

presentations. Those who pre-register will be scheduled to speak first. Individual oral comments may be limited by the time available, depending on the number of persons who register. At the beginning of the hearing, the Board will post a list of speakers at the entrance to the hearing room. Anyone who wishes to comment or provide technical information or data may do so in writing, either in lieu of, or in addition to, making an oral presentation. The Board Members may question presenters to the extent deemed appropriate. Public participation in the hearing will be subject to the participation criteria posted on the Board's Web site with the hearing agenda. Written comments and documents will be accepted at the hearing or may be sent to the Board's Washington, DC, office. The Board will hold the hearing record open until April 22, 2016, for the receipt of additional materials.

The hearing will be presented live through Internet video streaming. A link to the presentation will be available on the Board's Web site (www.dnfsb.gov). A transcript of the hearing, along with a DVD video recording, will be made available by the Board for inspection and viewing by the public at the Board's Washington office and at the Department of Energy's (DOE) public reading room at the DOE Federal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20585. The Board specifically reserves its right to further schedule and otherwise regulate the course of the hearing, to recess, reconvene, postpone, or adjourn the hearing, conduct further reviews, and otherwise exercise its authority under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended.

Dated: March 1, 2016.

Joyce L. Connery,
Chairman.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Hispanic-Serving Institutions STEM and Articulation Program

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

Overview Information

Hispanic-Serving Institutions STEM and Articulation Program

Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2016.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.031C.

DATES:

Applications Available: March 4, 2016.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: May 3, 2016.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: July 5, 2016.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The Hispanic-Serving Institutions STEM and Articulation Program supports eligible Hispanic-Serving institutions (as defined in section 502 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA) (20 U.S.C. 1101a)) (HSIs) in developing and carrying out activities described in section 503(b) of the HEA (20 U.S.C. 1101b(b)) to increase the number of Hispanic and low-income students attaining degrees in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

Background: Given the growth in the Hispanic population, taking steps to increase the number of Hispanic students with STEM credentials is critical to the future workforce and economy of the United States. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics¹ project that jobs in occupations related to STEM will grow to more than nine million between 2012 and 2022. This represents an increase of about one million jobs over 2012 employment levels. Additionally, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that Latinos accounted for just 6.5 percent of the STEM workforce in 2011, even though they made up about 17 percent of the U.S. population. The number of Hispanic students graduating with a postsecondary degree has increased in recent years; however, these students continue to be significantly underrepresented in the total number of students earning STEM credentials. In 2013 Hispanic students accounted for nine percent of students earning STEM degrees and certificates, with the majority of such Hispanic students coming from HSIs.²

These data demonstrate the need for comprehensive support programs that promote educational opportunities in STEM fields for Hispanics. The Department has promoted college retention, affordability, and completion,

especially for minority and low-income students, through various policy initiatives. This competition specifically acknowledges the importance of student-centered programs that will increase the number of Hispanic and low-income students who graduate with degrees in STEM fields, as well as the need to promote strong articulation and transfer models, leading to more transfer students attaining STEM field degrees.

In recent years, the Department has emphasized the importance of promoting evidence-based practices through our grant competitions. In an effort to focus on promising strategies that have been the subject of research and evaluation as a way to enhance the effectiveness of work supported by funded applicants with Federal dollars, and to improve outcomes for students participating in our programs, we have included competitive preference priorities encouraging applicants to model their proposed projects on evidence-based strategies. For applicants that address a competitive preference priority, we award one additional point if the activities or strategies are supported by a study that meets the evidence of promise standard or three additional points if the activities or strategies are supported by a study (or studies) that meet the moderate evidence of effectiveness standard.

Applicants must demonstrate that the research cited is relevant to the proposed project activities or strategies. In assessing the relevance of the research cited to the proposed project, the Secretary will consider, among other factors, the portion of the requested funds that will be dedicated to the evidence-based strategies or activities. In addition, in an effort to help generate evidence about effective intervention strategies and best practices that lead to increased completion rates at two- and four-year HSIs, particularly for STEM credentials, we have included a selection criterion awarding additional points for applications that propose rigorous evaluation methods for their proposed projects.

Priorities: In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), Absolute Priority 1 is from the list of authorized activities in the statute (see section 503(b)(5) of the HEA (20 U.S.C. 1101b(b)(5))). In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(iv), Absolute Priority 2 is from section 371(b)(2)(B) of the HEA (20 U.S.C. 1067q(b)(2)(B))). In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(ii), the competitive preference priorities are from 34 CFR 75.226.

Absolute Priorities: For FY 2016 and any subsequent year in which we make

¹ Vilorio, D. (2014, March). STEM 101: Intro to tomorrow's jobs. *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*. Retrieved from www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2014/spring/art01.pdf.

² *Excelencia in Education*. (2015). *Finding Your Workforce: Latinos in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)*. Washington, DC: Excelencia in Education.

awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are absolute priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet both priorities.

These priorities are:

Absolute Priority 1

An application that proposes to develop or enhance tutoring, counseling, and student service programs designed to improve academic success, including innovative and customized instruction courses (which may include remedial education and English language instruction) designed to help retain students and move the students rapidly into core courses and through program completion.

Absolute Priority 2

An application that proposes activities to increase the number of Hispanic and other low-income students attaining degrees in the STEM fields and proposes to develop model transfer and articulation agreements between two-year HSIs and four-year institutions in STEM fields.

Competitive Preference Priorities: For FY 2016 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are competitive preference priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), we award one additional point to an application that meets Competitive Preference Priority 1 and three additional points to an application that meets Competitive Preference Priority 2. Applicants may address only one of the competitive preference priorities and must clearly indicate in their application which competitive preference priority they are addressing. Applicants that address Competitive Preference Priority 2, but whose applications do not meet the moderate evidence of effectiveness standard, may still be considered under Competitive Preference Priority 1 to determine whether their applications meet the evidence of promise standard.

These priorities are:

Competitive Preference Priority 1. (One additional point) Applications supported by evidence of effectiveness that meets the conditions set out in the definition of “evidence of promise.”

Competitive Preference Priority 2. (Three additional points) Applications supported by evidence of effectiveness that meets the conditions set out in the definition of “moderate evidence of effectiveness.”

Definitions: These definitions are from 34 CFR 77.1.

Evidence of promise means there is empirical evidence to support the theoretical linkage(s) between at least one critical component and at least one relevant outcome presented in the logic model for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice. Specifically, evidence of promise means the conditions in both paragraphs (i) and (ii) of this definition are met:

(i) There is at least one study that is a—

(A) Correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias;

(B) Quasi-experimental design study that meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations; or

(C) Randomized controlled trial that meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with or without reservations.

(ii) The study referenced in paragraph (i) of this definition found a statistically significant or substantively important (defined as a difference of 0.25 standard deviations or larger), favorable association between at least one critical component and one relevant outcome presented in the logic model for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice.

Logic model (also referred to as theory of action) means a well-specified conceptual framework that identifies key components of the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice (*i.e.*, the active “ingredients” that are hypothesized to be critical to achieving the relevant outcomes) and describes the relationships among the key components and outcomes, theoretically and operationally.

Note: In developing logic models, applicants may want to use resources such as the Pacific Education Laboratory’s Education Logic Model Application (www.relpacific.mcrel.org/PERR.html or <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED544779.pdf>) to help design their logic model.

Moderate evidence of effectiveness means one of the following conditions is met:

(i) There is at least one study of the effectiveness of the process, product, strategy, or practices being proposed that meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations, found a statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (with no statistically significant and overriding unfavorable impacts on that outcome for relevant populations in the study or in other studies of the intervention reviewed by and reported on by the What Works Clearinghouse), and includes a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to

receive the process, product, strategy, or practice.

(ii) There is at least one study of the effectiveness of the process, product, strategy, or practice being proposed that meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations, found a statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (with no statistically significant and overriding unfavorable impacts on that outcome for relevant populations in the study or in other studies of the intervention reviewed by and reported on by the What Works Clearinghouse), includes a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to receive the process, product, strategy, or practice, and includes a large sample and a multi-site sample.

Note: Multiple studies can cumulatively meet the large and multi-site sample requirements as long as each study meets the other requirements in this paragraph.

Multi-site sample means more than one site, where site can be defined as a local educational agency, locality, or State.

Quasi-experimental design study means a study using a design that attempts to approximate an experimental design by identifying a comparison group that is similar to the treatment group in important respects. These studies, depending on design and implementation, can meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations (but not What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations).

Randomized controlled trial means a study that employs random assignment of, for example, students, teachers, classrooms, schools, or districts to receive the intervention being evaluated (the treatment group) or not to receive the intervention (the control group). The estimated effectiveness of the intervention is the difference between the average outcome for the treatment group and for the control group. These studies, depending on design and implementation, can meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

Relevant outcome means the student outcome(s) (or the ultimate outcome if not related to students) the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice is designed to improve; consistent with the specific goals of a program.

Strong theory means a rationale for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice that includes a logic model.

What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards means the standards set forth in the What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook

(Version 3.0, March 2014), which can be found at the following link: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1067q(b)(2)(B).

Although the HSI STEM and Articulation Program authorized under section 371 of the HEA is not part of the Developing HSIs Program authorized by title V of the HEA, the eligibility and activity provisions under the Developing HSIs Program apply to the HSI STEM and Articulation Program pursuant to section 371(a)(2) and (b)(2)(B) of the HEA.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485 (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education (IHEs) only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.
Estimated Available Funds:

\$91,773,000.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2017 from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards:

\$700,000–1,200,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards:

\$775,000.

Estimated Number of Awards: 109.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. **Eligible Applicants:** (a) IHEs that qualify as eligible HSIs are eligible to apply under the HSI STEM and Articulation Program. To be an eligible HSI, an IHE must—

(i) Have an enrollment of needy students, as defined in section 502(b) of the HEA (section 502(a)(2)(A)(i) of the HEA; 20 U.S.C. 1101a(a)(2)(A)(i));

(ii) Have, except as provided in section 522(b) of the HEA, average educational and general expenditures

that are low, per full-time equivalent (FTE) undergraduate student, in comparison with the average educational and general expenditures per FTE undergraduate student of institutions that offer similar instruction (section 502(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the HEA; 20 U.S.C. 1101a(a)(2)(A)(ii));

Note: The notice announcing the FY 2016 process for designation of eligible institutions, and inviting applications for waiver of eligibility requirements, was published in the **Federal Register** on November 19, 2015 (80 FR 72422). Only institutions that the Department determines are eligible, or are granted a waiver, may apply for a grant in this program.

(iii) Be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association that the Secretary has determined to be a reliable authority as to the quality of education or training offered, or making reasonable progress toward accreditation, according to such an agency or association (section 502(a)(2)(A)(iv) of the HEA; 20 U.S.C. 1101a(a)(2)(A)(iv));

(iv) Be legally authorized to provide, and provide within the State, an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree, or be a junior or community college (section 502(a)(2)(A)(iii) of the HEA; 20 U.S.C. 1101a(a)(2)(A)(iii)); and

(v) Have an enrollment of undergraduate FTE students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students at the end of the award year immediately preceding the date of application (section 502(a)(5)(B) of the HEA; 20 U.S.C. 1101a(a)(5)(B)).

Note: Institutions that have been identified as meeting the requirements to be an "eligible institution" for purposes of title V of the HEA as described in the **Federal Register** notice published on November 19, 2015, including the requirement that it have at least 25 percent Hispanic enrollment, do not need to submit any additional eligibility information but must submit a grant application. Institutions that have been identified as meeting the basic requirements to be an eligible institution except for the requirement for 25 percent Hispanic enrollment must submit documentation to demonstrate that they meet that requirement. The institution must submit either: The data the institution submitted to the Department in response to the IPEDS surveys for Fall 2014 or the data submitted by the institution to the State. See the application package for more information regarding eligibility documentation.

An institution that is required to submit documentation of its percentage of Hispanic student enrollment but does not do so will not be eligible to apply for a grant. An institution that meets the basic requirements of an eligible institution but does not demonstrate

that it meets the requirement for 25 percent Hispanic enrollment is also not eligible to apply for a grant.

(b) An eligible HSI that submits multiple applications may only be awarded one grant.

2. **Cost Sharing or Matching:** This program does not require cost sharing or matching unless the grantee uses a portion of its grant for establishing or improving an endowment fund. If a grantee uses a portion of its grant for endowment fund purposes, it must match those grant funds with non-Federal funds (section 503(c)(2) of the HEA; 20 U.S.C. 1101b(c)(2)).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. **Address to Request for Application Package:** Everardo Gil or Jeffrey Hartman, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., Room 7E311, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 219-7000 or (202) 502-7607 or by email: Everardo.Gil@ed.gov or Jeffrey.Hartman@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities can obtain a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotope, or compact disc) by contacting the program contact person listed in this section.

2. **Content and Form of Application Submission:** Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for this program.

Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria, the absolute priorities, and the competitive preference priorities that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We have established the following mandatory page limits for all applications:

- If you are not addressing a competitive preference priority, you must limit your application narrative to no more than 50 pages.

- If you are addressing one of the competitive preference priorities, you must limit your application narrative to no more than 55 pages.

Please include a separate heading for the absolute priorities and for the competitive preference priority, if you address one.

For the purpose of determining compliance with the page limits, each page on which there are words will be

counted as one full page. Applicants must use the following standards:

- A “page” is 8.5” x 11”, on one side only, with 1” margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Page numbers and an identifier may be within the 1” margins.

- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, except titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, captions and all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs. These items may be single-spaced. Charts, tables, figures, and graphs in the application narrative count toward the page limit.

- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger, or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch). However, you may use a 10-point font in charts, tables, figures, graphs, footnotes, and endnotes.

- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial. An application submitted in any other font (including Times Roman or Arial Narrow) will not be accepted.

The page limit applies to all of the application narrative section, including your complete response to the selection criteria, the absolute priorities, and a competitive preference priority. However, the page limit does not apply to Part I, the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424); the Department of Education Supplemental Information form (SF 424); Part II, Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524) and budget narrative; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the one-page project abstract. If you include any attachments or appendices not specifically requested in the application package, these items will be counted as part of your application narrative for purposes of the page-limit requirement.

3. *Submission Dates and Times:* Applications Available: March 4, 2016.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: May 3, 2016.

Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically, or in paper format by mail or hand delivery, please refer to *Other Submission Requirements* in section IV of this notice.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process should contact the person listed

under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

CONTACT in section VII of this notice. If the Department provides an accommodation or auxiliary aid to an individual with a disability in connection with the application process, the individual's application remains subject to all other requirements and limitations in this notice.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: July 5, 2016.

4. *Intergovernmental Review:* This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this program.

5. *Funding Restrictions:* (a) *General.* We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

(b) *Applicability of Executive Order 13202.* Applicants that apply for construction funds under the HSI STEM and Articulation Program must comply with Executive Order 13202, as amended. This Executive order provides that recipients of Federal construction funds may not “require or prohibit bidders, offerors, contractors, or subcontractors to enter into or adhere to agreements with one or more labor organizations, on the same or other construction project(s)” or “otherwise discriminate against bidders, offerors, contractors, or subcontractors for becoming or refusing to become or remain signatories or otherwise to adhere to agreements with one or more labor organizations, on the same or other related construction project(s).” Projects funded under this program that include construction activity will be provided a copy of this Executive order and will be asked to certify that they will adhere to it.

6. *Data Universal Numbering System Number, Taxpayer Identification Number, and System for Award Management:* To do business with the Department of Education, you must—

- a. Have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);

- b. Register both your DUNS number and TIN with the System for Award Management (SAM) (formerly the Central Contractor Registry), the Government's primary registrant database;

- c. Provide your DUNS number and TIN on your application; and

- d. Maintain an active SAM registration with current information while your application is under review by the Department and, if you are

awarded a grant, during the project period.

You can obtain a DUNS number from Dun and Bradstreet at the following Web site: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. A DUNS number can be created within one to two business days.

If you are a corporate entity, agency, institution, or organization, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service. If you are an individual, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service or the Social Security Administration. If you need a new TIN, please allow two to five weeks for your TIN to become active.

The SAM registration process can take approximately seven business days, but may take upwards of several weeks, depending on the completeness and accuracy of the data you enter into the SAM database. Thus, if you think you might want to apply for Federal financial assistance under a program administered by the Department, please allow sufficient time to obtain and register your DUNS number and TIN. We strongly recommend that you register early.

Note: Once your SAM registration is active, it may be 24 to 48 hours before you can access the information in, and submit an application through, Grants.gov.

If you are currently registered with SAM, you may not need to make any changes. However, please make certain that the TIN associated with your DUNS number is correct. Also note that you will need to update your registration annually. This may take three or more business days.

Information about SAM is available at www.SAM.gov. To further assist you with obtaining and registering your DUNS number and TIN in SAM or updating your existing SAM account, we have prepared a SAM.gov Tip Sheet, which you can find at: www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/sam-faqs.html.

In addition, if you are submitting your application via Grants.gov, you must (1) be designated by your organization as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (2) register yourself with Grants.gov as an AOR. Details on these steps are outlined at the following Grants.gov Web page: www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html.

7. *Other Submission Requirements:* Applications for grants under the HSI STEM and Articulation Program must be submitted electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section.

- a. *Electronic Submission of Applications.*

Applications for grants under the HSI STEM and Articulation Program, CFDA

number 84.031C, must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at www.Grants.gov. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not email an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement *and* submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided later in this section under *Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement*.

You may access the electronic grant application for this competition at www.Grants.gov. You must search for the downloadable application package for this program by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.031, not 84.031C).

Please note the following:

- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.
- Applications received by Grants.gov are date and time stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted and must be date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not accept your application if it is received—that is, date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system—after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.
- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors, including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application

deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this competition to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov under News and Events on the Department's G5 system home page at www.G5.gov. In addition, for specific guidance and procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov, please refer to the Grants.gov Web site at: www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information you typically provide on the following forms: The Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications.

- You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a read-only, non-modifiable Portable Document Format (PDF) format. Do not upload an interactive or fillable PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable PDF (e.g., Word, Excel, WordPerfect, etc.) or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material. Please note that this could result in your application not being considered for funding because the material in question—for example, the project narrative—is critical to a meaningful review of your proposal. For that reason, it is important to allow yourself adequate time to upload all material as PDF files. The Department will not convert material from other formats to PDF.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page-limit requirements described in this notice.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic notification of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by the Department. Grants.gov will also notify you automatically by

email if your application met all the Grants.gov validation requirements or if there were any errors (such as submission of your application by someone other than a registered Authorized Organization Representative, or inclusion of an attachment with a file name that contains special characters). You will be given an opportunity to correct any errors and resubmit, but you must still meet the deadline for submission of applications.

Once your application is successfully validated by Grants.gov, the Department will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send you an email with a unique PR/Award number for your application.

These emails do not mean that your application is without any disqualifying errors. While your application may have been successfully validated by Grants.gov, it must also meet the Department's application requirements as specified in this notice and in the application instructions. Disqualifying errors could include, for instance, failure to upload attachments in a read-only, non-modifiable PDF; failure to submit a required part of the application; or failure to meet applicant eligibility requirements. It is your responsibility to ensure that your submitted application has met all of the Department's requirements.

- We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues with the Grants.gov System: If you are experiencing problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1-800-518-4726. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and must keep a record of it.

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions described elsewhere in this notice.

If you submit an application after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date, please contact the persons listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** in section VII of this notice and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along

with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number. We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that the problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. We will contact you after we determine whether your application will be accepted.

Note: The extensions to which we refer in this section apply only to the unavailability of, or technical problems with, the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the application deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement: You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through the Grants.gov system because—

- You do not have access to the Internet; or
- You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system; and
- No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days or, if the fourteenth calendar day before the application deadline date falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the two grounds for an exception prevents you from using the Internet to submit your application.

If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to: Everardo Gil or Jeffrey Hartman, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., Room 7E311, Washington, DC 20202. FAX: (202) 205-0063.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

b. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your application to the Department. You

must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.031C) LBJ Basement Level 1, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20202-4260.

You must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

We will not consider applications postmarked after the application deadline date.

c. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.031C), 550 12th Street SW., Room 7039, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-4260.

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications: If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department—

- (1) You must indicate on the envelope and—if not provided by the Department—in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and
- (2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call

the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

V. Application Review Information

1. **Selection Criteria:** The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210. We will award up to 100 points to an application under the selection criteria; the total possible points for each selection criterion are noted in parentheses.

(a) **Quality of the Project Design.** (Maximum 30 points) The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs. (Up to 10 points)

(2) The extent to which the design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives. (Up to 5 points)

(3) The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory (as defined in this notice). (Up to 5 points)

(4) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition. (Up to 10 points)

(b) **Quality of Project Services.** (Maximum 20 points) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers 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, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice. (Up to 10 points)

(2) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services. (Up to 10 points)

(c) **Significance.** (Maximum 20 points) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project,

the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies. (Up to 5 points)

(2) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement. (Up to 15 points)

(d) *Quality of the Management Plan.* (Maximum 10 points) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project. In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) 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. (Up to 5 points)

(2) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project. (Up to 5 points)

(e) *Quality of the Project Evaluation.* (Maximum 20 points) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (Up to 5 points)

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. (Up to 5 points)

(3) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well-implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations. (Up to 10 points)

2. *Review and Selection Process:* We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or

submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary requires various assurances including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

Awards will be made in rank order according to the average score received from an evaluation performed by a panel of non-Federal reviewers based on responses to the selection criteria and, if applicable, the competitive preference priorities. If an application is scored highly, has the possibility of being funded, and includes a response to one of the competitive preference priorities, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) will review the studies cited in the application to determine whether they meet the "moderate evidence of effectiveness" or the "evidence of promise" standard. Only those applications that address a competitive preference priority and have the possibility of being funded because of high scores and available funds for new awards will undergo further review by IES.

Note: As noted in 34 CFR 75.217, we will use other information noted in this section to select applications for new grants when two or more applicants receive the same score in the rank order and the program funds are insufficient to fund all applicants with the same cut off score.

3. *Risk Assessment and Special Conditions:* Consistent with 2 CFR 200.205, before awarding grants under this competition the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 3474.10, the Secretary may impose special conditions and, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. *Award Notices:* If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your GAN. We may notify you informally, also.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements:* We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. *Reporting:* (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multiyear award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms.html.

(c) Under 34 CFR 75.250(b), the Secretary may provide a grantee with additional funding for data collection analysis and reporting. In this case the Secretary establishes a data collection period.

4. *Performance Measures:* The Secretary has established the following key performance measures for assessing the effectiveness of the HSI STEM and Articulation Program:

a. The percentage change, over the five-year grant period, of the number of Hispanic and low-income full-time STEM field degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled.

b. The percentage of Hispanic and low-income first-time, full-time STEM field degree-seeking undergraduate students who were in their first year of postsecondary enrollment in the previous year and are enrolled in the current year who remain in a STEM field degree/credential program.

c. The percentage of Hispanic and low-income first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled at four-year HSIs graduating within six years of enrollment with a STEM field degree.

d. The percentage of Hispanic and low-income first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled at two-year HSIs graduating within three years of enrollment with a STEM field degree/credential.

e. The percentage of Hispanic and low-income students transferring successfully to a four-year institution from a two-year institution and retained in a STEM field major.

f. The number of Hispanic and low-income students participating in grant-funded student support programs or services.

g. The percent of Hispanic and low-income students who participated in grant-supported services or programs who successfully completed gateway courses.

h. The percent of Hispanic and low-income students who participated in grant-supported services or programs in good academic standing.

i. The percent of Hispanic and low-income STEM field major transfer students on track to complete a STEM field degree within three years from their transfer date.

j. The percent of Hispanic and low-income students who participated in grant-supported services or programs and completed a degree or credential.

5. *Continuation Awards*: In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: Whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation award, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Agency Contacts

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jeffrey Hartman or Everardo Gil, Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., Room 7E311, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 502-7607 or (202) 219-7000 or by email: Jeffrey.Hartman@ed.gov or Everardo.Gil@ed.gov.

If you use a TDD or a TTY, call the FRS, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

Applicants should periodically check the HSI Program Web site for information regarding pre-application technical assistance workshops and webinars. The address is: www.ed.gov/programs/idueshsi/index.html.

VIII. Other Information

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotope, or compact disc) on request to one of the program contact persons listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** in section VII of this notice.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. Free Internet access to the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations is available via the Federal Digital System at: www.gpo.gov/fdsys. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or PDF. To use PDF, you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the **Federal Register** by using the article search feature at: www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Dated: March 1, 2016.

Lynn Mahaffie,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Planning and Innovation Delegated the Duties of Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.

[FR Doc. 2016-04868 Filed 3-3-16; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Technical Assistance and Dissemination To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities; Personnel Development To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities; and Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals With Disabilities Programs—Postsecondary Education Center for Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

Overview Information

Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities (TA&D); Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities (Personnel Development); and Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities (ETechM2) Programs—Postsecondary Education Center for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Notice inviting applications for a new award for fiscal year (FY) 2016.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.326D.

DATES:

Applications Available: March 4, 2016.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: April 18, 2016.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: June 17, 2016.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: Funding from three Department of Education (Department) programs supports this competition: The TA&D program, the Personnel Development program, and the ETechM2 program.

The purpose of the TA&D program is to promote academic achievement and to improve results for children with disabilities by providing technical assistance (TA), supporting model demonstration projects, disseminating useful information, and implementing activities that are supported by scientifically based research.

The purposes of the Personnel Development program are to: (1) Help address State-identified needs for personnel—in special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education—to work with children with disabilities; and (2) ensure that those personnel have the skills and knowledge—derived from practices that have been determined through research and experience to be successful—that are needed to serve those children.

Finally, the purposes of the ETechM2 program are to: (1) Improve results for children with disabilities by promoting the development, demonstration, and use of technology; (2) support educational activities designed to be of educational value in the classroom for students with disabilities; (3) provide support for captioning and video description that is appropriate for use in the classroom; and (4) provide accessible educational materials to students with disabilities in a timely manner.