

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS IN ACCESSIBLE FORMATS FOR ELIGIBLE CHILDREN & STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER 84.327D)

APPLICANT INFORMATION SESSION

- ▶ Slides are for guidance only and information has been summarized due to logistics of the webinar.
- ▶ Please read the entire Notice Inviting Applications (NIA).
- ▶ Please review the recorded webinar titled “Applying for Office of Special Education Programs Discretionary Grants” for additional information related to submitting an application.

- ▶ NIA published in the Federal Register on February 9, 2022.
- ▶ Applications due no later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 11, 2022.

Application Package Contents



- ▶ Dear Applicant Letter
- ▶ Notice Inviting Applications
 - Federal Register Notice
 - Grants.gov System Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants
- ▶ Priority Description and Selection Criteria
- ▶ General Information
- ▶ Required Forms



Program Information

Purpose

Eligible Applicants

Funding Levels

- ▶ The purpose of this priority is to fund a cooperative agreement to establish and operate a Center that will provide free educational materials, including textbooks, in fully accessible media for eligible children and students enrolled in early intervention, preschool, elementary, and secondary schools, and eligible students enrolled in postsecondary schools.

► (SEAs); State lead agencies under Part C of IDEA; Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), including public charter schools that are considered LEAs under State law; IHEs; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; freely associated States and outlying areas; Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

- ▶ 1 estimated award.
- ▶ Maximum award will not exceed \$8,500,000 for a single budget period of 12 months.
- ▶ Project period is up to 60 months

Competition Information

Expected Center Outcomes and Activities

Application Narrative and Selection Criteria

Application Requirements and General Requirements

Expected Center Outcomes (1 of 4)

- a) Improved access to text, images, charts, graphics, equations, and other expressions, notations, or numerical content disseminated in AEM;
- b) An increase in the number of children and students accessing high-quality AEM, including those in underserved communities (e.g., urban, rural, and high-poverty areas);
- c) An increase in the number of early intervention providers, LEAs, and postsecondary schools enrolling eligible children or students and accessing AEM on behalf of eligible children and students;
- d) An increase in the number of eligible children and students enrolling and accessing AEM directly from the Center;

- e) An increase in the number of publishers and producers who create and disseminate student-ready accessible files to the Center and provide eligible children and students direct access to student-ready accessible files;
- f) An increase in the number and quality of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) textbooks and educational materials, including STEM images, graphics, descriptions, charts, equations, and other expressions, notations, or numerical content distributed to eligible children and students;

- g) Improved implementation of a model or models for producing and disseminating educational materials in accessible formats for children served under Part C of IDEA and section 619 of IDEA;
- h) Expanded or enhanced models for postsecondary schools to produce and disseminate accessible educational materials and textbooks that align with the key recommendations from the Advisory Commission on Accessible Instructional Materials in Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities (2011); and

- i) Increased provision of educational materials in accessible formats, including any specialized software needed to use the materials, at no cost to SEAs, LEAs, families, schools for use by students who are eligible to receive accessible materials through the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC).

Center Activities – The Center will provide:



- ▶ High-quality AEM to eligible children and students with disabilities, including individuals from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, at no cost, in a timely manner including dedicated outreach and collaboration with stakeholders (including those in high needs communities) to increase awareness and use of AEM.
- ▶ Educational materials and textbooks distributed by the Center must be in accessible formats that are of high quality and meet or exceed industry standards for accessibility and digital rights management.



Center Activities (continued):

- ▶ Processes, strategies, and models used in the production, dissemination, and in digital rights management must be user-friendly, efficient, and cost effective.
- ▶ The AEM distributed by the Center must exemplify accessibility features required to receive third-party certification for accessibility.
- ▶ The Center will improve access to text, images, charts, graphics, equations, and other expressions, notations, or numerical content included in educational materials.
- ▶ To facilitate continuous improvement and promote equity in access to free, high-quality products and services, the Center will collect and analyze relevant data on the needs of its' users and barriers encountered by children and students eligible to use, but not currently using AEM.

- ▶ Quality of Project Services
- ▶ Quality of the Project Evaluation
- ▶ Adequacy of Resources and Quality of Project Personnel
- ▶ Quality of the Management Plan

- ▶ Acquire materials from publishers or authorized entities and make those materials accessible and available as high-quality, user-friendly AEM, including digital text, braille-ready files, and audio formats at no cost to eligible children and students
- ▶ Ensure equal access and treatment for eligible children and students from groups that have been traditionally underrepresented
 - (i) Apply knowledge of diverse populations, inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status, to determine preferences and respond to unmet needs of eligible children and students in selecting the materials and services made available by the Center;
 - (ii) Use criteria to develop and implement processes for selecting, producing, and adding high-quality products and services to meet the needs of eligible children and students; and
 - (iii) Increase engagement in high-need communities to ensure educators in these communities are accessing professional development and learning to support the effective use of AEM in their instructional practice.

► Achieve its goals, objectives, and intended outcomes

- Measurable intended project outcomes; and
- A plan to implement the services and provide the products described in paragraph one of this section including the provision of no cost, compatible software for use with a variety of electronic devices and operating systems (e.g., e-readers, computers, smart phones, and tablets);
- A plan that focuses on improving the quality, timeliness, ease of use, and access to AEM for eligible children and students, including anticipating and responding to future needs and technologies across the five years of the project;
- A plan to ensure that eligible children and students will continue to be able to access at no cost the educational materials, including textbooks, in accessible formats, when the Center is no longer federally funded;

- ▶ A plan to ensure that resources developed by the Center are, to the maximum extent allowable under the law, openly licensed through an open licensing authority;
- ▶ A detailed digital rights management plan that will be implemented during the project and will protect the interests of rights holders while maintaining ease of access to AEM for eligible children and students;
- ▶ A plan to consult with publishers, software developers, other manufacturers of AEM for eligible children and students, and the NIMAC, to ensure that the project uses the most efficient, cost-effective technology available to provide timely access to AEM. This plan should also address strategies to provide consistent features across all interfaces and media formats;
- ▶ A plan to encourage and support the inclusion of accessibility features that are embedded during the development and production of the AEM by publishers and producers, where possible;

- ▶ A plan for how the project will proactively coordinate across authorized entities to include IHEs, SEAs, and LEAs to reduce costs of production and duplication of materials, and to improve the timeliness of distribution;
- ▶ Information on how the project will collaborate with the National Library Service (NLS), Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP), NIMAC, the National AEM Center, and other projects supporting accessibility to ensure awareness of work, share developed products to improve the quality of AEM, and minimize duplicative efforts;
- ▶ Information on how the project will collaborate with the National AEM Center and other projects supporting accessibility to implement a plan for improving IHE, SEA, and LEA systems for providing educational material in accessible formats to eligible children and students; and
- ▶ A description of how the project will ensure that project activities are conducted in compliance with 17 U.S.C. 121. (www.copyright.gov/title17/92chap1.html#121).

- ▶ Provide direct support to eligible children and students to address any technical assistance (TA) needs;
- ▶ Implement outreach activities to systematically distribute information, products, and services to varied audiences, including underserved individuals and their families (e.g., individuals from racially, ethnically, linguistically diverse backgrounds and individuals living in poverty or experiencing homelessness), using a variety of engagement strategies, to promote awareness and use of the Center's products and services; and
- ▶ Develop a professional learning plan to increase awareness of AEM, develop educator capacity, and create support systems for current and future educators. The plan must include strategies to engage faculty from teacher preparation programs responsible for preparing future educators as well as outreach to and engagement with current educators to support the effective use of AEM in their instructional practice.

Quality of the Project Evaluation

- ▶ Developed in consultation with and implemented by a third-party evaluator
 - Costs associated with implementation of the evaluation plan by the third-party evaluator

- ▶ Evaluation plan includes --
 - Logic Model
 - Formative and summative evaluation plan
 - Measures of progress in and fidelity of implementation and project outcomes
 - Strategies for analyzing data to inform and improve product development and service delivery
 - Cost and Efficiency measures
 - Timeline and staff assignments
 - Sufficient funding each budget year

- ▶ Encourage employment of traditionally underrepresented personnel
- ▶ Qualifications and expertise of key personnel, consultants, and subcontractors
- ▶ Applicant and partners have adequate resources
- ▶ Costs are reasonable

- ▶ Project achieves outcomes on time and within budget
 - Defined responsibilities for key personnel, consultants, and subcontractors
 - Timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks
- ▶ Adequacy of the allocation of personnel to meeting project's outcomes
- ▶ Quality, relevance, and usefulness of products and services
- ▶ Incorporation of diversity of perspectives
- ▶ Advisory committee membership
- ▶ Communicate and collaborate with OSEP-funded projects (including NIMAS)
- ▶ Communicate with OSEP Project Officer

- ▶ Quality of Project Services (30 points)
- ▶ Quality of the Project Evaluation (30 points)
- ▶ Adequacy of Resources and Quality of Project Personnel (20 points)
- ▶ Quality of the Management Plan (20 points)

- ▶ Include, in Appendix A:
 - Personnel-loading charts and timelines, as applicable, to illustrate the management plan described in the narrative;
 - A conceptual framework to develop project plans and activities, describing any underlying concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, or theories, as well as the presumed relationships or linkages among these variables, and any empirical support for this framework

- ▶ Include, in the budget, funds to support attendance at meetings sponsored by the Department of Education as specified in the notice, at a minimum.

- ▶ An assurance to assist OSEP with the transfer of pertinent resources and products and to maintain the continuity of services to eligible children and students during the transition to this new award period and at the end of this award period, as appropriate.

- ▶ Include, in the budget, a line item for an annual set-aside of 5 percent of the grant amount to support emerging needs that are consistent with the proposed project's intended outcomes, as those needs are identified in consultation with, and approved by, the OSEP project officer.
- ▶ Maintain a high-quality website, with an easy-to-navigate design, that meets or exceeds government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility
- ▶ Ensure that annual progress toward meeting project goals is posted on the project website

Submission Information

Application Submission

Submission Tips

Ineligible Applications

Application Tips

- ▶ Applications must be submitted electronically using Grants.gov.
- ▶ Applications may NOT be submitted via email.
- ▶ Applications must be submitted no later than 11:59:59 p.m., Eastern Time, on April 11, 2022.
- ▶ Application narrative sections and all other attachments to the application must be uploaded as a PDF read-only, non-modifiable format (preferred) or Microsoft Word file.

- ▶ Register early. Grants.gov may take five or more business days to complete. Be sure that your registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) is current.
- ▶ Submit early. Don't 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.
- ▶ Verify submission is ok. Verify that Grants.gov received your submission on time and that it was validated successfully.

- ▶ Maximum funding level is noted in the notice.
- ▶ Recommended organization, page limits, spacing, and font sizes facilitate the application review process.
- ▶ Read-only, non-modifiable PDF files facilitate the consolidating of application elements and review process.
- ▶ Read carefully “Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants” found in section B of the application package.

Ineligible Applications

- ▶ Duplicate applications
- ▶ Applications received after deadline
- ▶ Applications not addressing the published priority

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