

Grant Writing 101

Information and Tips for Preparing
and Submitting an Application

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What are grant announcements?

- **Grant announcements** let the public know about grant funding that is available for a specific program competition. Also referred to as Notice Inviting Applicants.



Pre-Application Announcements:

- **Notice of Proposed Rulemaking** - the Department is required to publish and request public comment on proposed substantive regulations before issuing final regulations
- **Notice of Final Regulations** – After at least 30-day comment period in which comments are received and reviewed, the Department develops final regulations.
- **Notice of Proposed Priority** – the Department is required to publish and request public comment when proposing one or more final priorities, requirements, definitions, or selection criteria for a discretionary grant program. The public can provide comments on these programs in order to influence and shape how these programs will be finalized.
- **Notice of Final Priority** – After at least 30-day comment period in which comments are received and reviewed, the Department develops final priorities.



Location of these announcements

- www.ed.gov/news/fedregister
- <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>
- www.grants.gov (Notice Inviting Applicants only)



What are priorities?

- Funding priorities are used to –
 - communicate the required content focus of an application
 - give a priority or identify the Department's interest in a specific issue, approach or target population, as a way of focusing a competition and identifying the activities that will be funded in a given year.



The Department generally uses three different types of priorities:

- **Absolute** – this is an absolute preference/focus that must be met. If the absolute priority is not addressed, the application will not be considered eligible for funding.
- **Competitive** – gives a preference to applications that address a specified topic, approach, or target population, usually in the form of additional points being added to the peer review score.
- **Invitational** – applicants are encouraged to address a specific topic but applicant will not receive any competitive preference points if the invitational priority is not addressed.



What are selection criteria?

- Selection criteria are used by:
 - The applicant to shape or design their project or activities to be carried out;
 - Peer reviews to score and evaluate the quality of applications.



Commonly used selection criteria include:

(Listed in order of how frequently used)

- **Quality of the project design** – the excellence of how well the proposed project is developed. (Point range 30-50)
- **Quality of project evaluation** – the quality of the evaluation that will be conducted of the proposed project. (Point range 10-40)
- **Need for the project** – applicant identifies the magnitude or severity of the problem that will be addressed by the proposed project. (Point range 10-25)
- **Significance** – the importance of the problem or issues to be addressed. (Point range 15-25)

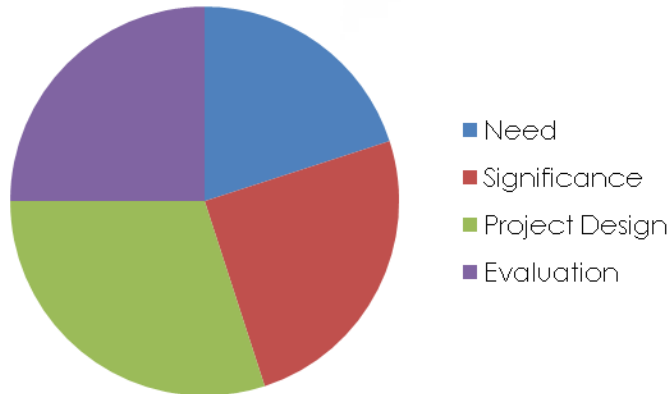
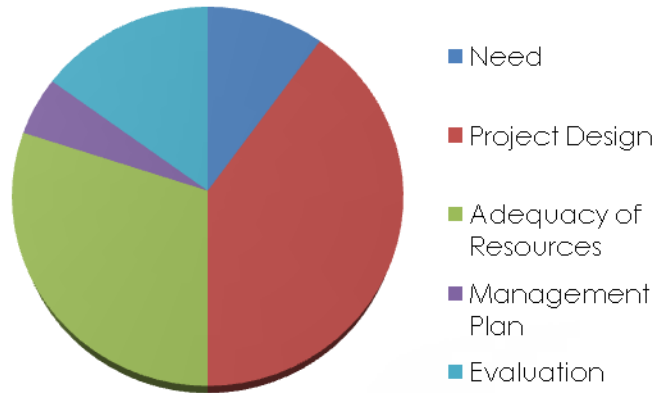


Commonly used selection criteria include: (Contd.)

- **Quality of management plan** – the quality of the plan for managing the proposed project. (Point range 5-20)
- **Quality of project services** – quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. (Point range 20-25)
- **Quality of project personnel** – quality of the personnel that will carry out the proposed project. (Point range 5-10)
- **Adequacy of resources** – demonstration that resources are sufficient to carry out the project. (Point range 10-30)



Examples of Selection Criteria in OSDFS Application Packages



Common Definitions That Are Used in Application Packages

Eligible Entities:

- **Applicant** means a party requesting a grant or subgrant under a program of the Department.
 - **Community-Based Organization** - The term 'community-based organization' means a public or private nonprofit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that:
 - is representative of a community or significant segments of a community; and
 - provides educational or related services to individuals in the community.



Common Definitions That Are Used in Application Packages (Contd.)

Eligible Entities: (Contd.)

- **Local educational agency (or LEA)** means The term local educational agency' means a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or of or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.:
 - Commonly referred to as “school district”

- **State Educational Agency** - The term State educational agency' means the agency primarily responsible for the State supervision of public elementary schools and secondary schools.



Common Definitions That Are Used in Application Packages (Contd.)

Application Terms:

- **Budget** is the recipient's financial plan for carrying out the project or program.
- **Grantee** means the legal entity that has been awarded financial assistance under one of ED's discretionary grants or cooperative agreements.
- **Project** means the activity described in an application.



Application Organization Tips

- Getting Started:
 - Allow plenty of time to prepare. Approximately 25-40 hours is needed.
 - Read the application package in its entirety.
 - If you have any questions, contact the competition manager or refer to the application package.
 - Competition manager is the key program contact that is responsible for answering inquiries regarding the application process, as well as overseeing all aspects of the grant program through the award phase.



Application Organization Tips (Contd.)

- Preparing Your Proposal:
 - Follow the suggested formatting guidelines.
 - Structure your narrative according to the selection criteria (make it easy for peer reviewers to evaluate your proposal).
 - Pay careful attention to the language that you use - be clear, concise, and specific.
 - Justify your funding request according to the proposed project activities, and check all budget figures for accuracy (keep in mind that costs must be both **reasonable** and **necessary**).
 - Proofread your proposal.



Application Organization Tips (Contd.)

- Submitting Your Proposal:
 - Do **NOT** wait until the last minute to submit your application.
 - If you are submitting an e-application, know the specific deadline date and time.
 - If a competition does not require electronic submission and you experience technical problems in submitting an electronic application that can't be quickly resolved, print your application and submit in hard copy before the application deadline.
 - Have a fresh pair of eyes read your proposal before submission.
 - Make certain that all required forms and signatures are included in your application.



Common Mistakes

- Failing to allow enough time to submit via mail or electronically.
- Not reading the application package in its entirety.
- Not following formatting guidelines
- Not obtaining required signatures on required forms.
- Failing to proofread.



Common questions received

- What is the deadline date?
- Am I an eligible applicant?
- Can I sign the required forms?
- Can I send some of the package after the deadline date?
- Where do I go to for additional questions?
- Will this grant be offered again next year?
- Can my Senator send a support letter?
- Will the deadline be extended?
- What happens next after I receive my proposal?



Questions

- General Questions
 - debbie.kalnasy@ed.gov or
 - bryan.williams@ed.gov
- Program-specific Questions
 - Contact the competition manager for the grant program.

