

# Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) Program Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Competition Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## A. Application Process

### **A1. If an eligible entity was awarded a grant in a prior SEED competition, may it submit an application this year?**

Yes, as long as the applicant proposes new activities not funded under previous SEED grant competitions.

### **A2. Can an eligible entity submit more than one application?**

Yes, as long as the applications propose distinct projects involving different activities. However, section 2242(b)(4) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) limits eligible entities to one grant per competition. If an eligible entity receives high scores on two or more applications, only the highest rated application will be selected for funding.

### **A3. Will an equal number of awards be made under each Absolute Priority (AP)?**

As noted in the Notice Inviting Applications (NIA), the Secretary intends to award grants under each absolute priority for which applications of sufficient quality are submitted. This language does not necessarily mean an equal number of awards will be made under each AP. If the Department receives no applications of sufficient quality for one of the APs, then awards will only be made from the other AP.

### **A4. Do all partner organizations have to be selected prior to applying for a SEED grant and identified in the application?**

There is, with the one exception noted below, no requirement that all partners be identified in the application. However, the reviewers can only rate applications based on the information that is provided, so we suggest that applicants provide as much information as possible on the characteristics and selection of their partners.

Exception: The partners would need to be identified in the case of an application involving a partnership between a for-profit entity and either a national nonprofit or an institution of higher education. In that case, the partnering organizations would have to be identified in the application to determine if all required entities are part of the partnership.

### **A5. Are planning activities allowable in Year 1?**

There is no prohibition on using grant funds for planning activities, but applicants are required to include all activities, including planning activities, in their budget, and should explain how the activities align with their proposed outcomes and consider how to balance planning time with actual implementation to maximize project outcomes.

**A6. Can an applicant work with a district that is already being served by a prior SEED grant?**

Yes, as long as the new grant would support new activities that are distinct from the existing SEED grant activities.

**A7. Can any products or findings produced by a SEED grant project remain proprietary to the organization?**

A grant recipient may copyright any copyrightable works products developed or acquired under a grant award. However, the Department reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the works including data produced under an award for Federal purposes and to authorize others to do so. Please visit [https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ab22fcfaa6625ae6e0bfe85b9967a7f0&mc=true&node=se2.1.200\\_1315&rgn=div8](https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=ab22fcfaa6625ae6e0bfe85b9967a7f0&mc=true&node=se2.1.200_1315&rgn=div8) for a detailed description of the requirements and rights related to intangible property under a grant award (2 CFR 200.315).

**B. Evidence Standards**

**B1. Can a potential applicant submit its evidence for Department review prior to submitting an application?**

No. Evidence in support of an application must be submitted with the application. The Department does not review evidence documentation before the application deadline.

**B2. Does a study submitted to demonstrate Moderate Evidence or Promising Evidence have to be on the specific intervention that the applicant is using?**

No, but the applicant must document how the study or evidence supports the effectiveness of the proposed “project component” for Promising Evidence or the proposed “practice” for Moderate Evidence. Additionally, for Moderate Evidence, the applicant must demonstrate that the population or setting that it proposes to serve overlaps with the sample in the study.

**B3. What does “overlapping population or setting” mean in the definition of “Moderate Evidence?”**

Under the definition of Moderate Evidence, the studies submitted must include “a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed” to be served by the project. While the population or settings (e.g., schools in rural, urban, or suburban areas) served by a proposed project do not need to be the exact type of population or settings served in the study, the applicant must document how the proposed populations or settings are relevant or related to those in the study.

**B4. Must an applicant citing evidence against the Moderate Evidence or Promising Evidence standard identify the populations or settings to be served in the application?**

For applicants citing evidence against the Moderate Evidence standard, the Department needs to know the populations or settings to be served by the proposed project in order to determine whether the cited study is relevant to those populations or settings. This may include information related to the geographical area, student subgroups, or other relevant data. Therefore, an applicant seeking to demonstrate that its proposed project is supported by Moderate Evidence must include in its application information about the populations or settings it will serve and, as appropriate, explain how the populations or settings described in the cited evidence are similar to those in the proposed project.

While the definition of Promising Evidence does not require an overlapping population or setting, the population or setting to be served may still be relevant information for a reviewer to know when scoring an application, and applicants are encouraged to submit such information.

**C. Eligibility Criteria**

**C1. Are organizations that operate regionally, but provide services in several States, eligible to apply?**

For the purposes of the SEED program, the definition of "National Nonprofit Organization" does not distinguish between a regional and a national organization as long as the organization meets the definition, including having "staff or affiliates in multiple States."

**C2. Does a nonprofit organization that has programs in multiple States, but only one central office, meet the definition of a "National Nonprofit Organization?"**

An organization does not need to establish offices in multiple States as long as it can document that it has staff, which may include volunteers, or affiliates that provide the applicant's services onsite in those States.

**C3. What is an affiliate for the purposes of being a national nonprofit?**

For the purposes of the SEED grant competition, an affiliate is an entity that is separate from the applicant; has an ongoing, formal relationship with the applicant and whose work is relevant to the applicant's project.

**C4. Does the fact that a nonprofit organization has an online program mean it meets the definition of a "National Nonprofit Organization?"**

For the SEED grant competition, merely having an online presence that is accessible in several States is not sufficient to meet the definition of a "National Nonprofit Organization." An applicant would still have to demonstrate that it has "staff or affiliates in multiple States" to be eligible to receive a SEED grant.

**C5. What would constitute a “significant number or percentage of recipients” for the purposes of meeting the definition of a “National Nonprofit Organization?”**

There is no specific threshold to meet that aspect of the definition. Therefore, the applicant must demonstrate how it meets that standard based on the context in which it proposes to implement its project.

**C6. To meet the definition of “National Nonprofit Organization,” does an organization need onsite staff at project sites across multiple States at the time the application is submitted, or is it sufficient for staff to be onsite only during the SEED project period?**

To be eligible, an organization must have staff or affiliates located in multiple States, or be providing services onsite in multiple States, at the time of application. It is not sufficient for an applicant to propose to expand to multiple States through their grant application.

**D. Budget**

**D1. How many years of funding can an applicant receive under a SEED grant?**

Consistent with section 2242(b) of the ESEA, the Department will award grants covering project periods of up to three years, and may renew a grant for one additional two-year period. Further information on the renewal process will be provided at a later date.

**D2. If an applicant intends to charge indirect costs to the grant, what information should it submit with its application?**

Because SEED has a supplement not supplant requirement, each grantee must use a restricted indirect cost rate, rather than an unrestricted indirect cost rate, to charge indirect costs to SEED funds. See 34 CFR §§ 75.563 and 76.564 – 76.569. The applicant should include an estimated amount of indirect costs in the “Indirect Costs” line of its Form 524, provide the other information this form requests, and include an explanation of these costs in the budget narrative.

In addition, if an applicant has a current approved restricted indirect cost rate, it should submit with its application a copy of its current indirect cost rate agreement that identifies its current restricted rate. If the applicant’s indirect cost rate has expired, it should discuss options with its cognizant agency on how to update the expired indirect cost rate.

**D3. May SEED funds support training stipends for educators?**

Yes. SEED funds may support stipends if they are reasonable and necessary to carry out the proposed project and meet the absolute priority for which the applicant applied. Applicants should provide an explanation in the budget narrative.

## E. Match Requirement

### **E1. Must SEED grantees secure matching funds to support their project activities?**

Yes. If awarded a grant, the grantee must obtain matching funds or in-kind contributions from non-Federal sources equal to at least 25 percent of the total cost of its project. Please note that this amount is equal to 33 percent of the grant award.

### **E2. When must a grantee secure the required match?**

As part of its application, each applicant must provide a proposed budget and budget narrative in which it identifies both its proposed annual uses of SEED funds and its proposed annual matching contributions. If awarded a grant, the eligible entity would need to secure the promised matching funds and in-kind contributions in time to use these non-Federal resources during the project year in which it had proposed their use in its approved SEED application.

### **E3. What funds or in-kind contributions may count towards meeting the match requirement?**

Only cash or in-kind contributions from non-Federal sources count toward the matching requirement. Applicants should refer to the Uniform Requirements on cost-sharing and matching in 2 CFR § 200.306 for provisions pertaining to in-kind (and cash) contributions.

Among other requirements, applicants should note the following:

- 2 CFR § 200.306(b)(2) prohibits non-Federal funds or contributions being used as a match for one Federal program to be used as a match for another; and
- 2 CFR § 200.306(b)(4) requires all charges claimed as part of a non-Federal match or cost-share be allowable if paid with Federal grant funds, and so meet considerations addressed in 2 CFR § 200.403 and any other cost principle in 2 CFR Subpart E.

In addition, section 2301 of the ESEA requires that grantees use SEED funds to supplement, and not supplant, State (and other Federal) funds used in carrying out project activities. Therefore, any State (and other non-Federal) funds or contributions treated as matching funds must supplement other State and non-Federal funds that, in the absence of the funds used for the match, would be provided for SEED-funded activities.