

Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How can a project be innovative if it also must be evidenced-based?

A project's "innovation" can be focused at the level of a project component. For example, you might have a project component that is based on evidence, but your application proposes a "spin" that includes an additional component that is new and innovative.

Are examples of successful applications available?

Examples of successful applications and the associated technical review forms from the peer review process may be viewed from the [Awards page](#) on the EIR website.

What type of projects do EIR grant funds support (i.e., target population, grade level, etc.)?

Projects that focus on improving academic achievement for high-needs students. All grantees must implement practices that are designed to create, develop, implement, replicate, or take to scale entrepreneurial, evidence-based, field-initiated innovations to improve academic achievement for high-need students. The U.S. Department of Education (The Department) expects that proposed projects would benefit all students, but with high-need students as the primary focus of those projects.

The Department does not define high-need students for the EIR program and leaves it to each applicant to identify those students consistent with their unique needs and circumstances. Examples of high-need students might include, among others, students at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance or support, such as children and students who are living in poverty, who are English learners, who are academically far below grade level, who have left school before receiving an on-time high school diploma, who are at risk of not graduating on-time with a high school diploma, who are homeless, who are in foster care, who have been incarcerated, or who have disabilities.

The Department does not specify the specific grade level(s) each applicant must serve; however, EIR is authorized under section 4611 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended (ESEA), which is focused on K-12 education. Projects should focus on, be related to, or have a close connection with these grades.

Must projects include an aspect of the Improving Student Achievement Agenda?

No. The Improving Student Achievement Agenda was [announced](#) by the White House in January 2024. While this document does not outline requirements for the EIR grant (those requirements can be found in the Federal Register Notice Inviting Applications for the [Early-phase](#), [Mid-phase](#) and [Expansion](#) competitions), it provides information on the Administration's focus on evidence-based approaches to support academic success strategies.

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Is the Notice of Intent to Apply required?

No. Notice of Intents to Apply empower the Department to review grant applications more efficiently by allowing us to approximate the number of applicants that intend to apply. Therefore, we strongly encourage each potential applicant to notify us of their intent to submit an application.

Must the setting for the project be school based?

No. However, the project scope must focus on K-12 education and improving academic achievement for high-needs students.

Can the proposed project be conducted in another country?

All proposed projects must be conducted in the United States. EIR funds are appropriated to address persistent educational challenges facing K-12 students in the United States and US territories.

If you currently have an EIR grant, can you apply for a grant in different tier before you complete your current grant?

Yes. There is no need to have completed your existing EIR grant before submitting another application. However, current EIR grantees are encouraged to consider evidence, readiness to scale, and staff capacity to complete existing grant and start a new one at the same time. In addition, the activities under the existing and proposed new grant should be distinct as grantees are prohibited from paying for the same cost under two grants.

May an applicant submit multiple applications to an EIR grant competition, multiple applications to different EIR competitions, or multiple applications under the same absolute priority?

Applicants are not limited in the number of applications they may submit, so long as these proposals are substantially different.

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What are the formatting standards an applicant should follow in preparing its EIR application (Early-phase, Mid-phase, or Expansion)?

As discussed in the NIAs, applicants should use the following formatting standards in preparing applications (including appendices):

- A “page” is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

Charts do not have to be double spaced.

Are institutions of higher education (IHEs) eligible to apply for an EIR grant?

A private IHE that can document its nonprofit status, as provided for under **34 CFR 75.51(b)**, which includes recognition by the **IRS as having 501(c)(3) status**, is eligible to apply for and receive an EIR grant as a lead applicant, applying as a nonprofit organization.

In addition, any IHE is eligible to be a partner in an application where an LEA, SEA, BIE, consortium of SEAs or LEAs, or a nonprofit organization is the lead applicant that submits the application. A nonprofit organization, such as a development foundation, which is affiliated with a public IHE, can apply for a grant. A public IHE that has 501(c)(3) status would also qualify as a nonprofit organization and could be a lead applicant for an EIR grant.

A public IHE without 501(c)(3) status, or that could not provide any other documentation described in 34 CFR 75.51(b), would not qualify as a nonprofit organization, and therefore could not apply for and receive an EIR grant **BUT may serve as a partner on a grant awarded to an eligible applicant**.

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Must community partners meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA)?

The eligibility requirements outlined in the NIA apply to the lead applicant entity.

Could the lead applicant “grant-back” funds to another organization?

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

Must EIR projects serve only high-need students?

All grantees must implement practices that are designed to create, develop, implement, replicate, or take to scale entrepreneurial, evidence-based, field-initiated innovations to improve academic achievement for high-need students. The Department expects that proposed projects would benefit all students, but with high-need students as the primary focus of those projects.

The Department does not define high-need students for the EIR program and leaves it to each applicant to identify those students consistent with their unique needs and circumstances. Examples of high-need students might include, among others, students at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance or support, such as children and students who are living in poverty, who are English learners, who are academically far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, who are at risk of not graduating with a regular high school diploma on time, who are homeless, who are in foster care, who have been incarcerated, or who are children or students with disabilities.

Is there a minimum number of students that an EIR grantee must serve?

No, there is no minimum number of students that an EIR grantee must serve. An applicant is free to propose how many students it will serve under its project, consistent with its project goals, capacity, and resources.

Given that all EIR grantees are required to report on the performance measure regarding the target number of students served by the grant, applicants should propose scaling targets that represent reasonable costs per student for the grant. Applicants can specify in their application narrative considerations such as intensity of services (for example, projects proposed to serve students with severe disabilities that rely on one-on-one services or high-cost auxiliary supports).

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Can an applicant use an EIR grant to serve students of only one sex (e.g., a nonprofit organization offering STEM programming for female students or an LEA operating its own single-sex classes)?

Excluding students from schools, classes, or activities based on their sex is generally prohibited under the U.S. Constitution and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits sex discrimination in education programs and activities receiving Federal funds (20 U.S.C. §§ 1681-1688). The Department's Title IX regulations (34 C.F.R § 106.34) permit a recipient operating at non-vocational coeducational elementary or secondary school to provide non-vocational single-sex classes or extracurricular activities if they meet certain standards, which are explained in more detail in our Office for Civil Rights' (OCR) Questions and Answers on Title IX and Single-Sex Elementary and Secondary Classes and Extracurricular Activities, available at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/docs/faqs-title-ix-single-sex-201412.pdf>. The Title IX regulations also permit a recipient to operate a public non-vocational elementary or secondary school on a single-sex basis if it also offers a substantially equal single-sex or coeducational school to students of the excluded sex. Non-vocational public charter schools that are single-school LEAs are exempt from this requirement.

A nonprofit organization that serves students of only one sex could be part of a partnership applying for an EIR grant if it qualifies as a voluntary youth service organization under 20 U.S.C. §1681(a)(6)(B). This means that membership in the nonprofit organization is voluntary, is traditionally limited to members of one sex, and principally limited to persons under nineteen years old. See also 34 C.F.R. § 106.14. The membership practices of voluntary youth service organizations are exempt from Title IX and the above-referenced Title IX regulations regarding single-sex classes and activities. The voluntary youth service organization and any partner recipient(s), as recipients of Federal financial assistance, must still comply with other Title IX requirements. For more information on Title IX requirements related to nonprofit organizations that provide single-sex programming, see OCR's Dear Colleague Letter on Voluntary Youth Service Organizations, available at www.ed.gov/ocr/letters/colleague-201512-voluntary-youth-service-organizations.pdf.

Where can an applicant find resources on designing logic models?

The Regional Educational Laboratories provides applicants resources on designing logic models at <http://relpacific.mcrel.org/resources/elm-app>.

Additional logic model resources are available on the "Evidence" informational slides on the [EIR Competition page](#).

For the evaluation requirement that a grantee must conduct an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of its project, does the Department define "independent?"

No, the Department does not provide a definition for "independent evaluation." However, an applicant might want to consider, in meeting this statutory requirement, an evaluation that is designed and carried out independent of, but in coordination with, any employees of the entities who develop a practice and are implementing it.

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If an application is judged not to meet the “standards of evidence” required for Mid-phase grants (i.e., moderate evidence), will it be considered for a different type of EIR grant?

No. An application will only be considered for funding only under the type of grant for which the applicant indicates it is applying.

When will EIR awards be made, and what will be the start date for projects receiving EIR funds?

Award notifications are anticipated by December 30, 2024. The project period for all EIR grants officially begins January 2025. Please note an entity may propose a planning period within its project period. Additionally, under 2 CFR 200.308, prior approval is required for pre-award costs incurred up to 90 days before the budget period begins. These expenditures, however, must be in the approved budget, properly documented, and meet other statutory and regulatory requirements, including those set out in the Uniform Guidance.

How do ESSA Tiers of Evidence relate to EIR evidence requirements?

Tier 1 (strong evidence) is applicable to Expansion. Tier 2 (moderate evidence) is applicable to Mid-phase. Tier 4 (demonstrating a rationale) is applicable to Early-phase. Tier 3 (promising evidence) is not included in this EIR program but could be used for Early-phase. Additional information is here: <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/pdf/blogs/RELMW-ESSA-Tiers-Video-Handout-508.pdf>

If the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) does not have any current or recent evidence for my proposed innovation, how does this impact the review process for my application?

Evidence for proposed Early-phase innovations must demonstrate a rationale for the innovation informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes; those research or evaluation findings may, but do not necessarily need to, be in the WWC. Evidence for proposed Mid-phase and Expansion innovations can come from studies already reviewed by WWC that meet moderate/strong evidence or new studies cited in the evidence form. If citing new studies, we suggest using the [moderate evidence checklist](#) and [strong evidence checklist](#); the program office will submit high-scoring applicants' citations for WWC review as part of the competition.