National Center on Digital Access in Education
(Assistance Listing Number 84.327Z)

Pre-Application Orientation Meeting

Note Regarding Webinar

▶ Slides are for guidance only and information has been summarized due to logistics of the webinar

▶ Please read the entire notice inviting applications, instructions, and all other references or related statutes, regulations, instructions, etc.

▶ Please review the recorded webinar titled "Applying for Office of Special Education Programs Discretionary Grants" for additional information related to submitting an application

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Application Timelines

- NIA published in the Federal Register January 3, 2024.

- Applications due no later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 4, 2024.

Application Package

▶ 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

Number of Awards

Funding Levels

Project Period

▶ Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities Program (ETechM2 Program)

▶ **Purpose**: To improve results for students with disabilities by

1) promoting the development, demonstration, and use of technology;

2) supporting educational media activities designed to be of educational value in the classroom for students with disabilities;

3) providing support for captioning and video description that is appropriate for use in the classroom; and

4) providing accessible educational materials to students with disabilities in a timely manner.

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National Center on Digital Access in Education

▶ The purpose of this priority is to fund a cooperative agreement to establish and operate a National Center on Digital Access in Education.

▶ The Center will work with key partners to improve the quality, availability, and timely provision of accessible digital educational materials and instruction, for children with disabilities, in all learning environments in which children with disabilities are served under Part B and Part C of IDEA.

Eligible Applicants

▶ State educational agencies (SEAs) and State lead agencies under Part C of the IDEA;

▶ Local Education Agencies (LEAs), including public charter schools that are considered LEAs under State law;

▶ Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs);

▶ other public agencies;

▶ private nonprofit organizations;

▶ freely associated States and outlying areas;

▶ Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations; and

▶ for-profit organizations.

- Awards are for a maximum of $1,800,000 per year for <u>four years</u>.

- This program uses an unrestricted indirect cost rate.

- This program does not include any program-specific limitation on administrative expenses.

$1.8M
1 award expected

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Priority Definitions

Terms defined for the purposes of this priority

Key Partners

"Key partners" must include

▶ SEAs,

▶ LEAs,

▶ Part C lead agencies, and

▶ relevant OSEP-funded TA centers

and may include

▶ other partners identified by the Center as essential to the required outcomes of the grant.

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Accessible Digital Educational Materials & Instruction

"accessible digital educational materials and instruction" means:

▶ electronic educational materials and accompanying technologies, including assessments,

▶ which are accessible to children with disabilities,

▶ along with any necessary instruction in the use of these materials and technologies and instruction which effectively incorporates these materials and technologies.

▶ Children with disabilities and their families must be able to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as people who do not have disabilities in an equally integrated and equally effective manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use (U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, June 29, 2010; U.S. Department of Education, May 26, 2011).

"accessible format"

▶ is defined in Section 121 of the Copyright Act as "[A]n alternative manner or form that gives an eligible person access to the work when the copy or phonorecord in the accessible format is used exclusively by the eligible person to permit him or her to have access as feasibly and comfortably as a person without such disability."

Underserved Children and Families

Underserved children refers to:

▶ children living in poverty or served by schools with high concentrations of children living in poverty;

▶ children of color; children who are members of a federally recognized Indian Tribe; and English learners;

▶ disconnected youth and technologically unconnected youth;

▶ migrant children and children experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity;

▶ lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, or intersex (LGBTQI+) children;

▶ children in foster care;

▶ children without documentation of immigration status;

▶ pregnant, parenting, or caregiving children;

▶ children impacted by the justice system, including those formerly incarcerated;

▶ children performing significantly below grade level; and

▶ military- or veteran-connected children.

Underserved families refers to:

▶ foster, kinship, migrant, technologically unconnected, and military- or veteran-connected families; and

▶ families of color, living in poverty, without documentation of immigration status, experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, or impacted by the justice system, including the juvenile justice system.

▶ Underserved families also refers to families that include:

- members of a federally or State recognized Indian Tribe;
- English learners;
- adults who experience a disability;
- members who are LGBTQI+;
- adults in need of improving their basic skills or with limited literacy; and
- disconnected adults.

Competition Information

Expected Project Outcomes and Activities

Application Narrative and Selection Criteria

Project Assurances

General Requirements

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Expected Project Outcomes

a) Increased procurement and production of accessible digital educational technologies and materials by SEAs, LEAs, Part C lead agencies, educators, and service providers, including in areas with the highest percentages of children living in low-income families and in rural and remote areas.

b) Increased SEA, LEA, and Part C Lead Agency adoption and use of policies and practices which ensure the procurement, curation, and provision of accessible materials, educational tools, and assessments for children with disabilities.

c) Increased efficiency of SEA and LEA internal accessibility reviews of digital educational technologies, resulting in reduced costs and duplication of efforts.

d) Increased knowledge and skills of pre-service and in-service general and special educators, related service providers, and TA providers in Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) funded projects in the selection and preparation of accessible digital educational materials and instruction.

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▶ Significance

▶ Quality of Project Services

▶ Quality of the Project Evaluation

▶ Adequacy of Resources and Quality of Project Personnel

▶ Quality of the Management Plan

Significance: NIA Narrative

Demonstrate how the proposed project will…

▶ how the proposed project will address the need for accessible digital educational materials and instruction, to support equal opportunities for all children with disabilities.

▶ Include in this section:

- Applicable data

- Relevant background knowledge

► In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.
- The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.
- The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

Demonstrate how the proposed project will…

▶ Ensure equal access and treatment for members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

▶ Achieve its goals, objectives, and intended outcomes.

▶ Be based on current research and make use of evidence-based practices (EBPs)

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Demonstrate how the proposed project will…

▶ Develop products and provide services that are of high quality and sufficient intensity and duration to achieve the intended outcomes of the proposed project.

▶ Develop products and implement services that maximize efficiency.

▶ Systematically disseminate information, products, and services to varied intended audiences

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▶ In determining the quality of the proposed project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

- The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable

- The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework

- The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice;

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▶ In determining the quality of the proposed project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services;

- The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services; and

- The extent to which the TA services to be provided by the proposed project involve the use of efficient strategies, including the use of technology, as appropriate, and the leveraging of non-project resources.

Include an evaluation plan for the project developed in consultation with and implemented by a third-party evaluator. The plan must include…

▶ Formative and summative evaluation questions across all planned levels of technical assistance (TA), including important process and outcome evaluation questions.

▶ Description of methods for measuring progress in and fidelity of implementation, as well as project outcomes

▶ Description of strategies for analyzing data and how data will be used to inform and improve service delivery over the course of the project

▶ Timeline for conducting the evaluation, including staff assignments

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► In determining the quality of the proposed project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

- The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible;

- The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

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Demonstrate how …

▶ The proposed project will encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, as appropriate;

▶ The proposed key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors have the qualifications and experience to carry out the proposed activities and achieve the project's intended outcomes;

▶ The applicant and any key partners have adequate resources to carry out the proposed activities;

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Adequacy of Resources, Quality of Personnel: NIA Narrative, cont'd

Demonstrate how …

▶ The proposed project will have processes, resources, and funds in place to provide equitable access for project staff, contractors, and partners, who require digital accessibility accommodations; and

▶ The proposed costs are reasonable in relation to the anticipated results and benefits.

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In determining the adequacy of resources and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

▶ The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

▶ The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of

- the project director or principal investigator.

- key project personnel.

- project consultants or subcontractors.

- the evaluator.

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In determining the adequacy of resources and the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

▶ The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization.

▶ The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

▶ The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project

▶ The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

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Demonstrate how …

▶ The proposed management plan will ensure that the project's intended outcomes will be achieved on time and within budget.

▶ Key project personnel and any consultants and subcontractors will be allocated and how these allocations are appropriate and adequate to achieve the project's intended outcomes;

▶ The proposed management plan will ensure that the products and services provided are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients; and

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Demonstrate how …

▶ The proposed project will benefit from a diversity of perspectives, including those of families, educators, TA providers, researchers, and policy makers, among others, in its development and operation.

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In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

▶ The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

▶ The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project;

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In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

▶ The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

▶ How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

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Selection Criteria

▶ Significance of the Project   (10 points)

▶ Quality of Project Services   (35 points)

▶ Quality of the project evaluation   (20 points)

▶ Adequacy of resources and quality
    of project personnel   (15 points)

▶ Quality of the management plan   (20 points)

As you review the requirements, keep in mind:

- "Universal, general TA" means technical assistance and information provided to independent users through their own initiative, resulting in minimal interaction with project staff.

- "Targeted, specialized TA" means TA services based on needs common to multiple recipients and not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the TA recipient and one or more TA project staff. This category of TA includes one-time, labor-intensive events, such as facilitating strategic planning or hosting regional or national conferences. It can also include episodic, less labor-intensive events that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls on single or multiple topics that are designed around the needs of the recipients. Facilitating communities of practice can also be considered targeted, specialized TA.

- Although previous 327Z priorities have included Intensive TA, there is no requirement for "Intensive TA" in this NIA.

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▶ Make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities

▶ Involve individuals with disabilities, or parents of individuals with disabilities ages birth through 26, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project

▶ Maintain high-quality website

▶ Budget for attendance at in-person kick-off meeting, Project Director's meetings, and additional Department briefings or conferences

▶ Budget for a 5% set-aside as described in the NIA

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► Engage doctoral students or post-doctoral fellows, including those who are multilingual and racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse, in the project to increase the number of future leaders in the field who are knowledgeable about digital accessibility and related technologies in educational and early-learning contexts;

► Include, in Appendix A, an assurance to assist OSEP with the transfer of pertinent resources and products during the transition to a new award at the end of this award period, as appropriate.

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Subgrants and contracts

▶ Under 34 CFR 75.708(b) and (c), a grantee under this competition may award subgrants--to directly carry out project activities described in its application--to the following types of entities:

- IHEs,

- nonprofit organizations suitable to carry out the activities proposed in the application, and

- public agencies.

The grantee may award subgrants to entities it has identified in an approved application or that it selects through a competition under procedures established by the grantee, consistent with 34 CFR 75.708(b)(2).

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Submission Information

Application Submission

Submission Tips

Ineligible Applications

Application Tips

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Application Submission

▶ 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 March 4, 2024**

▶ Application narrative sections and all other attachments to the application must be uploaded as a PDF (preferred) or Microsoft Word file.

▶ Format narratives and attachments with accessibility in mind.

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Submission Tips

▶ 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.

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Application Tips

▶ Maximum funding levels for each grant are noted in the notice.

▶ Recommended organization, page limits, spacing, and font sizes facilitate the application review process.

▶ 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.

▶ More about document accessibility at OSEP Ideas That Work: Resources for Grantees: 508 Accessibility.

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Ineligible Applications

▶ Duplicate applications

▶ Applications received after deadline (March 4, at 11:59:59 p.m., Eastern Time).

▶ Applications not addressing the published priority.

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IDEAs that Work

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