EDUCATION INNOVATION & RESEARCH (EIR) PROGRAM

Overview of the 2019 EIR Review Process
October 2019

The following describes the Department of Education's review process of the 2019 EIR applications.

Context/Background on the 2019 EIR Program

The purpose of the EIR program is to provide grants through a competitive process to applicants who design, generate, and validate solutions to persistent educational challenges and to support the expansion of effective solutions to serve substantially larger numbers of students using the criteria outlined in the notices inviting applications (NIAs) in the *Federal Register*. These grants will allow eligible entities to: (1) explore new ways of addressing persistent challenges that other educators can build on and learn from; (2) build evidence of effectiveness of their practices; and (3) replicate and scale successful practices in new schools, districts, and states while addressing the barriers to scale, such as cost structures and implementation fidelity.

- There are three types of grants: Expansion (up to $15MM and requires strong evidence in support of the proposed project), Mid-phase (up to $8MM and requires moderate evidence in support of the proposed project), and Early-phase (up to $4MM and requires a rationale based on high quality research findings of evaluation).

- Independent peer reviewers read and scored 287 distinct applications. Specifically, the Department reviewed 2 Expansion applications, 26 Mid-phase applications, and 259 Early-phase applications from a diverse pool of local educational agencies, state educational agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

- Across two types of grants, Expansion and Mid-phase, applications addressed five selection criteria (for a possible 100 points). Early-phase applications addressed four selection criteria and one optional competitive preference priority (for a possible 105 points).

- Under section 4611(c) of the ESEA, the Department must use at least 25 percent of EIR funds per fiscal year to make awards to applicants serving rural areas, contingent on receipt of an adequate number of applications of sufficient quality. Furthermore, the FY 2019 appropriations directive was to award at least $60 million for Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math (STEM) projects, including computer science.

Applications Funded

In making funding decisions, the Department considered the quality of the applications in each grant type, rural applicants among the highly rated applications, and STEM applicants. Each competition had its own rank order and the two absolute priorities within the Mid-phase and Early-phase competitions also had their own rank order; the NIAs for these two competitions stated that applications would be rank ordered separately for the two absolute priorities. For the Early-phase competition, there are funded applications under Absolute Priority Three – Field Initiated – STEM applications that have a lower score than those funded under Absolute Priority Two – Field-Initiated – General applications. A few highlights of the funded applications are included below.

Summary of Funded Applications by Competition and Absolute Priority

Competition	Absolute Priority	Number of Awards	FY 2019 Funding
Expansion	Absolute Priority 2: Field Initiated Innovations–General	1	$8,659,037
Mid-phase	Absolute Priority 2: Field Initiated Innovations–General	4	$19,989,382
	Absolute Priority 3–Field Initiated Innovations–STEM	2	$9,921,899
Early-phase	Absolute Priority 2: Field Initiated Innovations–General	7	$16,717,474
	Absolute Priority 3–Field Initiated Innovations–STEM	27	$68,108,507
Total		41	$ 123,396,299

- There are 29 grants (FY 2019 funding amount: $78,030,406) that focus on STEM and, of those, 26 specifically address computer science; STEM applicants under the Early-phase competition were eligible to receive additional points under the computer science competitive preference priority.

- Nine grants (FY 2019 funding amount: $33,119,188) are serving rural areas (these applicants met the qualification for rural applicants outlined in the NIAs).

- The 41 awards are geographically dispersed across the United States.

- Eleven entities have not received an award from the Department in the past five years.