED grants, and access links to grant applications.

- **ED Programs By Title and Office:** This page provides an A to Z listing of all Department programs. You can access basic information about the programs ED administers.

- **ED Grants Forecast** (the Forecast)**:** The Forecast is the preliminary plan for the discretionary grant competitions for the coming fiscal year. It includes anticipated dates for each forecasted competition. As the Forecast is subject to change during the year, you should check the website of the program in which you are interested in the most current information about its competitions. The Forecast is updated throughout the year as information on ED's programs is published.

- **Federal Register:** ED's program offices publish **application notices** in the *Federal Register* to announce that they are inviting applications for new discretionary grant competitions. A program office uses application notices to announce a single competition or, occasionally, to invite applications for several program competitions. Application notices provide important program and funding information for the competitions and can tell you when and where you can obtain applications.

- **Grants.gov:** Grants.gov is a central location on the internet that allows you to find and apply for funding opportunities across the federal government. You can search for information on different topics and review synopses of grant opportunities from federal departments and agencies.

How do I determine if I am eligible to receive a discretionary grant?

Find Programs by Eligibility allows you to search for programs for which you may be eligible based on the kind of entity that is interested in applying for ED grants. Please be sure to review all eligibility requirements before applying for a grant.

Eligibility requirements vary from program to program. Eligibility might be limited to a specific type of organization, such as:

- A State Educational Agency (SEA)

- An Institution of Higher Education (IHE)
- A Non-profit Agency
- An Individual

Eligibility may be limited to organizations that serve a particular target population such as underserved students or Native American students.

Some programs may only be available to specific kinds of applicants. These programs may require you go through a process to certify that you are an eligible applicant before you can apply. If you fail to certify that you are eligible then your application will not be reviewed during the competition.

Please be sure to review all eligibility requirements before applying for a grant.

What should I consider before I apply for a discretionary grant?

Once you identify the grant program(s) for which you or your organization might want to apply, you should review the program's statute and regulations to find the description and requirements of the specific program.

Once at a program's web page, select "Laws, Regs & Guidance" to access the applicable statutes and regulations. You can also find regulations for those programs that have them in [Title 34 of the CFR](#)..

The NIA and the *application package* specify the eligibility requirements and selection criteria. Read the entire application notice that ED publishes in the *[Federal Register](#)* for each new competition before deciding whether to apply.

Applying for a Grant

This section describes the application package, some of the standard information and forms required for an application, and how to submit your application package. This section also introduces a wide range of resources available to you as an ED grant applicant.

ED continues to streamline and simplify the process of applying for a grant. Utilizing advances in technology with administrative procedures for grants, the process of submitting a grant application is increasingly seamless. The landscape is interactive and collaborative such that when applying for a grant, applicants have immediate access to online resources, outreach to project collaborators, and a community of current grantees with a focus on the ED mission, goals, and objectives.
ED seeks to expand outreach and awareness of discretionary grant competitions with the goal of increasing the number of applications received, especially from applicants that have never applied.

This section describes the application package, some of the standard information and forms required for an application, and how to submit your application package.

How should I prepare for the grant application process?

Before you begin the grant application, you must first become familiar with standard data elements required of all applicants. These standard data elements, listed below, are designed to verify both the eligibility and financial status associated with the applicant.

To do business with ED, you must

a. obtain a **Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)**;

    If you are a corporate entity, agency, institution, or organization, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service. If you are an individual, you can obtain a TIN from either the Internal Revenue Service or the Social Security Administration.

b. register with the **System for Award Management (SAM)**, the government's primary registrant database;

    SAM generates a Unique Entity Identifier **(UEI)**. Please note: you need to update your SAM registration annually.

c. maintain an active SAM registration with current information while your application is under review by ED and, if you are awarded a grant, during the *project period*; and

d. provide your UEI and TIN on your application;

e. register with Grants.gov.

Organizations should complete the registration process as soon as possible to ensure the timely submission of grant applications.

How do I apply for funding from a discretionary grant program?

Each competition has different application procedures and will include specific instructions in the application package. You will generally be required to complete and submit an application that includes certain standard forms, a narrative description of the project, and a budget or cost estimate for the proposed project's activities.

The application package for a competition will have specific submission instructions including: the deadline, accepted ways to submit your application, and the contact information for a person or office that can answer any questions you may have.

What is in an application package?

A discretionary grant application package contains all the information you need to apply for a grant from ED, including information about the process and content that will be used to evaluate your application, and the purpose and goals of the program.

Application packages typically include the Notice Inviting Application (NIA) published in the *Federal Register*. It provides basic and financial information on each competition, the type of award (e.g. discretionary, cooperative agreement), when and where potential applicants may obtain applications, submission deadlines, and estimates regarding the number and amount of the awards to be made. The NIA includes information about and instructions for the following:

1. SAM registration, and UEI and TIN requirements
2. Application submission requirements for Grants.gov
3. Requirements for paper submissions when electronic submissions are not possible
4. Selection criteria and process used for application evaluations
5. Description of ED's criteria for evaluating applicant risk, and
6. The Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) review disclosure with information about ED's review process in FAPIIS prior to awarding funds

Grant application packages also include the standard form *Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424)*, or the application "cover page," along with the *Supplemental Information Required for Department of Education.* These forms must be completed as part of the application package. Other components of the application package include:

1. Applicable statutes and program regulations
2. Eligibility Criteria
3. Project objectives and goals
4. Applicable priorities required by statutes, appropriation language, or policy
5. Program/ project performance measures

Finally, application packages will designate at least one point of contact in case you have any questions.

How do I get an application package?

Almost all discretionary grant application packages are available online. The NIA specifies where the application package is available electronically. ED makes application packages available through Grants.gov, where instructions and training demonstrations are located. Anyone can visit the website at any time to search for a specific type of application or sign up to receive notifications of announcements sent directly to your inbox.

Who do I contact if I have questions concerning the application?

ED's application packages contain detailed instructions on how to complete an application. However, if you still have questions that are not addressed in the application package, you can contact ED for assistance. The name of a contact person for inquiries is published in the *Federal Register* and the application package. Program offices also sponsor workshops for some competitions where you can ask questions. If a program office plans to conduct a workshop, the application notice and the program website generally state when and where it will be held.

What are certifications and assurances?

Certain federal requirements are compulsory for applicants and grantees as conditions of receiving grant funds. Application packages contain forms that must be signed by an authorized representative, binding your organization to abide by the federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders that apply to grantees. Certifications relate to requirements of eligibility to apply for and receive federal financial assistance. Assurances relate to complying with various grant requirements, including those protecting public welfare and prohibiting discrimination. If you become a grantee and plan to distribute grant funds to other entities or individuals (for example, project

partners, fellowship holders, or contractors), some programs may require you to submit certain forms signed by those other entities or individuals.

What are regulations?

ED generally uses two types of regulations to award and administer grants: program regulations and administrative regulations.

Program regulations apply to all applicants and/or grantees under a particular program. They implement statutes passed by Congress to authorize a specific grant program, and usually include applicant and participant eligibility criteria and specify the types of activities funded. Program regulations or *Federal Register* notices, which identify funding priorities or invite applications, can include selection criteria or competitive priorities under which applications will be selected for funding.

Administrative regulations apply to all grantees. These regulations implement requirements contained in the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR part 200), presidential executive orders, and statutes that affect all applicants for or recipients of federal grants. As noted above in the section "Grants at the U.S. Department of Education," ED has administrative regulations found in *Title 34* of the *CFR* (called EDGAR) and in *Title 2* of the *CFR*.

New and amended program and administrative regulations issued by ED are published throughout the year in the Federal Register.

What are funding priorities?

For some programs, ED publishes *funding priorities* in a *Federal Register* notice to focus a competition on the activities and objectives for which the Secretary of Education (Secretary) is particularly interested in receiving applications. ED has discretion in establishing funding priorities based on statutory requirements, the Secretary's priorities, priority for evidence-based interventions. ED uses three kinds of funding priorities in its programs: absolute, competitive preference, and invitational.

If ED publishes an "absolute priority" for a program, it will consider for funding only those applications that address that priority. For example, a published absolute priority to fund only projects that increase the amount of time students are engaged in the study of mathematics and science would mean that only those applications that outline steps to achieve this result can be considered for funding.

If ED publishes one or more "competitive priorities" for a program, applicants successfully addressing those priorities might receive additional points or preference during the competitive review process.

If ED publishes "invitational priorities," it encourages applicants to address certain issues in their project design. However, an application that meets an invitational priority receives no competitive or absolute preference over applications that do not meet the priority.

Is there anything I can do to help shape regulations and funding priorities?

Yes. The public has the opportunity to comment on proposed regulations and funding priorities. Usually, before ED publishes final regulations and final funding priorities, it issues a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)* or a notice of proposed priorities, requirements, definitions, or selection criteria (NPP). One exception is that ED is not required to publish for comment information on a competition the first time ED solicits applications for a new program. NPRMs and NPPs are published in the *Federal Register*. They describe the proposed rules and priorities, and you can submit your comments on them by the deadline identified in the notice. NPRMs and NPPs are also posted on ED's website.

Additionally, Regulations.gov provides a central source for U.S. government regulations and related documents. On this site you can find, read, and comment on regulations from all agencies of government, including ED's NPRMs and NPPs. ED takes into consideration the comments it receives from you and other members of the public on an NPRM as it develops the final regulations. Final regulations are published in the *Federal Register* in a *final rule.* Similarly, ED considers comments it receives from the publication of NPPs as it develops a notice of final priorities, requirements, definitions, or selection criteria in a Notice of Final Priorities (NFP), which is also published in the *Federal Register*.

What are performance measures?

Performance measures are methods used to assess a grantee's performance under a program or project to determine whether the funded project is making *substantial progress* toward meeting the approved objectives. As a grantee, you will submit a *performance report* that will provide information to ED to track and evaluate your progress. This evaluation takes into consideration the following:

➢ Your project goals and objectives

➢ Program-specific measures required by the *Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)*

➢ Program-specific measures established by the program offices for the particular grant competition

➢ **Performance targets** in your approved application

➢ Data or evaluations required by the program (if applicable)

Most application packages will require you to propose performance measures and to specify the targeted outcome levels you expect to achieve. The application package specifies the types of measures that you should propose. For the project goals and objectives, you are encouraged to use performance measures that will produce data about the primary desired outcomes of a project, such as increased teacher retention, decreased dropout rates, or increased student assessment scores.

The program specific *GPRA* measures relate directly to the program purpose and provide data to indicate program success that is submitted to OMB, in accordance with GPRA. The required GPRA measures are specified in the application package. Every project that receives funds from programs with established GPRA measures must report on those measures.

When you apply for a grant, you should consider these measures in conceptualizing the design, implementation, and evaluation of your project because of their importance in the application review process. In addressing selection criteria, you must describe the measures and the proposed targets. You must also describe the data collection and analysis methods you will use to provide data for each of the program measures referenced in the application package and provide convincing evidence that the proposed approaches (which could include evaluation studies) are appropriate to yielding the intended results.

Program offices collect data on the performance of programs and projects administered by ED to inform regular program improvements and to provide greater transparency to Congress and members of the public about the Departments management and impact.

Project performance measures that align with the program objectives and financial management of federal assistance funds are integral to the funding criteria found in an application package. Applicants should think strategically about how program statute and appropriation language can be infused into your project to maximize impact.

What should I consider when designing a project plan?

An evidenced-based design can add value to a proposed project. By demonstrating positive outcome programs that have been proven to be effective can facilitate community support for school districts, increased parental involvement and help school administrators focus education resources.

ED grant competitions are designed for applicants to communicate a clear understanding of a community's local needs and subsequently address those needs through an evidence-based intervention. EDGAR establishes four tiers of evidence for applicants to consider as they develop their program intervention and evaluation designs. The four tiers of evidence are: 1) Evidence that demonstrates a rationale; 2) Promising Evidence; 3) Moderate Evidence; and 4) Strong Evidence. These can include a range of projects such as research-based Logic Models for competitions that fund projects in the design and development stage without an established evidence base demonstrating effectiveness, or projects supported by an experimental study for a competition that aims to support the expansion of proven strategies.

When developing an intervention and evaluation design applicants may utilize the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), established by ED to support applicants and grantees interested in using rigorous and relevant research, evaluations, and statistics to inform improvement of our educational system, with ED data resources when developing grant applications. Under EDGAR studies must meet WWC evidence standards and other requirements to provide Moderate Evidence or Strong Evidence.

What do I need to know about using grant funds for procurement, particularly for services from potential partners, contractors, and evaluators?

As a grantee, when you procure goods and services for the purposes of a grant project, you are generally required to follow the procurement standards found in 2 CFR part 200. States follow their own policies and procedures used for procurements awarded from their nonfederal funds. Other grantees must use their own documented procurement procedures, provided that such procedures conform to applicable federal statutes and the standards specified in the regulations.

EDGAR part 75 allows you to exercise a competition exception when procuring services from an entity in instances where the entity is identified in the funded application. The regulations are intended to reduce the burden on grantees in selecting implementation sites, implementation partners, or providers of evaluation or other essential services for their proposed projects. Program offices review and consider information in FAPIIS if the grant exceeds or will exceed the simplified acquisition threshold before making a new award. The review will determine if there is evidence of satisfactory progress when executing programs under procurement awards. ED program monitoring include review of contract and procurement administration for compliance with State policies and procedures for procuring goods and services under a Federal grant. All other grantees and subgrantees may use their own procurement policies and procedures. Procurement is a compliance area that is tested as a part of a grantee's single or program specific audit.

For-profit organizations with expenditures associated with grant funds expended under a contract with a third party will be examined as part of a compliance audit.

What do I need to know about passing funds to a subgrantee for carrying out part of the federal grant program?

If allowed by the program regulations or established in the NIA, you may create a *subaward* to a nonfederal entity to carry out part of the work of the program. When this happens, you must evaluate each subgrantee's risk of noncompliance with federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the subgrant in order to determine the appropriate monitoring. In addition, you will need to follow all reporting and monitoring requirements, as required by federal statutes and regulations. The subgrantee is accountable to you, the grantee, for the use of the funds provided.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) under CFR Title 2 Part 170 requires all grantees passing more than $30,000 to a subaward to publish the award information in the FFATA Subaward Reporting System.

What systems does my organization need to have in place?

All recipients and subrecipients are required to establish and maintain accounting systems and maintain financial records to accurately account for funds awarded to them. You need to track receipts, expenditures, assets, and liabilities for awards, programs, and subrecipients.

Your system should have the following capabilities:

Internal control. The system should allow for effective control and accountability for all grant and subgrant cash, real and personal property, and other assets.

Budget control. The system should compare actual expenditures or outlays with budgeted amounts for each award and subaward. It also must relate financial information to performance data.

Allowable cost. The system should support making sure that Federal cost principles, agency program regulations, and the terms of grant and subgrant agreements are followed in determining the reasonableness, allowability, and allocability of costs.

Source documentation. The system should require support for accounting records with source documentation (e.g. canceled checks, paid bills, payrolls, time and attendance records, and contract documents).

The system will require minimizing the time between the transfer of funds from the U.S. Department of Treasury and disbursement by recipients whenever advance payment procedures are used. When advances are made by electronic funds transfer, or EFT methods, the system should help to make drawdowns as close as possible to the time of making disbursements.

Subrecipient monitoring. The system should involve monitoring of all cash drawdowns by subrecipients to assure that they conform substantially to the same standards of timing and amount as apply to advances to the direct recipient.

What does it mean if a program has cost-sharing or matching requirements?

Some program statutes or regulations require that the grantee contribute some percentage of the total project costs during the budget period. Be sure to read application materials carefully to learn if *cost-sharing* or *matching* must be included in your application budget. Generally, the statute or regulation specifies a minimum percentage of the total cost of the project or a minimum percentage of the amount of the federal funds awarded that the grantee must contribute.

Even when cost-sharing or matching is not required by statute or regulation, applicants may volunteer to provide cost-sharing or matching funds to support their proposed grant projects. If you voluntarily make a commitment in the application to such support for a project, you must honor that commitment to the project the cost-sharing or matching amounts shown in the budget if a grant is awarded.

You must account for the cost-sharing and matching contributions (whether voluntary or required just as you account for the federal funds expended on grant activities. Project expenses for which a grantee uses cost-sharing or matching funds must meet the same standards of allowability as federal funds.

What do I need to know about indirect costs and the indirect cost rate when preparing my application?

Indirect costs are costs that an organization incurs for common or joint objectives that cannot be specifically identified with a certain grant project or activity. For instance, preparing payroll for all employees of an organization, including those assigned to a federal grant, is an incurred cost that cannot be tied to a single grant. Many applicants request funds for indirect costs that they incur while implementing a federally funded grant program. Typically, you charge such costs to the grant as a percentage of some or all *direct cost* items in your budget. This percentage is called the *indirect cost rate*. Apart from some limitations imposed by federal statute or regulation, indirect costs are *allowable costs*. Be sure to review all information regarding indirect costs in a program's NIA and application to calculate indirect costs correctly.

OMB has assigned to certain federal departments and agencies the responsibility for determining indirect cost rates for specific organizations. That department or agency, known as the *cognizant agency for indirect costs*, is generally the federal entity that provides the organization with the most federal funding. The cognizant agency negotiates with organizations to develop an *indirect cost rate agreement,* which is usually accepted by other federal agencies. Organizations should consult [2 CFR part 200](#) for assignments of cognizant agencies. ED is the cognizant agency for indirect cost rates for the SEAs of the 50 States and Washington, D.C. Department of Health and Human Services determines rates for most universities and colleges receiving grant funds from ED.

If you do not have an established indirect cost rate and want to apply for a grant from ED (or any other federal department or agency), you should follow the guidance provided in the application package about the program's policy for reimbursing grantees for indirect costs.

Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), federally-recognized Indian Tribes, State and Local Governments receiving less than $35 million in direct federal funding, and nonprofit organizations, if they do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, and are not subject to the Department's training rate or restricted rate (supplement-not-supplant provisions) may elect to charge a de minimis indirect cost rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). This rate may be used indefinitely.

For more information, please visit the website of ED's [Indirect Cost Division](#) in the Office of Acquisition and Grants Administration within the Office of Finance and Operations ([OFO](#)).

What do I need to know about the protection of human subjects in research when preparing my application?

If an activity is a systematic investigation that can develop or contribute new generalizable knowledge, it is "research" even if not considered research for other purposes. This includes some evaluation research.

Education research and research methods are rapidly changing. Research methods can pose risks to study participants and research sites, affecting the ability to recruit subjects and successfully complete research.

If you plan to conduct research involving human subjects at any time during the proposed project, on the Supplemental Information Form provide specific information about these activities and indicate whether you think that they fall under one or more of the Common Rule exemptions.

No other action is needed in this regard until the grant is funded. ED will determine whether the proposed activities include nonexempt research. If so, ED will ask the grantee (and any others that will be engaged in the research) for a Federal Wide Assurance (FWA). You will also need certification approving the research by a registered Institutional Review Board (IRB). ED cannot complete human subjects clearance for covered research until the FWA(s) and IRB approval is in place.

No covered human subjects research can be initiated until the study has ED protection of human subjects clearance. Some research involves "cooperative research" with multiple entities conducting research. There can only be a single IRB of record (usually selected by the grantee) for approval of research. Plan for how the selection of the IRB of record will be handled if applicable.

For additional information about the protection of human subjects in research, check ED's [Protection of Human Subjects in Research](#) website.

Where do I submit the completed application?

To submit a completed grant application, you must follow the transmittal instructions provided in the *[Federal Register](#)* application notice and in the application package.

There are two systems that are primarily used to apply:

- [Grants.gov](#), or
- [G5](#), ED's *Grant Management System*

Submit the application through the appropriate system in accordance with the submission requirements contained in the application notice. Once you submit it,

your application is forwarded automatically to the appropriate program office for processing and review. (If the transmittal instructions explicitly state that paper applications are accepted, mail your application to the address specified in the transmittal instructions.)

Note that most programs require applicants to submit their applications electronically. Usually, you may apply for a waiver of this requirement as directed in the application package. The waiver must be approved by ED before an application otherwise required to be submitted electronically will be accepted in another format.

What should I know about application deadlines?

To be considered under a grant competition, you must submit your application by the *application deadline*. ED will not accept applications submitted after the deadline date and time specified in the application notice. Applicants applying electronically must submit the application electronically by the specified date and time. Carefully follow the application submission instructions.

Do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the electronic application submission process. The amount of time it can take to upload an application varies depending on a variety of factors, including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. If the application is late, you will receive notification that the application cannot be accepted. You must verify the time that your application is due by checking the application package.

If granted a waiver to submit a paper application, follow guidance provided the mailing instructions as described in the application notice or provided by the grant program.

What if there are technical problems with Grants.gov on the deadline date?

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application by the application deadline because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, ED will extend the deadline until the following business day, or after the technical problems have been resolved, to enable you to transmit your application electronically.

For ED to grant this extension:

➢ you must provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk case number;

➢ you must have been fully registered to submit an application to Grants.gov before the deadline date and time; and

➢ the technical problem or unavailability must be a result of a problem with the Grants.gov system (not the result of a problem with the applicant's technology).

To grant this extension, ED must be able to confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that the problem affected your ability to submit your application by 11:59:59 p.m., ET, on the application deadline date. ED will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

If Grants.gov is experiencing significant difficulties, ED may request applications to be submitted through its grant management system, G5. If there are technical problems with G5, then the same Grants.gov deadline extension process will apply to G5. To request an extension, you must notify either the contact person listed in the *Federal Register* notice or the G5 help desk at 1-888-336-8930.

What if I find an error or realize I have omitted something in my application after the deadline?

There is no means to recall or cancel a submission in Grants.gov. If for any reason you need to resubmit your application prior to the posted application deadline then you may resubmit your application. After all application are received, ED identifies duplicate applications. The submission with the latest time stamp is reviewed and scored, and the earlier submissions are deemed ineligible.

To ensure fairness to all applicants, ED does not allow any applicants to submit additional or revised materials after the deadline unless the missing information resulted from a technical problem with Grants.gov (or other ED approved system for the submission of applications). ED staff may permit the applicant to submit missing information if ED staff has verified that: 1) the technical problem occurred in Grants.gov (or other ED approved system for the submission of applications); 2) the technical problem was the cause for the application to be incomplete; and 3) the submission deadline has passed. Under no other circumstances will ED permit, after the application deadline date, the submission of omitted information that is required for the application in accordance with the program's selection criteria.

What happens to an application after it is submitted?

Upon submission, an electronic application submitted via Grants.gov receives a Grants.gov tracking number, which is displayed in the on-screen confirmation message and sent to you, the applicant, via email. Once Grants.gov validates the application successfully, ED receives the application and assigns a ***Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN)***, which is sent to you via email and displayed on the

Grants.gov website as the "agency tracking number." This may also be referred to as a PR/Award Number.

Your application is transferred to G5 where it can be accessed by the program office responsible for the competition. The program staff screen the application for eligibility and completeness.

What do the letters and numbers mean in my FAIN?

The FAIN is composed of seven parts that provide specific information about your application. For example, H029A211234-21C:
H   - Principal Office identifier
029   - Federal Assistance Listing numeric suffix of the program
A   - Alphabetic sub-program identifier
21   - Last two digits of the fiscal year of the competition
1234   - Unique application identifier
22   - Fiscal year of the funding
C   - Alphabetic identifier signifying the most recent funding action in a fiscal year

The first five parts of the FAIN remain the same throughout the life of the application and grant, while the last two parts change by *budget period*. It is essential to include your FAIN on all correspondence with ED.

What happens if my application is not eligible?

If an application does not meet the eligibility criteria for the program it addresses, ED notifies the person who signed the application that the application is not eligible and will not be considered. The notification from ED explains the reason that the application is not being reviewed in the competition.

Do you have any tips for new potential grantees and novice applicants?

ED seeks to make grant opportunities more accessible to *new potential grantees* and *novice applicants* and encourages funding engagement from a wider sector of the education community. Under an Administrative priority, ED programs can give special consideration to new potential grantees by establishing a separate absolute, competitive preference, or invitational priority. Each competition announcement includes information about pre-application webinars to help new applicants prepare their application and assist with the process and requirements for applying for a Federal grant.

Under the regulation found in [EDGAR](#) 75.225, programs may either establish a separate competition for novice applicants or include novice applicants in the general

program competitions and give them competitive preference by assigning bonus points. Programs that use the novice procedures in their competition will notify you in the application notice published in the *Federal Register*.

The following are tips for a strong application to consider when applying for grant funding with ED:

1. If you are considering submitting an application, be sure to read carefully all of the material in the application package to identify any published priorities and whether the program is providing special consideration to novice applicants and new potential grantees or a priority specific only to each population.

2. Applicants are encouraged to utilize evidence-based practices to evaluate the impact of their program. As you review the content in the application package, employ your creative insights for use of evidence, data analysis, and information management. Utilize information from your current program's ability to achieve performance outcomes and reach program goals and objectives. Use evidence from current research to inform how to address program measures and make decision regarding on how to assess program outcomes. Draw from the strength of your program to determine the results that will address the needs of your community.

The Application Review Process at ED

The amount of time that passes between an application deadline and the day an applicant learns about the funding decision will vary. During this time, ED's staff is processing the applications consistent with statutes and regulations that govern the process. The length of time required for the review and award process depends in part on the volume of applications ED receives for a competition, as well as the time required for ED to act on its commitment to give each application a fair and thorough review. This section describes what happens to an eligible application after ED receives it.

How does ED review my application for funding?

For the majority of ED's grant competitions, program offices recruit *application reviewers* (**reviewers**) from outside the federal government who have expertise in the subject area of the grant program for which the applications were submitted. ED program staff screen applications to ensure that they meet all the requirements of the program and assign applications to reviewers. Reviewers read and independently score each application assigned to them. After the reviewers score the applications, the program staff carry out an internal review to ensure that the reviewers' scoring sheets are correctly completed.

How are application reviewers chosen?

ED recruits reviewers who have expertise in areas pertinent to a grant program. ED maintains a reviewer registry and contacts qualified individuals when they are needed for an upcoming competition.

ED assesses potential reviewers' information to evaluate their relevant expertise, conflicts of interest (direct or indirect) in the outcome of the upcoming competitions, or any other reasons for which the public would question their objectivity to serve as a reviewer. A reviewer is considered to have a *conflict of interest* when he or she has been, is, or will be associated with the project; has a financial interest in the competition; or has a relationship with an entity or individual with a financial interest in the competition. ED also evaluates reviewers for other personal interests connected to the competition that may affect objectivity. ED staff work with potential reviewers and assign them to competitions that raise no conflicts of interest and have no other reasons for which the public would question their objectivity.

Some of the methods that ED uses for recruiting individuals for the reviewer registry are:

➢ notices and advertisements in appropriate publications, including the *Federal Register*, journals, newspapers, and the principal office's website;

➢ letters of request to key individuals (such as college or university deans, heads or prominent members of education research institutions and professional associations, or private and public school officials); and

➢ contacts with members of the education community, professional associations, and current or former reviewers.

The reviewer training, grant review procedures, time commitment, and compensation vary depending on the grant program. Some programs require reviewers to travel to Washington, D.C. (at ED's expense), and others are conducted virtually. Reviewer comments are stored in **e-Reader**, a section of the G5 system.

If you are interested in becoming a reviewer, contact the program office in your area of interest or review ED's Peer Reviewer Toolkit. You will need to complete an application or submit a resume or curriculum vita providing information that the program staff can use to determine whether you have the necessary qualifications.

What criteria do reviewers use to score my application?

Reviewers will score your application against the selection criteria stated in the *Federal Register* notice, which is included in the application package. These criteria can be based on merit, statute regulation, and preferences, but do not include eligibility criteria. Cost-sharing or matching, if part of the grant program, can either be an eligibility or an evaluation criterion—the application package will specify which. In reviewing your application, reviewers are not permitted to use other criteria or consider any information that is not in the application or within the scope of the review.

How does ED determine the final scores?

Generally, ED averages the scores given by all the reviewers who read an application. Specific information can be found in the application package. The application notice sometimes includes opportunities for you to earn additional points for other considerations, such as absolute or competitive preference priorities, that are not part of the evaluation criteria.

How does ED decide which projects get funded?

After the application reviews are complete and related documents are checked for completeness, ED uses the scores determined by nonfederal reviewers to make funding determinations. The following factors guide that process:

➢ Panel scores are used to develop a rank order list of applications received (if there are multiple absolute priorities, there may be separate rank orders for each).

➢ Appropriated funds determine how many applications can be funded.

➢ A cost analysis is performed. Cost analyses determine whether the proposed costs in your budget are allowable, *allocable*, and reasonable, and allow program staff to ensure that costs relate to the project activities and objectives. Grantees may not use funds for unallowable costs, therefore unallowable costs are deleted from the budget or redirected to allowable costs. During this stage, you may be contacted by program staff, usually by phone, to clarify information. If the program staff requests a written response, your response should address only the specific items needing clarification. This clarification contact does not imply an offer of funding.

➢ A funding slate is created. A funding slate is a formal list of recommended applications for funding and the recommended funding level for each.

➢ Applicant risk is evaluated. To complete this analysis, ED consults various sources of information to review eligibility or financial integrity information. In addition, ED may review your history through past performance monitoring, audits, and other available records. In addition, ED may review applicant histories, including records in FAPIIS.

➢ The funding slate is forwarded to the *principal officer* of the program office (or his or her designee) for final review and approval. New awards are then approved by the Secretary.

➢ Grant award notifications (GANs) are issued to successful applicants.

Does a high score guarantee funding?

There is no particular score that guarantees that an application will be funded. Even if an application ranks high it might not be funded. ED might be unable to fund all high-scoring applications because of the large number of high-quality applications submitted and the level of funds that Congress appropriates for a program. Some applications might not be funded because an applicant's risk review indicates it is

ineligible to receive federal funds, despite a high score. If the risk analysis indicates poor past performance, ED can apply grant conditions, assign a high-risk designation, or decide not to fund the application, depending on the specifics of the poor performance.

How long does it take ED to decide on my application?

The process of reviewing, scoring, and ranking applications varies from competition to competition, and usually takes several months.

When Your Project Receives Funding

When ED notifies you that your application has been funded, the next phase of the discretionary grants process begins. There are post-award communications and discussions with ED officials, and then you start the substantive activities of your project. This section provides information about what happens after your grant has been awarded.

How do I learn whether my application has been funded?

If successful, you may receive funding notification in one of two ways. For most competitions, ED first informs members of Congress from the grantees' congressional districts of the projects being funded. As a result, you might receive your notice from your congressional delegation. Otherwise, ED will contact you directly.

Either way, if your application was successful, you will receive a *grant award notification (GAN)*, or an email containing a link to access an electronic version of the GAN. A grant award is not official until a GAN has been signed by the authorized program official and sent to you. When ED issues the GAN, both you and ED are bound to the terms and conditions of the grant, the statutory and regulatory requirements, as well as the requirements specifically described in the attachments to the GAN.

What happens if my application is not funded?

Program staff may contact you and advise you that your application is in an "on-hold" funding status. This means that, while the application is not recommended for funding at the time, because it ranked slightly lower than the funded group or for some other reason, it might receive a grant award later if additional funds become available, or if some of the recommended applications are not funded.

ED notifies applicants whose applications were not evaluated because they were deemed ineligible, and the reasons for being ineligible.

 ED will also inform you if an application was evaluated but not selected for funding. With this notification, ED will specify why the application was not funded, will provide reviewer comments, and may also include the rank order listing of applications.

Is an application always funded for the entire amount requested?

No. Funding levels might be restricted based on the amount of funds appropriated for the current fiscal year and the number of applications to be funded. In some cases,

the program staff determines that certain proposed activities in the application are unnecessary or unallowable and deletes them and their associated costs from the award. In others, the program staff that performs the cost analysis determines that the amounts requested for some items are excessive and reduces the budget for them.

What information does my grant award notification (GAN) contain?

The GAN is the official document that states the terms, conditions, and amount of an award, and is signed by the official who is authorized to obligate funds on behalf of ED. The document is formatted into numbered blocks that provide specific information about the award, including administrative information, legislative and fiscal data, and names and telephone numbers of project and program office staff. The GAN references the approved application, which includes a work plan, budget, performance goals, measures, and milestones.

For multiyear awards, the GAN also includes information on anticipated subsequent funding periods and their tentative levels of funding.

The GAN and its attachments spell out additional terms and conditions of the award, including specific conditions. Specific conditions may be applicable to all grantees, or specific conditions may be assigned if the pre-award review indicated there is a risk associated with a specific grantee or if a grantee was designated as high risk. Enclosures give further guidance on administrative procedures (for example, how to draw down funds and where to submit required reports). You should thoroughly read all attachments, specific conditions, and enclosures.

Programs issue GANs electronically in the G5 system. An email that contains the URL in G5 where the GAN can be accessed, is sent to the authorized representative who signed the Application for Federal Assistance form (SF 424) and other required forms and to the Project Director.

What happens after I get the grant award?

Receiving your GAN symbolizes the beginning of a relationship between your organization and ED to promote and ensure successful project outcomes. This relationship should be characterized by frequent and ongoing communication between you and the program staff throughout the life of the project. You are encouraged to work with your *Program Specialist* for technical assistance and as resources in achieving your project goals. You are encouraged to use email to maximize communication with program staff.

The *post-award conference* (or post-award performance conference) is generally the first step in developing this relationship. This initial discussion takes place shortly after a new grant is awarded. The main focus of the conference is to establish a

mutual understanding of the specific outcomes that are expected, and to clarify measures and targets for assessing the project's progress and results. Information on project outcomes is needed to ensure that the project achieves the objectives stated in the application. The post-award conference generally clarifies and lays the groundwork for reporting, *monitoring,* and ongoing communication between you and ED. These activities are meant to ensure that the grant is administered in compliance with applicable statutes and regulations and that the project's goals are achieved.

A conference can take many forms. It can be a face-to-face meeting, telephone discussion, workshop, online conference, email exchange, or notes sent via fax or postal mail. For some programs, the post-award conference might involve entering into a performance agreement that is signed by both parties and specifies activities and milestones expected for the grant.

How do I receive my grant funds?

You get grant funds by setting up accounts with the "Payee" role and making payment requests through G5. You withdraw funds for each separate grant award by FAIN. Once a request for payment has been made and is validated, funds are deposited into your designated bank account.

Grantees are typically able to access funds in G5 and draw down funds based on the projects need. There are payment restrictions, known as payment flags, that may be associated with an account if deemed necessary by ED to mitigate risk or if requested by the grantee.

How often should I draw down funds from G5?

The frequency of advance payment requests and the amount of withdrawals must be limited to the amounts actually needed to meet the *obligations* made under the grant. They must also be timed in accordance with the project's immediate cash needs to carry out the activities of the grant.

Attachment 1 of the GAN explains ED's payment system. After registering online for the Payee role in G5, you must complete the included G5 External User Access Request form and return it to ED before you can request funds through the G5 system. For security purposes, access to G5 is granted only after a notarized copy of the user's form is received by ED. New users of G5 can get assistance on a variety of topics, including the processes for registering and for requesting funds, by going to G5 and selecting the "Help" option on the main menu. Questions about using G5 can also be emailed to the G5 helpdesk. If you do not have Internet capability, you can call the G5 Hotline directly at 888-336-8930.

If your organization has already established the necessary G5 accounts when you receive a grant from ED, you do not need to send another notarized form to ED. Instead, you will receive a request for the latest payment information along with the GAN. Please remember that you may draw funds only to meet the immediate cash needs of the project for obligations made under the grant.

You should be aware that the grant payment you receive may be subject to the Treasury Offset Program (TOP), which collects delinquent federal debts, in accordance with the *Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996*. Additional information about [TOP](#), including which grant programs are exempt from TOP. In addition, ED will periodically check the suspension and debarment list of excluded vendors and other federal government websites to ensure the grantee's continued eligibility to receive funds.

How long does it take to get my grant funds?

Electronic funds are usually deposited to your bank account within two business days after an advance payment request is made. Reimbursements may take longer.

How do I get funds after the first year if my organization receives a multiyear award?

To receive funds after the initial year of a multiyear award, you must submit performance and financial data that describes the progress the project has made toward meeting the performance targets established at the beginning of the project. The form or format for the report is provided by program staff. Some grantees will submit their performance reports electronically using G5 or another electronic report system. Your program office notifies you if you are required or have the option to submit your reports online. Some programs require grantees to report financial and expenditure information annually on such matters as cost-sharing or matching and indirect costs. Your Program Specialist will provide instructions for submitting the required information.

The program staff uses the information in the performance report in combination with the project's fiscal and management performance data to determine subsequent funding decisions. The performance report should specify any changes that need to be made to the project for the upcoming funding period. You cannot receive a continuation award if you have not filed all the reports required for the grant. Before a continuation award can be issued, program staff reviews the information in the performance report and the financial and project management activities. The goal is to determine if you have made substantial progress in reaching the project's objectives, if expenditures correspond to the project's plans and timelines, if the recommended funding amount is appropriate, and if continuation of the project is in the best interest

of the federal government. To ensure that you achieve substantial progress during the funding period, you should contact your program staff as often as necessary. Program staff members are available to answer your questions, provide technical assistance, and help you better understand federal requirements and procedures to ensure that the goals of your projects are achieved. If these requirements are met, program staff recommends a continuation award. The Principal Officer (or his or her designee) reviews and approves continuation awards.

What responsibilities do I have under a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement?

When undertaking a project funded by ED, your major responsibilities are to

- ➢ perform the work described in the approved application (and any approved revisions to the application);

- ➢ maintain strong internal controls to ensure your organization

  - o exercises proper stewardship of federal funds, including cash management and documentation of expenditures;

  - o complies with all statutory and regulatory requirements, conditions of the grant award, and certifications;

  - o takes prompt action when non-compliance is noted, including audit findings; and

  - o safeguards protected personally identifiable information;

- ➢ communicate regularly with ED program staff;

- ➢ draw down funds only when needed to make payments for expenditures made under the grant for allowable activities;

- ➢ perform a risk assessment and monitor any subgrants and contracts made with federal funds;

- ➢ demonstrate measurable progress toward achieving project performance goals;

- ➢ report all required information to ED and/or OMB using OMB-approved standard information collections; and

- ➢ maintain records documenting activities and expenditures for at least three years.

In addition, check your GAN for specific responsibilities imposed by the specific program under which you are funded.

Congress and federal agencies are placing an ever-increasing emphasis on accountability for the use of public funds. As a Department grant recipient, you share in the responsibility for being accountable to Congress and the public for proper stewardship of taxpayer dollars and for achieving the greatest public benefit possible with those dollars.

Accountability for a grant project is measured in part on performance in achieving the educational goals of the project. Examples of success include improving student achievement, teacher effectiveness, the employment of individuals with disabilities, or the understanding of what works in educational practice. You are also responsible for managing the personnel, the financial, and other administrative aspects of the project, consistent with the requirements of the statutes and regulations that govern federally funded projects. This section discusses some of the responsibilities of grantees and some basic information about grant administration. As a grantee, you will learn much more about ED's expectations for responsible stewardship of the federal grant funds entrusted to you from your grant award documents, project directors meetings, and discussions with ED program staff.

What are Improper Payments?

It is critical to understand what constitutes an improper payment with Federal funds. [2 CFR part 200](#) defines an improper payment as any payment that should not have been made or that was made in an incorrect amount under statutory, contractual, administrative, or other legally applicable requirements. It encompasses more than waste, fraud, and abuse. Improper payments include overpayments or underpayments that are made to eligible recipients (including inappropriate denials of payment or service, any payment that does not account for credit for applicable discounts, payments that are for an incorrect amount, and duplicate payments). An improper payment also includes any payment that was made to an ineligible recipient or for an ineligible good or service, or payments for goods or services not received (except for such payments authorized by law).

Grantees must maintain documentation related to all expenditures of grant funds. When a review of grantee records is unable to discern whether a payment was proper because of insufficient documentation, this payment should also be considered an improper payment.

When grantees establish documentation requirements for payments, they should ensure that all documentation requirements are necessary and should refrain from imposing additional burdensome documentation requirements.

Questioned costs identified in audits are not automatically deemed to be improper. However, if the review is unable to determine that the payment was proper, it will be documented as improper. See 2 CFR Part 200 and OMB Circular A-123 Appendix C for more information about improper payments and payment integrity.

Which regulations apply to my award?

Carrying out the activities of your project in a way that is consistent with the requirements of federal regulations is a process that begins before you receive a grant. It begins with the application process. You should make yourself familiar with any program regulations, EDGAR, and 2 CFR part 200 when you are preparing your grant application. You can find program regulations in the NIA, application package or on the program's website. EDGAR and 2 CFR part 200 contain public policy regulations, the administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements applicable to your grant.

If you still have questions after reading the regulations, contact the program staff person who administers or monitors your grant.

What must I do if I need to change some part of my project from the approved application?

If you need to change your approved project plan, the first step is to determine if the change you want to make requires prior approval from the program office. In some cases, the program office will require you to submit a request for approval of a project change, with supporting documentation.

Some changes, however, do **not** require prior approval. Grant changes requiring prior approval are identified at 2 CFR part 200, "Revision of budget and program plans." The provisions **generally** permit you to undertake the following *administrative actions* without seeking prior approval from your program office:

➢ Preaward costs: obligating funds for up to 90 days before the start date of the performance period

➢ No-Cost Extension: extending the project period one time at the end of the grant for a period of up to 12 months

➢ Carryover: carrying funds over from one budget period to the next

➢ Budget Transfer: transferring funds among budget line items, except line items that reduce approved costs for participant support.

In many cases, even when allowable, program offices might require you to provide a notification of the planned change, sometimes with supporting justification.

If the change you wish to make is beyond these allowable administrative actions, for example a change in key personnel, you must contact ED for prior approval. You should review 2 CFR part 200 relating to the type of change you wish to make. When in doubt, contact the Program Specialist listed on your GAN.

ED will not permit you to change the objectives or scope that were established in the application and scored by reviewers during the application review process. This policy is designed to provide basic fairness to applicants for discretionary grants.

If you carry over a large amount of funding from one budget period to the next, ED might reduce the amount of new funds available for the next budget period. If you wish to make some other type of change, or you are not certain whether the change is allowable, or if prior approval is required, contact the Program Specialist shown on your GAN for assistance.

You should always work with your Program Specialist to ensure your changes are allowable and approved. If prior approval is required, send the request to the Program Specialist identified on the GAN by email. Grantees can request approval for changes to their grants through the [G5](#) system, which is accessed from ED's G5 home page, or through alternative grant administration systems as instructed by your Program Specialist. Once registered, G5 e-Administration users can submit a request, and track when the Department reviews it and when a decision or change is made. Once the request is processed, you will receive a system-automated email notification specifying whether the request is approved. For some G5 administrative actions that require prior approval, program staff might contact you to obtain further justification or clarification regarding the request. Administrative actions that require prior approval can take up to 30 days to process. You will be notified once a determination is made regarding a requested change.

What can I do to help my request for a change get processed quickly?

You can take a number of steps to reduce the time it takes ED to process your request for a change to a project:

➢ **Always use your FAIN**. The FAIN gives program staff a great deal of information. Include it in all written correspondence and have it available when you call your program staff. We recommend that you include it in the subject

of your email, so your correspondence can be accessed easily and filed properly.

➢ **Always check your computations in budgets more than once**. Check the calculations in your request and any other materials associated with your grant that you send to your program office.

➢ **Carefully read the attachments and enclosures that come with your GAN**. The attachments and enclosures sent with your GAN contain important information that can simplify the administration of your grant with regard to receiving payment, sending required reports, and following special terms and conditions.

➢ **When in doubt, ask.** If you are not sure about something, do not hesitate to contact your Program Specialist. That person is available to give technical assistance and to help you understand grant regulations and the award documents.

How does ED know how my project is doing?

ED uses information from your performance and financial reports, grants monitoring tools, independent audits, and, if available, *Office of Inspector General (OIG)* audits and investigations to determine how your grant is being managed and how you are performing. You should expect to participate in some monitoring and oversight activities, which occasionally might include site visits conducted by ED staff.

What type of monitoring should I expect?

Monitoring individual projects, such as yours, is an integral part of ED's grant administration and oversight. The end goal of ED's monitoring is to promote the efficient and effective achievement of the program objectives. These objectives support ED's mission to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access to educational opportunity. ED monitors all projects for compliance with statutes and regulations to ensure that the public funds entrusted to grantees are spent for the purposes they were awarded to support. ED also monitors how you are progressing on meeting the program objectives in order to encourage the successful completion of your grant project.

ED uses many different types of monitoring. On a regular basis, the program staff monitors your fiscal activities (such as draw down of funds and total expenditures to date) and administrative changes and requests. They maintain regular or periodic contact with you by telephone or email to check on the progress of your projects.

Program Specialists review interim and final performance and financial reports to monitor the efficacy of the project—that it is proceeding as planned, consistent with the approved activities and budget.

Program Specialists also conduct monitoring site visits with some grantees. ED selects projects for site visits based on a number of factors aimed at managing the risk to the grant funds. Some projects are selected to include a representative sampling of grantees and projects across the program. For these visits, ED's goal is to identify best practices, learn more about project implementation, and identify challenges in order to provide high quality technical assistance. Other projects are selected based on risk factors, such as the size of the grant or information about the grant performance. ED might select projects on a multi-year cycle that allows the program staff to visit many of the grantees at least once during the performance period. If you are selected for a site visit, you should view it as an opportunity for staff members from ED and your project staff members to get to know one another better and learn more about and improve the project. A site visit will allow you to present information to ED staff about your project in greater depth and detail. Prior to a site visit, Department staff will provide you with guidance on preparing for the occasion.

The goal of monitoring is to make every project successful. Successfully completed projects can provide suggested practices and information to ED and other grantees. See the section titled, *The End of the Project*, for more information. If, in the course of monitoring, ED's staff identify areas of weakness or noncompliance, discover that the grantee is not making substantial progress, or have suggestions for how the grantee might better achieve the program objectives, they will provide technical assistance to help bring the project back on track. Unresolved monitoring findings can result in such actions as additional grant terms and conditions, recovery of funds, a decision to not award a continuation grant, or the termination of a grant.

What are the independent audit requirements for my grant?

Depending on your specific circumstances, you will likely be required to have an audit conducted by independent auditors, as established by the *Single Audit Act of 1984*, as amended.

A single audit will typically cover the entire operation of your organization and include a review of all federal funds expenditures, from all sources, across the organization. It will especially target areas of risk and internal controls, and test compliance with program requirements. Auditors examine expenditures and activities by the organization under major programs. Under some circumstances, you may be able to have a program-specific audit conducted.

If your organization is required to have a single audit conducted, it must send an electronic copy of the audit report to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse (FAC) as specified in the attachments that accompany your GAN.

The revised single audit requirements can be found in [2 CFR part 200](#) subpart F. The appropriate regulations will identify the threshold for requiring an audit and requirements for the auditor, auditee, report submission, and audit follow up.

To obtain more information on preparing for an audit, consult 2 CFR part 200, subpart F and OMB's annual *Single Audit Compliance Supplement.* The supplement is the guide for auditors who conduct the yearly audits under the *Single Audit Act* and provides program-specific audit requirements. It is also a helpful guide for you in preparing for an audit. You might find it useful also to review the page of frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the single audit process, which is found on the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse](#) website.

Sometimes an audit report concludes that there are deficiencies or weaknesses in a grantee's financial system or programmatic activities. These weaknesses are called *audit findings*. If your organization's single audit report contains findings related to a discretionary grant program, ED staff will contact your organization to resolve the findings. Together, your organization and ED will engage in a cooperative audit resolution. The audit report and proof of resolving audit findings are key elements of ED's monitoring process.

What happens if the Office of Inspector General (OIG) selects my grant for an audit?

Another type of audit is conducted by ED's [OIG](#). These occur less frequently than single audits, and not every grantee receives such an audit. An OIG audit can cover both financial and programmatic performance.

The OIG audit process includes an entrance conference, fieldwork, an exit conference, a draft audit report, and a final audit report. During the entrance conference, the OIG auditors explain the purpose of the audit, establish working arrangements, requests copies of necessary documents from your organization, and will answer any questions you have. During the fieldwork, OIG auditors gather general information on your organization, study specific activities or operations, and examine pertinent documents, records, and procedures.

The exit conference takes place before the OIG issues its draft report. The OIG auditors will brief your organization on their preliminary findings and offer you an opportunity to respond and provide additional information before the draft report is issued. The draft report presents the preliminary OIG findings and recommendations.

You will have 30 days to respond to the findings in a draft report. Your comments will be included as an attachment to the final report. The final report gives the name(s) of the ED official(s) who are responsible for following up on resolving the issues discussed in the report and taking final Departmental action on the audit.

What happens if an audit report recommends cost recovery?
Sometimes a finding from an audit questions whether certain expenditures were allowable under the requirements that apply to the federal program. If an auditor questions any of your costs, ED staff reviews the audit and related documentation to determine if any of the costs questioned by the audit were, in fact, unallowable. If ED determines that you must repay expenditures that were unallowable, you are officially notified by ED. The official correspondence from ED will include information on appeal procedures that are available to all grantees. You will need to adhere carefully to these procedures, particularly the deadlines for submitting an appeal.

How do I return grant funds to ED?

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Payment Management System – Program Support Center (PSC) handles the return of Federal funds and interest earned from Federal grant drawdowns. The preferred method to return funds or interest is through the Automated Clearing House (ACH) Direct Deposit or FedWire.

Funds may be returned by check using only the U.S. Postal Service; however, returning funds via check may take 4-6 weeks for processing before a check payment may be applied to the appropriate account.

> Returns by check are to be mailed to:
>
> **HHS Program Support Center**
> **PO Box 979132**
> **St. Louis, MO 63197**
> A brief statement explaining the nature of the return must be included.
>
> To return interest on a grant not paid through the Payment Management System, make the check payable to the **Department of Health and Human Services**, and include the following with the check:
>
> - An explanation stating that the refund is for interest
> - The name of the awarding agency
> - The grant number(s) for which the interest was earned
> - The return should be made payable to: **Department of Health and Human Services**.

The End of the Project

The final part of any project is reporting back to ED on the successes and outcomes of, and the effort and funds invested in, the project. Your reporting becomes the basis of ED's evaluation of your project and the overall success of the program. ED gathers information from the projects' reports in order to report to Congress, the U.S. Government Accountability Office, and the public on ED's progress toward achieving its goals for the program.

What happens after the project has ended?

When you have reached the end of your performance period, you are officially in the *grant closeout process*. During the grant closeout process, ED has a series of checks to ensure that all required administrative and programmatic activities have been successfully completed and that you have properly accounted for both federal and any matching funds under the grant.

What responsibilities do I have after the project has ended?

You are responsible for preparing a final performance report after the project activities have been completed. Cooperative agreements might require additional items. Your report is due within 120 days of the end of the project period. Attachment 2 of your GAN provides information on when and where the report must be sent. Be sure that you always provide complete and accurate information in the report and include the FAIN of your grant. Your program office will notify you if you should use G5 e-Reports or another electronic system to submit your final report. Some grants require a final financial report with information on cost-sharing or matching contributions, indirect costs, or other financial information, in addition to the final performance report.

Your specific program may have additional requirements. Be sure to review and complete any steps outlined for you in program regulations and as directed by ED staff.

What does ED do with the information in my final performance report?

ED uses the information in final performance reports to evaluate the success of individual projects and the grant program. Generally, information from your project will be analyzed to determine whether the goals of the project were accomplished. Then, the data from all the projects will be evaluated to understand the extent to which the program had an impact on the larger, national issues it was designed to address. The long-term success of a discretionary grant program is dependent upon complete and accurate information from all grantees. ED also reviews the information

to decide how to improve the design of grant programs and to explain the program's impact to Congress and the public.

The information contained in final performance reports also helps ED to identify projects that contributed significantly to furthering the goals of the program and that have national significance. This information is shared with other grantees, potential grantees, and the general public using a variety of methods, including the Education Resource Information Center (ERIC) and national centers and clearinghouses. ED also disseminates information to future grantees and other interested members of the education community through ED's website, training, technical assistance, and conferences.

Do I have to keep any records related to my grant project after ED closes out my grant?

Yes. Almost all of ED's programs fall under the record retention provisions of the *General Education Provisions Act* (*GEPA*) and 2 CFR part 200. These provisions require grantees to maintain grant records for three years after the submission of all required reports. This time period is extended if audit or legal matters take longer than three years to resolve. Your program office contact can answer any questions you have about record retention.

What kinds of records do I need to keep?

You must:

> ➢ Keep records regarding the use of grant funds, compliance with program requirements, and the data used to demonstrate the project's effectiveness in meeting the project objectives.
> ➢ Keep your copy of the approved application.
> ➢ Keep financial records showing the amounts and sources of all funds spent on the grant, including any cost-sharing or matching funds that were required or volunteered as part of the approved project. These records must also document how all federal and matching funds were used.
> ➢ Keep records that document other types of information you provided in your annual or final reports, such as records of program participants and the source data used to report on performance measures.
> ➢ Maintain inventory records, if you purchase equipment with grant funds, until you dispose of the equipment or transfer it to another federal project for use.
> ➢ Keep copies of all correspondence with ED regarding the project.

> *GEPA*, EDGAR, and 2 CFR part 200 provide the specific requirements for record retention. You might need these records to demonstrate to program monitors or

auditors that all expenditures and activities you conducted with the grant were allowable and accurately reported.

AFTERWORD

The leadership and staff of the U.S. Department of Education appreciate your interest in our grant programs and look forward to working with you to promote excellence and equity in U.S. education. We hope that you have found this publication helpful. ED's Grants Policy and Training Division (GPTD) in the *Office of Acquisitions and Grants Administration (OAGA)* is responsible for updating this publication and welcomes your comments and suggestions for future editions. Please send them to:

U.S. Department of Education

Office of Acquisitions and Grants Administration

400 Maryland Ave. SW

Washington, DC 20202-0200

GLOSSARY

Administrative action: A post-award administrative request by a grantee to modify the terms and conditions of the original grant. An administrative action can be monetary or non-monetary and could require prior approval from ED.

Administrative regulations: Regulations that implement 1) guidance from OMB in *Title* 2 CFR part 200, which apply to the administration of all federal grants and cooperative agreements, 2) presidential executive orders (if regulation is necessary), 3) statutes that affects all applicants for or recipients of federal grants and cooperative agreements, and 4) ED's specific requirements for the award and management of grants. See also *EDGAR* and *Code of Federal Regulations* (*CFR*).

Allocable costs: Costs that can be traced to specific activities of a grant project.

Allowable costs: Expenditures under a grant project that are specifically permitted (or not specifically prohibited) by statute, regulation, or guidance. Allowable cost requirements for Department of Education grants are found in 2 CFR part 200, federal accounting standards, and other authoritative sources.

Application deadline (deadline date): The date and time by which an applicant must submit a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement application for it to be considered for funding by ED. Electronic applications must be received by the deadline date and time specified in the application notice. Paper applications must be mailed and postmarked by (or in some cases, received by) the deadline date.

Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424): The federal government's standard grant application form, sometimes referred to as the application "cover page." Grant applicants must include the completed SF 424 along with a completed "Supplemental Information Required for Department of Education" form (ED supplement to the SF 424) as part of their application packages.

Application notice: A notice published in the *Federal Register* and posted on ED's website that invites applications for one or more discretionary grant or cooperative agreement competitions, describes basic program and fiscal details for each, gives application instructions (almost always through Grants.gov), and cites the deadline date for submitting an application for each competition. This is also referred to as a "notice inviting applications" or "notice of funding opportunity."

Application package: A package that contains the application notice for one or more discretionary grant or cooperative agreement programs, and all the information and forms needed to apply for each program. It includes all the applicable program regulations and statutes.

Application reviewer (reviewer): An individual who serves ED by reviewing and scoring new discretionary grant and cooperative agreement applications; also referred to as "field reader" or "peer reviewer."

Appropriations statute: A law passed by Congress to provide a certain level of funding (e.g., for a grant program) in a given fiscal year.

Assurances: A listing of requirements found in different federal statute, regulations, and executive orders that apply to grants, and that applicants must agree in writing to observe as a condition of receiving federal assistance.

Audit finding: A conclusion about a monetary or non-monetary matter related to an auditor's examination of a grantee organization, program, activity, or function. Audit findings identify problems with an organization's grant expenditures and/or compliance with other grant requirements and provide recommendations for corrective action in order to prevent their future recurrence.

Authorizing statute: A law passed by Congress that establishes (or continues, in the case of a reauthorization) an activity (e.g., a grant program).

Budget period: An interval of time into which a project period is divided for budgetary purposes, usually 12 months.

Certification: A statement, signed by an applicant or grantee as a prerequisite for receiving federal funds, that the applicant or grantee 1) meets or will adhere to certain conditions and 2) will undertake or not undertake certain actions.

Code of Federal Regulations (*CFR*): A compilation of all final regulations issued by federal agencies and published annually by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), divided into numbered "titles." Title 2 contains the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements, and Title 34 contains the applicable regulations of the U.S. Department of Education.

Cognizant Agency (for *indirect costs*): The federal agency responsible for reviewing, negotiating, and approving cost allocation plans or indirect cost proposals developed under 2 CFR part 200 on behalf of all federal agencies.

Competitive review process: The process used by ED to select discretionary grant applications for funding, in which applications are scored by application reviewers and ED funds the most qualified applications.

Conflict of Interest: An issue that can arise in many areas of federal activity (such as a grant application review, financial transactions, conduct of research) where a

competing personal interest could affect, or appear to affect, an individual's judgment or could cause an individual's impartiality to be questioned.

Continuation award: A grant for a budget period subsequent to the first budget period. A grantee does not have to compete with other applicants to receive this award.

Cooperative agreement: A type of federal assistance; essentially, a variation of a grant (see *Grant programs*) awarded by ED if it anticipates having substantial involvement with the grantee during the performance of a funded project.

Cost-sharing or matching: The contribution to the costs of a federally funded project by the grantee (and the grantee's partners, if any, in the project), which also might include dollars from states, local governments, or private entities. Such contributions can be in the form of documented in-kind contributions as well as cash. Grantees are required to provide the level of cost-share that is indicated in the approved budget for their grant projects. If a program has a cost-sharing or matching requirement, the minimum percentage of the grantee's contribution and the appropriate sources for them are specified in application notices and packages.

Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number: A unique nine-digit identification code that is assigned to an institution by Dunn and Bradstreet, a nationally recognized credit rating bureau. All grantees and payees must have a DUNS number to receive payments through ED's Grants Management System (G5).

Direct costs: Those items in a grant project that can be identified specifically with a particular activity or cost objective. Examples of direct costs are compensation of employees for the time devoted to and identified specifically for the performance of grant activities; cost of materials acquired, consumed, or expended specifically for the purpose of the grant; equipment and approved capital expenditures; and travel expenses incurred specifically to carry out the activities of a grant project.

Discretionary grant: An award of financial assistance in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, made to an eligible applicant, at the discretion of the Secretary, based on evaluation of an application against predetermined and publicly available program criteria, through a competitive review process. Unlike with formula grants, discretionary grantees are not identified by Congress and budgets are program-based, not formula-based.

ED: The acronym for the U.S. Department of Education (meaning "Education Department," also referred to as the "Department").

Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR): Administrative regulations governing ED's grant programs found in parts 75, 76, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98 and 99 of Title 34 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR).

Federal Financial Report (FFR): A standard form, 425, used to obtain financial information from grantees. ED grantees are required to submit this form if reporting program income, or cost-sharing or matching, or when required by program statute or regulation, or by a specific condition to their grant.

Federal Register: A daily compilation of proposed and final federal regulations, legal notices, presidential proclamations and executive orders, federal agency documents having general applicability and legal effect, documents required to be published by an act of Congress, and other federal agency documents of public interest. The *Federal Register* is prepared by the National Archives and Records Administration for public distribution by the Government Publishing Office; it is the publication of record for the federal government.

Final Rule: A *Federal Register* notice that issues final regulations.

Formula grant: A grant that ED is directed by Congress to make to grantees, for which the amount is established by a formula based on certain criteria that are written into the statute and program regulations, and directly awarded and administered by ED's program offices.

Funding priorities: A means of focusing a competition on the areas in which the Secretary is particularly interested in receiving applications. Generally, priorities take the form of specific kinds of activities that applicants are asked to include in an application. There are absolute priorities, which the applicant must address in order to be considered for funding; competitive preferences, which the applicant has the option of choosing whether or not to address and for which they may receive additional points; and, invitational priorities, which the applicant is encouraged but not required to address. Applications addressing invitational priorities receive no preference over applications that do not meet the priority.

Grant Award Notification (GAN): The official document signed by a license holder stating the amount and conditions of an award for a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement.

Grant Closeout Process (grant closeout): The final step in the life cycle of a grant or cooperative agreement. During this phase, ED ensures that all applicable administrative actions and required work of a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement have been completed by the grantee. ED also reconciles and/or makes any final fiscal adjustments to a grantee's account in G5.

Grant Management System (**G5**): A management and financial subsystem that is part of ED's Education Department Central Automated Processing System (EDCAPS). G5 provides online capabilities for grantees to request payments, obtain their most current payment information (e-payments), access their GAN documents, request administrative changes to their grants (e-administration), and file electronic annual and final performance reports (e-reports). It allows for the online peer review of applications (e-reader). It is also the system through which Department staff manages aspects of the pre-award, award, post-award, closeout, and payments stages of the grants process.

Grant programs: For the purposes of this publication, ED's programs that award discretionary grants and cooperative agreements.

Grantee: An individual or organization that has been awarded financial assistance under one of ED's grant programs in the form of a grant or a cooperative agreement. Also known as "grant recipient" or, simply, "recipient."

Grants.gov: A storefront Web portal for use in electronic collection of data (forms and reports) for federal grant-making agencies through the Grants.gov site.

Indirect costs: Costs an organization incurs for common or joint purpose, which cannot be readily and specifically identified with a particular grant project or other institutional activity without effort in excess of the results achieved.

Indirect cost rate: A percentage established by a federal department or agency for a grantee organization or sub-organization, which the grantee uses in computing the dollar amounts it charges to the grant to reimburse itself for indirect costs incurred during the grant project.

Indirect cost rate agreement: A formalized, written, and signed agreement between a recipient and the cognizant agency for indirect costs that specifies the treatment of these costs. The agreement includes the approved rate(s), applicable fiscal year, and the specific treatment of certain items of cost. The rates and cost treatment laid out in the agreement are accepted and used by all federal agencies unless prohibited or limited by statute.

Monitoring: The regular and systematic assessment of 1) how well a grant is being implemented and achieving outcomes, 2) the degree to which it is meeting established measures, and 3) whether it is complying with statutory requirements, program regulations, policies, and fiscal requirements.

New Potential Grantees: Applicants who, if successful in a competition, will be new ED grantees.

Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM): An announcement published in the *Federal Register* of proposed new regulations or modifications to existing regulations; the first formal stage in the process of creating or modifying regulations for most programs.

Novice Applicant: Any applicant for a discretionary grant from ED that meets the standards in EDGAR § 75.225. Generally, a novice applicant for a grant is an entity that:

1. Never received a grant before from the program to which they are applying;

2. Never been a member of a group application that received a grant from the program to which they are applying; and

3. Not had an active grant from the Federal Government in the five years before the deadline date for applications under the ED discretionary grant programs to which they are applying.

Obligation: For a grantee, an obligation is the commitment of federal funds to pay for the costs of a grant project.

Office of Inspector General (OIG): The office that conducts audits and investigations of Department programs and operations in order to promote their efficiency and effectiveness, and to detect and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. Through courts and administrative procedures, this office seeks to recover misused federal funds. In cooperation with the Department of Justice, OIG seeks prosecution of wrongdoers.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB): An office within the Executive Office of the president that helps the president formulate spending plans; prepare the budget for submittal to Congress; evaluate the effectiveness of agency programs, policies, and procedures; assess competing funding demands among agencies; set government-wide funding priorities; manage federal information collection; and manage the federal government's regulatory procedures.

Performance measure: A characteristic or metric used to assess a grantee's performance under a program or project (e.g., dollars expended, student enrolled, grade-point average, number of job offers received).

Performance report: A report of the specific activities the recipient of a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement has performed during the budget or project period.

Performance target: A level of performance expressed as a tangible, measurable objective, against which actual achievement can be compared, including a goal expressed as a quantitative standard, value, or rate. In some instances (e.g., discretionary research awards), this may be limited to the requirement to submit technical performance reports (to be evaluated in accordance with agency policy).

Post-award conference (post-award performance conference): The first major discussion between ED and a grantee after a new award has been made. The conference generally focuses on the proposed project outcomes as stated in the grantee's approved application and on the ways in which the project's progress will be assessed.

Principal office: For the purposes of this publication, one of the organizational units of ED responsible for administering programs that award discretionary grants and cooperative agreements. The six principal program offices of ED are the Institute of Education Sciences (IES); Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA); Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE); Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE); Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS); and Office of Career Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE).

Principal Specialist: ED official who is head of one of the six principal offices (listed above) and who holds the rank of Assistant Secretary or its equivalent.

Program office: A sub-unit of a principal office that conducts the daily work of administering discretionary grant and cooperative agreement programs, including the review and ranking of applications.

Program regulations: Regulations that implement statutes passed by Congress to authorize a specific grant program; they may include applicant and participant eligibility criteria, the nature of activities funded, allowability of certain costs, selection criteria under which applications will be selected for funding, and other information relevant to the program.

Program staff: A group of Department personnel in a program office responsible for administering all phases of the grants process.

Project period: (also referred to as the "performance period"): The total amount of time, shown with a "start" date and an "end" date, for which ED will fund a grant and authorize a grantee to conduct the approved work of the project described in the application. Project periods of more than 18 months are generally divided into 12-month budget periods. When ED makes a multiyear award, it usually obligates funds for the first budget period and commits to fund subsequent budget periods under certain conditions, including sufficient annual appropriations by Congress and

sufficient progress by the grantee. Some programs, however, might award their grants with a single obligation of funds for the entire project period.

Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN): The identifying number for a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement application and award.

Secretary of Education: The Secretary is responsible for the overall direction, supervision, and coordination of all activities of the Department and is the principal adviser to the President on federal policies, programs, and activities related to education in the U.S.

System for Award Management (**SAM**): The primary registrant database (http://www.sam.gov) for the federal government, which collects, stores, and disseminates data related to federal agency contract and grant applicants and recipients, including a listing of individuals who are suspended or debarred from receiving or participating in federally funded projects.

Student financial assistance: ED's funding of undergraduate or graduate students attending colleges, universities, and other postsecondary institutions that meet ED's eligibility requirements. Sometimes referred to as "student aid," this assistance is provided by programs in ED's Office of Federal Student Aid.

Subaward: An award provided by an ED grantee to a subrecipient in order to carry out part of a federal award received by that entity.

Substantial progress: A level of accomplishment that a grantee must make in its project during a budget period, which produces measurable and verifiable evidence that the activities undertaken complied with those objectives to which ED and the grantee have agreed.

OTHER INFORMATION

U.S. Department of Education

Please visit [ED's website.](#)

Grant and contract information is available at [ED's website](#).

Formula grant information is available at [ED's website](#) by searching the name of the program, topic of the grant, or the program office that administers the grant program.

Federal Student Aid information is available at [FSA's homepage](#)

U.S. Department of Education Grants Training and Management Resources

[Online grants training](#) courses are available from the U.S. Department of Education.

Federal Assistance Listing

The [Federal Assistance Listing](#) contains an online searchable catalog of opportunities to apply for federal assistance, as well as a PDF of the catalog formatted in the same layout as the printed document.

Federal Statutes

Legislative information regarding recent sessions of Congress is available online at [Congress.gov](#).

U.S. Government Depository Libraries

U.S. government depository libraries are located in each state and act as official repositories for federal documents, such as some of those mentioned in this publication. For more information, visit the [US Government Depository Libraries' website](#).

Federal Citizen Information Center

The [Federal Citizen Information Center](#) provides a wealth of information about the operations and offerings of the federal government, including telephone contact numbers for grant-related information from other federal departments and agencies.

USASpending.gov

USASpending.gov is a powerful tool that furthers the government's efforts to be transparent. It is the official source for spending data for the U.S. Government. Its mission is to show the American public what the federal government spends every year. On this site, you can follow federal funds from Congressional appropriations to federal agencies and down to local communities and businesses.

Internet Directory

The U.S. Department of Education's website hosts a large collection of education-related information. The site includes statistical information, research findings and syntheses, full-text publications, directories of effective programs, and similar information. Visit ED's website.