U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education

Ready to Learn Programming

Assistance Listing Number: 84.295A

FY 2026 Grant Competition

Posted May 8, 2026

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Program Information

The Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is soliciting applications in support of the administration of the Ready to Learn Programming (RTL) program on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the Secretary of Education (the Secretary). RTL is designed to: (1) promote school readiness and academic achievement through the development and dissemination of accessible instructional programming for preschool and elementary school children and their families; (2) develop and disseminate programming and digital content containing Ready to Learn programming that is specially designed for nationwide distribution over public television stations' digital broadcasting channels and the Internet; and (3) Produce educational outreach materials and programs that are designed to deepen and extend the effectiveness of the educational television and interactive.

RTL accomplishes this by providing grants to support the creation of nationally distributed educational media content that meets the highest standards of educational quality. RTL television and digital media products focus on developmentally appropriate curriculum frameworks that align with widely accepted learning standards.

In order to ensure the media is widely available, applicants are encouraged to include specific plans for national distribution primarily over public television stations' digital broadcasting channels. To complement these media distribution efforts, applicants are also encouraged to promote the effective use of materials developed under RTL among parents, family members, teachers, principals, and other school leaders, Head Start providers, early childhood educators, elementary school teachers, public libraries, afterschool program personnel, young children, child care workers, and providers of family literacy services.

Assistance Listing Number: 84.295A.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C.7293.

OMB Control Number: 1894–0006.[1]

[1] According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 120 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit and voluntary. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0006. *Note:* Please do not return completed applications to this address.

For Further Information: Tammy Proctor. Telephone: (202) 260-7803. Email: ReadyToLearn@ed.gov.

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreements.

Estimated Available Funds: $31,000,000.

Estimated Range of Awards: $6,000,000 to $12,000,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: $9,000,000 for the first year of the project; $45,000,000 over five years.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1- 3.

Project Period: 60 months.

Application Deadline: July 8, 2026.

Note: This application notice and instructions is the official document governing the grant competition. ED is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

To receive funding under this competition, an entity must be a public telecommunications entity that is able to demonstrate—

(a) A capacity for the development and national distribution of educational and instructional television programming of high quality that is accessible by a large majority of disadvantaged preschool and elementary school children;

(b) A capacity to contract with the producers of children's television programming for the purpose of developing educational television programming of high quality;

(c) A capacity, consistent with the entity's mission and nonprofit nature, to negotiate such contracts in a manner that returns to the entity an appropriate share of any ancillary income from sales of any program-related products; and

(d) A capacity to localize programming and materials to meet specific State and local needs and to provide educational outreach at the local level.

Note: If two or more public telecommunications entities wish to form a consortium and jointly submit a single application, they must follow the procedures for group applications described in 34 CFR 75.127 through 75.129.

Costs

Cost Sharing or Matching

This competition does not require cost sharing or matching.

Indirect Cost Rate Information

This program uses a restricted indirect cost rate. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see this webpage.

Administrative Cost Limitation

Under section 4643(d) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), an entity that receives a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement under this section may use up to 5 percent of the amount received under the grant, contract, or agreement for the normal and customary expenses of administering the grant, contract, or agreement. This limit applies to the total indirect costs and direct administrative costs claimed by the grantee.

All administrative expenses must be reasonable and necessary and conform to Cost Principles described in 2 CFR part 200 subpart E of the Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance.

Subgrantees

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

Contracts

A grantee under this competition may enter into contracts with entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application as described under subsection (a)(1)(B)(iv) of 7293.

Submission Requirements and Deadlines

Applications Available	May 8, 2026
Notice of Intent to Apply Deadline	June 8, 2026
Application Deadline	July 8, 2026
Deadline for Intergovernmental Review	August 6, 2026

ED staff will be able to review grant applications more efficiently if we know the approximate number of applicants that intend to apply. Therefore, we strongly encourage each potential applicant to notify us of their intent to submit an application. To do so, please email the program mailbox at ReadyToLearn@ed.gov with the subject line "Intent to Apply," and include the applicant's name and a contact person's name and email address.

Applicants that do not submit a notice of intent to apply may still apply for funding; applicants that do submit a notice of intent to apply are not bound to apply or bound by the information provided.

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

Program Description

Priorities

This notice includes two competitive preference priorities and one invitational priority. Competitive Preference Priority 1 is from the Secretary's Supplemental Priority and Definitions on Meaningful Learning Opportunities (Meaningful Learning Opportunities Supplemental Priority), published in the *Federal Register* on February 12, 2026 (91 FR 6625); and Competitive Preference Priority 2 is from 34 CFR 75.225. The invitational priority is from the Secretary's Supplemental Priorities and Definitions on Evidence-Based Literacy, Education Choice, Education to the States, and Meaningful Learning Opportunities (2025 Supplemental Priorities), published in the *Federal Register* on September 9, 2025 (90 FR 43514).

Competitive Preference Priorities: An application may receive a maximum of 10 additional points under Competitive Preference Priority 1 and 3 additional points under Competitive Preference Priority 2 for a maximum of 13 additional points under the competitive preference priorities. ED will not review or award points for a competitive preference priority if an applicant fails to clearly identify it as a competitive preference priority that it wishes ED to consider for purposes of awarding competitive preference priority points.

Invitational Priority: ED does not give an application that meets an invitational priority a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

Priority Type	*Priority Title*	Required	Priority Language	Points
Competitive Preference Priority 1	*Meaningful Learning Opportunities*	No	Projects or proposals that are designed to support families in providing meaningful at-home learning, which can include providing resources, educational materials, and access to learning platforms to support student learning needs.	Up to 10 points

Priority Type	*Priority Title*	Required	Priority Language	Points
			Note: Applicants are encouraged to use evidence-based research to determine the effectiveness of the media used in out-of-classroom settings to prepare children for success in school, and to help parents and educators understand the conditions and context in which it is effective.	
Competitive Preference Priority 2	*Applications from New Potential Grantees*	No	Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate that the applicant has never received a grant or cooperative agreement, including through membership in a group application submitted in accordance with §§ 75.127 through 75.129 that received a grant or cooperative agreement, under the Ready to Learn program.	0 or 3 points
Invitational Priority	*Promoting Evidence-Based Literacy*	No	Projects or proposals that are designed to do one or more of the following: (a) Advance, increase, or expand evidence-based literacy instruction (as defined in this notice), or (b) Focus on evidence-based literacy instruction (as defined in this notice). *Note:* Applicants are encouraged to use evidence-based research to determine the effectiveness of the media used in out-of-classroom settings to prepare children for success in school, and to help parents and educators understand the conditions and context in which it is effective. Applicants may want to consult two What Works Clearinghouse Practice	Not Applicable

Priority Type	*Priority Title*	Required	Priority Language	Points
			Guides as they prepare their applications, including *Preparing Young Children for School* and *Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade*.	

Note: The media produced using RTL funds must comply with 16 CFR part 312, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule, which protects children under the age of 13 from unfair or deceptive use of personal information acts or practices in connection with the collection, use, and/or disclosure of personal information from and about children on the internet.

Application Requirements

Under section 4643 of the ESEA, to be eligible to receive a cooperative agreement under RTL, an eligible entity must include in its application—

(a) A description of the activities to be carried out under this section.

(b) A list of the types of entities with which such entity will enter into contracts under section 4643(a)(1)(B)(iv) of the ESEA.

(c) A description of the activities the entity will undertake widely to disseminate the content developed under this section; and

(d) A description of how the entity will comply with section 4643(a)(2) of the ESEA.

Program Requirements

Under section 4643 of the ESEA, awards made under RTL must be used to—

(a) Develop, produce, and distribute accessible educational and instructional video programming for preschool and elementary school children and their parents in order to facilitate student academic achievement;

(b) Facilitate the development, directly or through contracts with producers of children's and family educational television programming, of educational programming for preschool and elementary school children, and the accompanying support materials and services that promote the effective use of such programming;

(c) Facilitate the development of programming and digital content containing Ready to Learn programming and resources for parents and caregivers that is specially designed for nationwide distribution over public television stations' digital broadcasting channels and the internet;

(d) Contract with entities (such as public telecommunications entities) so that programming developed under this program is disseminated and distributed to the widest possible audience appropriate to be served by the programming, and through the use of the most appropriate distribution technologies; and

(e) Develop and disseminate education and training materials, including interactive programs and programs adaptable to distance learning technologies, that are designed—

(i) To promote school readiness; and

(ii) To promote the effective use of materials developed under paragraphs (2) and (3) among parents, family members, teachers, principals and other school leaders, Head Start providers, providers of family literacy services, childcare, childcare providers, early childhood educators, elementary school teachers, public libraries, and after-school program personnel caring for preschool and elementary school children.

Note: Under section 4643 of the ESEA, not less than 60 percent of the amount awarded for each fiscal year may be used to carry out activities under paragraphs (b) through (d) above.

Independent Evaluation: Under 34 CFR 75.590 a grantee is required to: 1) conduct an independent evaluation; and 2) submit the final evaluation to the Education Resources Information Center, which is administered by the Institute of Education Sciences.

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria outline how the application will be scored. The maximum possible total score an application can receive for addressing the criteria is 100 points. The maximum possible score for addressing each criterion is indicated in parentheses following the criterion. A suggested scoring rubric is provided in the Appendix of this notice as a guideline to assist peer reviewers during the application review process.

The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210.

Note: An applicant must provide in the project narrative section of its application information about how its proposed project addresses the selection criteria. In responding to the selection criteria, applicants should keep in mind that peer reviewers may consider

only the information provided in the written application when scoring and commenting on the application.

(a) *Significance (up to 10 points):* The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to meeting program purposes and requirements and serving target population.

(b) *Quality of the project design (up to 40 points):* The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified, measurable, and ambitious yet achievable within the project period, and aligned with the purposes of the grant program. (up to 5 points)

(ii) The extent to which the proposed project includes explicit plans for authentic, meaningful, and ongoing community members and partner engagement, including their involvement in planning, implementing, and revising project activities for underserved populations. (up to 5 points)

(iii) The quality of the logic model or other conceptual framework underlying the proposed project, including how inputs are related to outcomes. (up to 5 points)

(iv) The likely utility of the resources (such as materials, processes, techniques, or data infrastructure) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for effective use in a variety of conditions, populations, or settings. (up to 5 points)

(v) The extent to which the proposed development efforts include adequate quality controls, continuous improvement efforts, and as appropriate, repeated testing of products. (up to 5 points)

(vi) The quality of the plan to deliver project services more efficiently at scale and maintain effectiveness. (up to 5 points)

(vii) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to meaningful improvements in early childhood and family outcomes. (up to 10 points)

Note: In responding to the Quality of the project design selection criterion, an applicant should include a detailed description of its proposal to make widely available materials to communities and their members, as described in section 4643(a)(1)(B)(v), (a)(2) and (a)(4) of the ESEA.

(c) *Quality of the management plan (up to 25 points):* The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(i) The feasibility of the management plan to achieve project objectives and goals on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks. (up to 10 points)

(ii) The applicant's capacity (such as qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity), together with any project partners, to further develop and bring the proposed project effectively to scale on a national level during the grant period, based on the findings of the proposed project. (up to 10 points)

(iii) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (up to 5 points)

(d) Quality of the project evaluation or other evidence-building (up to 25 points): The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation or other evidence-building of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation or other evidence-building, the Secretary considers:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the effectiveness of the project on relevant outcomes that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbooks. (up to 10 points)

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation or other evidence-building are appropriate to the context within which the project operates and the target population of the proposed project. (up to 5 points)

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation or other evidence-building will provide guidance for quality assurance and continuous improvement. (5 points)

(iv) The extent to which the evaluation plan includes a dissemination strategy that is likely to promote others' learning from the project. (up to 5 points)

Note: We encourage applicants to review the What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook for technical assistance on evaluation.

Performance Measures

For the purposes of ED reporting under 34 CFR 75.110, ED has established a set of performance measures under RTL. These measures constitute ED's indicators of success for the program. Consequently, we advise an applicant for a grant under this program to consider these measures in conceptualizing the approach and evaluation for its proposed project.

Applications must describe:

The data collection and reporting methods the applicant would use and why those methods are likely to yield reliable, valid, and meaningful performance data.

The applicant's capacity to collect and report reliable, valid, and meaningful performance data, as evidenced by high-quality data collection, analysis, and reporting in other projects or research.

Program Measure	Description
Program Performance Measure 1	The number of children who use Ready to Learn-produced educational media products, disaggregated by individual product, as determined by appropriate industry standard metrics or, when available, by tracking tools.
Program Performance Measure 2	Dollars leveraged from non-Federal sources per Federal dollar dedicated to core non-outreach and non-research program activities.
Program Performance Measure 3	The percentage of educational "transmedia products," along with necessary accompanying support materials, that are deemed to be of high quality in promoting learning of literacy by an independent panel of expert reviewers. *Note:* ED will convene expert panels in years three and five to review grantee-produced products.

Program Measure	Description
	Quality will be determined by an independent panel of experts within three key areas – Quality of Pedagogy, Quality of Media, and Quality of User Experience. Applicants should include in their budget funds for two individuals in these years to spend two days in Washington, DC to attend these panel meetings and to demonstrate the identified products to reviewers.
Program Performance Measure 4	The percentage of summative experimental or quasi-experimental research studies that demonstrate positive and statistically significant gains in basic skills such as literacy and other outcomes relevant to RTL competition priorities. *Note:* Grantees will report on this measure once, in Year 5.

All grantees will be expected to submit an annual performance report that includes data addressing these performance measures to the extent that they apply to the grantee's project.

Application Submission Information

Pre-Application Materials

ED will post pre-application materials. Visit the RTL website for information.

Registration

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

Grants.gov registration involves several steps, including registration on SAM.gov which may take approximately one week to complete, but could take upwards of several weeks to complete, depending upon the completeness and accuracy of the data entered into the SAM database by an applicant. You may begin working on your application while completing the registration process, but you cannot apply until all registration steps are complete. Once your SAM registration is active, it will take 24-48 hours for the information to become available in Grants.gov. For detailed information on the registration steps, please go to Grants.gov Applicant Registration. Please note that your organization will need to update its SAM registration annually.

SAM.gov

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

To register, go to SAM.gov and click on "Get Started."

Click on the Entity Registration Checklist for the information you will need to register in SAM.gov.

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

Grants.gov

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

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

For more information or assistance, click on "Applicant Registration Page."

ED strongly recommends that you do not wait until the last day to submit your application. Grants.gov will put a date/time stamp on your application and then process it after it is fully uploaded. If Grants.gov rejects your application, you will need to resubmit successfully to Grants.gov before 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the deadline date.

You must provide the Unique-Entity ID (UEI) on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov. This UEI is assigned to your organization in SAM at the time your organization registers in SAM. If you do not enter the UEI assigned by SAM on your application, Grants.gov will reject your application.

A Grants.gov applicant must apply online using Workspace, a shared environment in Grants.gov where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different web forms within an application. The Grants.gov website contains further instructions on how to apply.

Intergovernmental Review

This is subject to Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs) and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. One of the objectives of Executive Order 12372 is to strengthen federalism – or the distribution of responsibility between localities, States, and the Federal government – by fostering intergovernmental partnerships. This idea includes supporting processes that State or local governments have developed to coordinate, and review proposed Federal financial grant applications. Grant applicants need to contact

State Single Points of Contact (SPOC) for information on their State's procedures. Multi-State applicants should follow procedures specific to each state. Further information about the SPOC List and the official list of entities can be found online.

Absent specific State review programs, applicants may submit comments directly to the point of contact listed in this notice.

Verify Submission

Verify that Grants.gov received your application submission on time and that it was validated successfully. To see the date/time your application was received, log in to Grants.gov and click on the Track My Application link. For a successful submission, the date/time received should be earlier than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on the deadline date, AND the application status should be: Validated, Received by Agency, or Agency Tracking Number Assigned.

If the date/time received is later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the deadline date, your application is late. If your application has a status of "Received," it is still awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will either change to "Validated" or "Rejected with Errors." If the status is "Rejected with Errors," your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found on the Encountering Error Messages webpage at Grants.gov.

For more detailed information on troubleshooting Adobe errors, you can review the Adobe Reader Software Tip Sheet. If you discover your application is late or has been rejected, please see the instructions below. *Note:* You will receive a series of confirmations both online and via e-mail about the status of your application. Please do not rely solely on e-mail to confirm whether your application has been received timely and validated successfully.

Helpful Hints When Working with Grants.gov

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

Submission Problems – What should you do?

If you have problems submitting to Grants.gov before the closing date, please contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at: support@grants.gov. You may also access the Grants.gov Self- Service Knowledge Base web portal.

Application Review Information

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

(a) Relevant to a criterion, priority, or other requirement that applies to the selection of applications for new grants;

(b) Concerning the applicant's performance and use of funds under a previous award under any ED program; and

(c) Concerning the applicant's failure under any ED program to submit a performance report or its submission of a performance report of unacceptable quality.

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

We will use independent peer reviewers with varied backgrounds and professions, such as experts in science or literacy education, early learning, media production and distribution, educational game development, educational technology, community-based outreach, or educational research and evaluation. All reviewers will be thoroughly screened for conflicts of interest to ensure a fair and competitive review process. Peer reviewers will read, prepare a written evaluation, and score the assigned applications, using the selection criteria provided in this notice.

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

Definitions

The definitions of "continuous improvement," "evaluation," "evidence-building," "independent evaluation," "national level," "quality data," and "What Works Clearinghouse Handbooks" are from 34 CFR 77.1. The definitions of "evidence framework," "evidence-based literacy instruction," "experimental study," and "quasi-experimental design study" are from the 2025 Supplemental Priorities.

Continuous improvement means using plans for collecting and analyzing data about a project component's implementation and outcomes (including the pace and extent to which project outcomes are being met) to inform necessary changes throughout the project. These plans may include strategies to gather ongoing feedback from participants and stakeholders on the implementation of the project component.

Evaluation means an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs, policies, practices, and organizations intended to assess their implementation, outcomes, effectiveness, or efficiency.

Evidence framework means an approach to providing a determination about whether an activity, strategy, or intervention meets each aspect of the definition of strong evidence or moderate evidence (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(21)(A)(i)(I-II)), as applicable.

(a) An evidence framework must include each of the following:

(i) Whether or not a study is an experimental study or quasi-experimental design study;

(ii) Whether or not a study shows a positive, statistically significant effect on student outcomes or other relevant outcomes;

(iii) Whether or not a study uses outcome measures that demonstrate validity and reliability, that do not give an unfair advantage to participants in one condition over another, and that are measured consistently for the groups or participants that are being compared;

(iv) Whether or not a study design is otherwise of high quality, including whether it minimizes factors outside the intervention that could affect student or other relevant outcomes (confounds) and whether random assignment (if used) was done with integrity; and

(v) Whether or not study implementation and analysis is appropriate, including whether groups or participants being compared demonstrate baseline equivalence on key individual and other relevant characteristics, whether

differences in baseline equivalence are statistically controlled, and by considering the impact on the validity of the study of any changes to the sample over time.

(b) An evidence framework may be implemented or verified by one or more of the following:

(i) An organization with relevant expertise that has demonstrated to the Department that it has a rigorous, transparent (publicly accessible) process for determining each aspect identified in (a);

(ii) By peer reviewers with statistical expertise who apply an evidence framework consistent with each aspect identified in (a) in reviewing support for an applicant's assertion that relevant information is strong evidence or moderate evidence, as applicable; or

(iii) By the Department or peer reviewers with statistical expertise who affirm an applicant's assertion that relevant information is strong evidence or moderate evidence because it is supported by study ratings included in the What Works Clearinghouse in one or more of:

(1) a practice guide;

(2) an intervention report; or

(3) individual studies otherwise assessed to meet strong evidence or moderate evidence.

Evidence-based literacy instruction means literacy instruction that relates to explicit, systematic and intentional instruction in phonological awareness, phonic decoding, oral and sign language, vocabulary, language structure, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and writing; promotes knowledge-rich materials; and is backed by one or more of the following, as supported by an evidence framework (as defined in this notice):

(a) strong evidence, meaning an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study (strong evidence as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(21)(A)(i)(I)) or

(b) moderate evidence, meaning an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study (moderate evidence as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(21)(A)(i)(II)).

Evidence-building means a systematic plan for identifying and answering questions relevant to programs and policies through performance measurement, exploratory studies, or program evaluation.

Experimental study means a study that is designed to compare outcomes between two groups (such as students) that are otherwise equivalent except for their assignment to either a treatment group receiving an activity, strategy, intervention, process, product, practice, or policy as compared with a control group that does not. Experimental studies can support claims of strong evidence. Randomized controlled trials and single-case design studies are specific types of experimental studies that meet this definition.

Independent evaluation means an evaluation of a project component that is designed and carried out independently of, but in coordination with, the entities that develop or implement the project component.

National level means the level of scope or effectiveness of a project component that is able to be effective in a wide variety of communities, including rural and urban areas, as well as groups with different characteristics (such as socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, language, and migrant status), populations, and settings.

Quasi-experimental design study means a study using a design that attempts to approximate an experimental study by identifying a comparison group that is similar to the treatment group in important respects. Cross-sectional group designs, comparative interrupted time series, difference-in-difference designs, and growth curve designs are specific types of quasi-experimental studies that meet this definition. This type of study can meet the definition of moderate evidence but not strong evidence.

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Handbooks (WWC Handbooks) means the standards and procedures set forth in the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Version 5.0, or in the WWC Standards Handbook, Version 4.0 or 4.1, or in the WWC Procedures Handbook, Version 4.0 or 4.1, the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Version 3.0 or Version 2.1 (all incorporated by reference; see § 77.2). Study findings eligible for review under WWC standards can meet WWC standards without reservations, meet WWC standards with reservations, or not meet WWC standards. WWC practice guides and intervention reports include findings from systematic reviews of evidence as described in the WWC Handbooks documentation.

Award Requirements

Terms and Conditions

If you are awarded a grant under this competition, you must ensure and may be required to demonstrate that federal funds will not be used under this project in any manner that violates the United States Constitution, Title VI or Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d *et seq.* or 42 U.S.C. 2000e *et seq.*), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*), section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 *et seq.*), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12131 *et seq.*), the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001 (20 U.S.C. 7905), section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1011f), or other applicable federal law.

Please note the provisions of Executive Orders, including but not limited to, 14151, 14168, 14173, and 14190, as well as the U.S. Department of Justice's July 29, 2025, non-regulatory "Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination," which clarifies the application of federal antidiscrimination laws to programs or initiatives that may involve discriminatory practices, including those labeled as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion ("DEI") programs.

Such activities may risk violating federal civil rights laws and may jeopardize federal funding. This includes any discriminatory equity ideology in violation of a Federal anti-discrimination law. A definition of "discriminatory equity ideology" is contained in Section 2(b) of Executive Order 14190. To the extent that any entity receiving grant funds under this grant uses those grant funds for such unallowable activities, ED reserves the right to take appropriate enforcement actions, including the recovery of grant funds or may pursue termination or non-continuation. The Grant Award Notification document accompanying your award may contain further terms and conditions, as necessary, to ensure grantee compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and administrative priorities.

Applicable Regulations

(a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of ED in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of ED in 2 CFR part 3474. (d) The Meaningful Learning Opportunities Supplemental Priority. (e) The 2025 Supplemental Priorities.

Note: The open licensing requirement in 2 CFR 3474.20 does not apply to this program pursuant to 2 CFR 3474.20(d)(1)(vi).

Continuation Awards

In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, ED considers, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; if ED has established performance measurement requirements, whether the grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the performance targets in the grantee's approved application; or whether the continuation of the project is in the best interest of the Federal government.

In making a continuation award, ED also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the terms and conditions specified elsewhere in this notice assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from ED (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23). In making any continuation award determination, ED may consider all relevant information.

Application Checklist

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

1. **Standard Documents**
    - ❑ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
    - ❑ ED Supplemental Information for SF-424
2. **Budget Information**
    - ❑ Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
3. **Abstract Form**
    - ❑ Project Abstract
4. **Project Narrative**
    - ❑ Application Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form)
5. **Budget Narrative**
    - ❑ Budget Narrative Attachment Form
6. **Other Attachment Forms**
    - ❑ Appendix A: Include Information Demonstrating the Eligibility of the Applying Public Telecommunications Entity

- ❑ Appendix B: Resumes of Key Personnel
- ❑ Appendix C: Letters of Support and Memoranda of Understanding, if applicable
- ❑ Appendix D: Other, if applicable

7. **Assurances and Certifications**
   - ❑ Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Standard Form LLL)
   - ❑ Grants.gov Lobbying Form

Part 1: Standard Documents

❑ Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)

❑ ED Supplemental Information for SF-424

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

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

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

Part 2: Budget Information

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

The SF-424A Budget Information Form is required. This part of your application contains information about the Federal funding you are requesting. The form requires high level, total funding requests for each year of the project, but only requires detailed information for Year 1 of the project. You will provide information on all years of the project, including an itemized budget breakdown for each year of the proposed project, in your Budget Narrative. Specific instructions for completing the Budget Narrative are provided within this application notice and

instructions under Budget Narrative. Budget Narrative attachments are not included in the page count.

Instructions for completing SF-424A:

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

Section A – Budget Summary

- *Section A-Budget Summary:* Enter the name of the grant program for which you are requesting funds in 1(a).
- *Section A-Budget Summary:* 1(b): Enter the Assistance Listing Number (84.295A).
- *Section A-Budget Summary:* 1(e) "Federal": Include the total amount requested for the entire performance period. The amount you enter here will auto populate in 5 (e).
- *Section A-Budget Summary:* 1(f) "Non-Federal": Only include an amount in this section if you propose to include non-Federal financial resources as part of this project, including any non-Federal funds to meet any program cost sharing requirements. If not including non-Federal financial resources, leave this blank or include 0.
- *Section A-Budget Summary:* 1(g): If using Grants.gov form, the total amount included here will be auto-calculated based on what is included in 1(e) and 1(f).

Section B – Budget Categories

Section B-Budget Categories:

- *Line 6. Object Class Categories:* The categories listed here (a-k) are the categories you will need to further describe in the Budget Narrative. For this section, only include the total amount by category for Year 1 of the project. You will provide a breakdown by category for each year of the project in the Budget Narrative. If using Grants.gov, line 6 column (1) will be auto-populated with the name of the program for which you are requesting funding.
    - *Personnel (line 6a.):* Enter project personnel salaries and wages only. Include fees and expenses for consultants on line 6f or 6h.

- *Fringe Benefits (line 6b):* The organization's normal fringe benefits contribution may be charged to the program. Leave this line blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of the indirect cost.
- *Travel (line 6c):* Indicate the travel costs of employees and participants only. Include travel of persons such as consultants on line 6f or 6h.
- *Equipment (line 6d):* Indicate the cost of tangible, non-expendable personal property that has a usefulness greater than one year and acquisition costs that are the lesser of the capitalization level established by the applicant entity for financial statement purposes or $10,000 per article. Lower limits may be established to maintain consistency with the applicant's policy.
- *Supplies (line 6e):* Show all tangible, expendable personal property. Direct supplies and materials differ from equipment in that they are consumable, expendable, and of a relatively low unit cost. Supplies purchased with grant funds should directly benefit the grant project and be necessary for achieving the goals of the project.
- *Contractual (line 6f):* The contractual category should include all costs specifically incurred with actions that the applicant takes in conjunction with an established internal procurement system. Include consultant fees, expenses, and travel costs in this category if the consultant's services are obtained through a written binding agreement or contract.
- *Construction (line 6g):* Construction funds are not authorized, unless specified by the program. If construction is allowable, include the amount request for construction costs.
- *Other (line 6h)*: Indicate all direct costs not covered on lines 1-6. For example, include costs such as space rental, required fees, honoraria and travel (where a contract is not in place for services), training, and communication and printing costs. If applicable, include stipends under other. If stipends are included under other, do not include stipends when calculating the indirect cost. Do not include costs that are included in the indirect cost rate.
- *Total Direct Costs (line 6i):* The sum of lines 6a-6h. If using Grants.gov, this number is auto-calculated.

- *Indirect Costs (line 6j):* Enter the amount of indirect cost in accordance with the program requirements, negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, or the 15% de minimis rate. Costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. For more information, please see the grantor agency requirements. If not applicable, leave blank.
- *Total Cost (line 6i and 6j):* This number should be equal to sum of lines 6i-6j (total of direct costs + indirect costs). If using Grants.gov, this number is auto-calculated. The sum for column one, labeled Project Year 6 (1), should also be equal to item 15a on the application cover sheet (SF Form 424).

Line 7. Program Income: You may leave this field blank.

Section C – Non-Federal Resources

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

Section D – Forecasted Cash Needs

- *Line 13. Federal:* The total for 1st Year column will automatically calculate based on the funding amounts included in Quarters 1-4. These quarters apply to ***Year One ONLY.*** Enter the forecasted cash needs from Federal sources for each quarter of the first program year. The amount entered for each quarter will be used to auto-calculate the amount in line 15 and is your forecasted needs. You will have an opportunity to provide updates to these quarterly amounts in post-award.
- *Line 14. Non-Federal:* The total for 1st year column will automatically calculate based on the funding amounts included in Quarters 1-4. These quarters apply to ***Year One ONLY. Leave this blank for each quarter if you are not including any Non-Federal Funds.*** If including non-Federal funds, enter the forecasted cash needs from non-Federal sources for the first quarter of the first program year. If not applicable, leave blank.
- *Line 15. (sum of lines 13 and 14):* If using Grants.gov, the total is auto-calculated.

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

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

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

Section F – Other Budget Information

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

Line 23. Remarks: You may leave this field blank.

Part 3: Abstract Form

The project abstract should not exceed one page and should include a concise description of the following information:

- Project objectives and activities
- Competitive Preference Priority(ies)
- Invitational Priority

- Proposed project outcomes
- Proposed project partners, if applicable

Ensure that you only attach the ED approved file types detailed in the detailed in the 2025 Common Instructions.

Part 4: Project Narrative

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

Ensure that you only attach the ED approved file types detailed in the 2025 Common Instructions. When attaching files, applicants should limit the size of their file names. Lengthy file names could result in difficulties with opening and processing your application.

❑ **Table of Contents**

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

❑ **Application Narrative**

ED encourages applicants to limit this section of the application to the equivalent of no more than 50 pages. The recommended page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; or the one- abstract, the resumes, the bibliography, logic model, or the letters of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to the **Project Narrative**.

Part 5: Budget Narrative

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

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

This section requires an itemized budget breakdown for each project year and the basis for estimating the costs of personnel salaries, benefits, project staff travel, materials and supplies, consultants and subcontracts, indirect costs and any other projected expenditures. Be sure to complete an itemized budget breakdown and narrative for each year of the proposed project.

Below is a breakdown of the categories to be included in the Budget Narrative for each project year:

- *Personnel*: List all staff positions by title including roles and responsibilities. For each position give the annual salary, the percentage of time devoted to the project, and the amount of each position's salary funded by the grant.

- *Fringe Benefits*: The institution's normal fringe benefits contribution may be charged to the program. Leave this line blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of the indirect cost.

- *Travel*: For grantee staff only, specify the purpose, number of staff traveling, mileage, per diem, estimated number of in-state and out-of-state trips, and other estimated costs for each type of travel.

- *Equipment*: Identify each item of equipment you expect to purchase that has an estimated acquisition cost of $10,000 or more per unit (or if your capitalization level is less than $10,000, use your capitalization level) and a useful lifetime of more than one year (see 2 CFR Part 200.1 for the definition of Equipment). List the item, quantity, and the unit cost per item.

- *Supplies*: Identify the cost of supplies (e.g., general office supplies, desk/chairs, laptops/printers, other specialty items) in the detailed budget per category. Except for general office supplies, list the item, quantity, and the unit cost per item. Supplies include all tangible personal property other than "equipment" (see 2 CFR Part 200.1 for the definition of Supplies). Items with a unit cost of less than $10,000 are supplies, not "equipment."

- *Contractual*: The contractual category should include all costs specifically incurred with actions that the applicant takes in conjunction with an established internal procurement system. Include consultant fees, expenses, and travel costs in this category if the consultant's services are obtained through a written binding agreement or contract.

- *Construction*: Construction funds are not authorized.

- *Other*: Indicate all direct costs not covered elsewhere. For example, include such costs as space rental, required fees, honoraria and travel (where a contract is not in place for services), training, and communication and printing costs. List items, such as stipends or incentives, not covered elsewhere. Do not include costs that are included in the indirect cost rate.

- *Indirect Costs*: Indicate the applicant's approved indirect cost rate, per sections 34 CFR 75.560 - 75.564. If an applicant does not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement with a cognizant Federal agency, the applicant must apply to ED for a temporary indirect cost rate if it wishes to charge indirect costs to the grant. For more information, go to ED's website. In addition, a grantee, if it is eligible, may also use de minimis rate as provided for under 2 CFR 200.414(f).

- *Total Cost*: This number should be total direct costs + indirect costs.

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

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

Important Note: Applicants are encouraged to review the Cost Principles described in 2 CFR part 200 subpart E of the Guidance for Federal Financial Assistance.

Part 6: Other Attachment Forms

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

Ensure that you only attach the ED approved file types detailed in the 2025 Common Instructions.

Suggested order:

❑ Appendix A: Eligible Applicant

An applying entity must demonstrate that it meets the statutory eligibility requirements. Applicants are encouraged to provide narrative evidence or to append supporting

documents, as necessary. First, an applicant should demonstrate that the applying entity: (a) is a public broadcast station or a noncommercial telecommunications entity; and (b) disseminates public telecommunications services to the public. Second, an applicant should demonstrate the applying entity has each of the following capacities:

(a) A capacity for the development and national distribution of educational and instructional television programming of high quality that is accessible by a large majority of disadvantaged preschool and elementary school children.

(b) A capacity to contract with the producers of children's television programming for the purpose of developing educational television programming of high quality.

(c) A capacity, consistent with the entity's mission and nonprofit nature, to negotiate such contracts in a manner that returns to the entity an appropriate share of any ancillary income from sales of any program-related products.

(d) A capacity to localize programming and materials to meet specific State and local needs and to provide educational outreach at the local level.

❑ Appendix B: Resumes of Key Personnel

Provide resumes/curriculum vitae for the project director as well as any key personnel identified in the application. We encourage applicants to keep resumes to five pages or less.

❑ Appendix C: Letters of Support and Memoranda of Understanding, if applicable

Provide letters of support for the project, including any memorandum of understanding and letters from project partners.

❑ Appendix D: Other, if applicable

You may wish to provide additional detail about the proposed media property, educational approach, distribution partners, or evaluation design. We remind applicants that while print pictures and diagrams that depict your media are acceptable, reviewers will not be able to view URL links, embedded videos, or other digital media. Applicants are instructed to only review the materials presented in the application, so do not direct them to external websites or files.

Part 7: Assurances and Certifications

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

❑ **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**

❑ **Grants.Gov Lobbying Form – "Certification Regarding Lobbying"**

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

Attaching Files – Additional Tips

Please note the following tips related to attaching files to your application:

- When you submit your application electronically, you must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in Portable Document Format (PDF). ED recommends applicants submit all documents as read-only flattened PDFs, meaning any fillable PDF files must be saved and submitted as non-fillable PDF files and not as interactive or fillable PDF files, to better ensure applications are processed in a more timely, accurate, and efficient manner.

- Grants.gov cannot process an application that includes two or more files that have the same name within a grant submission. Therefore, each file uploaded to your application package should have a unique file name.

- When attaching files, applicants should follow the guidelines established by Grants.gov on the size and content of file names. Uploaded file names must be fewer than 50 characters, and, in general, applicants should not use any special characters. However, Grants.gov does allow for the following UTF-8 characters when naming your attachments: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore, hyphen, space, period, parenthesis, curly braces, square brackets, ampersand, tilde, exclamation point, comma, semi colon, apostrophe, at sign, number sign, dollar sign, percent sign, plus sign, and equal sign. Applications submitted that do not comply with the Grants.gov guidelines will be rejected at Grants.gov and not forwarded to ED.

- Applicants should limit the size of their file attachments. Documents submitted that contain graphics and/or scanned material often greatly increase the size of the file attachments and can result in difficulties opening the files. For reference, the average discretionary grant application package with all attachments is less than 5 MB. Therefore, you may want to check the total size of your package before submission.

Appendix

FY 2026 RTL Application Suggested Scoring Rubric

Missing	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent
0	1-3	4 – 6	7-8	9-10
0	1-3	4-7	8-11	12-15
0	1-5	6-11	12-19	20-25