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Aaron Siegel,

Alternate OSD Federal Register Liaison
Officer, Department of Defense.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Strengthening Institutions Program

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary
Education, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

Overview Information:

Strengthening Institutions Program.
Notice inviting applications for new
awards for fiscal year (FY) 2017.

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

DATES:

Applications Available: March 1,
2017.

*Deadline for Transmittal of
Applications:* April 17, 2017.

*Deadline for Intergovernmental
Review:* June 16, 2017.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The
Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP)
provides grants to eligible institutions of
higher education (IHEs) to help them
become self-sufficient and expand their
capacity to serve low-income students
by providing funds to improve and
strengthen the institution's academic
quality, institutional management, and
fiscal stability.

Note: The Department of Education
(Department) is conducting two separate
competitions for SIP grants in 2017. This
competition (CFDA number 84.031A) does
not include any priorities. The Department is
conducting a separate competition under the
84.031F CFDA number. In that competition
applicants must address an absolute priority
and may address a competitive priority. The
84.031F competition will be announced in a
separate **Federal Register** notice. Applicants
may apply for grants in both the 84.031A and
84.031F competitions, but can only receive
one grant.

Definitions: These definitions apply to
the selection criteria for this
competition and are from 34 CFR 77.1.

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 ([http://
relpacific.mcrel.org/resources/elm-app/](http://relpacific.mcrel.org/resources/elm-app/) or
<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED544779.pdf>)
to help design their logic models.

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.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1057–
1059d (title III, part A, of the Higher
Education Act of 1965, as amended
(HEA)).

Note: In 2008, the HEA was amended by
the Higher Education Opportunity Act of
2008 (HEOA), Public Law 110–315. The
HEOA made a number of technical and
substantive revisions to SIP. Please note that
the regulations for SIP in 34 CFR part 607
have not been updated to reflect these
statutory changes.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The
Education Department General
Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in
34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 84, 86,
97, 98, and 99. (b) The Education
Department suspension and debarment
regulations 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. (d) The regulations for
this program in 34 CFR part 607.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86
apply to IHEs only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grant.
Five-year Individual Development
Grants will be awarded in FY 2017.
Cooperative Arrangement Development
Grants will not be made in FY 2017.

Estimated Available Funds: The
Administration has requested
\$86,534,000 for awards for the SIP
program for FY 2017, of which we
intend to use an estimated \$3,699,000
for this competition. The actual level of
funding, if any, depends on final
congressional action. However, we are
inviting applications to allow enough
time to complete the grant process if
Congress appropriates funds for this
program.

Contingent upon the availability of
funds and the quality of applications,
we may make additional awards in FY

2018 from the list of unfunded
applications from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards:
\$400,000–\$450,000 per year.

Estimated Average Size of Awards:
\$415,000 per year.

Maximum Award: We will reject any
application that proposes a budget
exceeding \$450,000 for a single budget
period of 12 months.

Estimated Number of Awards: 8–9.

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

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* This program is
authorized by title III, part A, of the
HEA. To qualify as an eligible
institution under any title III, part A
program, an institution must—

(a) Be accredited or preaccredited 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;

(b) Be legally authorized by the State
in which it is located to be a junior or
community college or to provide an
educational program for which it
awards a bachelor's degree;

(c) Be designated as an "eligible
institution" by demonstrating that it: (1)
Has an enrollment of needy students as
described in 34 CFR 607.3; and (2) has
low average educational and general
expenditures per full-time equivalent
(FTE) undergraduate student as
described in 34 CFR 607.4.

Note: The notice announcing the FY 2017
process for designation of eligible
institutions, and inviting applications for
waiver of eligibility requirements, was
published in the **Federal Register** on
November 25, 2016 (81 FR 85210). Only
institutions that the Department determines
are eligible, or which are granted a waiver
under the process described in that notice,
may apply for a grant in this program.

Relationship Between the Title III, Part A Programs and the Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) Program

A grantee under the HSI program,
which is authorized under title V of the
HEA, may not receive a grant under any
HEA, title III, part A program. The title
III, part A programs are: SIP; the
Tribally Controlled Colleges and
Universities program; the Alaska Native
and Native Hawaiian-Serving
Institutions program; the Asian
American and Native American Pacific
Islander-Serving Institutions program;
and the Native American-Serving
Nontribal Institutions program.

Furthermore, a current HSI program grantee may not give up its HSI grant to receive a grant under SIP or any title III, Part A program as described in 34 CFR 607.2(g)(1).

An eligible HSI that is not a current grantee under the HSI program may apply for a FY 2017 grant under all title III, part A programs for which it is eligible, as well as receive consideration for a grant under the HSI program. However, a successful applicant may receive only one grant as described in 34 CFR 607.2(g)(1).

2.a. *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 (20 U.S.C. 1059c(c)(3)(B)).

b. *Supplement-Not-Supplant:* This program involves supplement-not-supplant funding requirements. Grant funds must be used so that they supplement and, to the extent practical, increase the funds that would otherwise be available for the activities to be carried out under the grant and in no case supplant those funds (34 CFR 607.30(b)).

3. *Other:* An IHE, if selected for a SIP award, can only receive funding for one award under this program. If the IHE scores within the funding range in both competitions, the IHE will be awarded the grant in the competition under CFDA number 84.031F.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package:* You can obtain an application via the Internet using the following address: www.Grants.gov. If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact Nalini Lamba-Nieves or Jymece Seward, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., Room 4C103, Washington, DC 20202-6450. You may contact the individuals at the following email addresses and telephone numbers: Nalini.Lamba-Nieves@ed.gov, (202) 453-7953; and Jymece.Seward@ed.gov, (202) 453-6138.

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, audiotape, or compact disc) by contacting the program contacts listed in this section.

2. *Content and Form of Application Submission:* Requirements concerning the content and forms 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 that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We have established mandatory page limits for the application narrative. You must limit the section of the application narrative that addresses the selection criteria, including the budget narrative of the selection criteria, to no more than 50 pages using 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 outside of the 1” margin.
- Each page on which there is text or graphics will be counted as one full page.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, *except* titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions. Text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs in the application narrative may be single spaced and will count toward the page limit.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger, and 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 and Arial Narrow) will not be accepted.

The page limit does not apply to Part I, the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424-cover sheet); the Supplemental Information for SF 424 Form required by the Department of Education; Part II, the Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs Form (ED 524); Section A—Budget Summary—U.S. Department of Education Funds; Section B—Budget Summary—Non-Federal Funds; Section C—Budget Narrative; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; the one-page program abstract; the table of contents; or the bibliography. 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 the purpose of the page-limit requirement.

Note: The Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs Form (ED 524)

Sections A–C are not the same as the narrative response to the Budget section of the selection criteria.

We will reject your application if you exceed the page limit.

3. *Submission Dates and Times: Applications Available:* March 1, 2017.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: April 17, 2017.

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 if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, 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 one of the persons 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: June 16, 2017.

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) We specify unallowable costs in 34 CFR 607.10(c). We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

(b) Applicants that apply for construction funds under the title III, part A, HEA programs, must comply with Executive Order 13202, signed by former President George W. Bush on February 17, 2001, and amended on April 6, 2001. 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 adhere to agreements with one or more labor organizations, on the same or other construction project(s).” However, the Executive order does not prohibit contractors or subcontractors from voluntarily entering into these agreements. 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), 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 this 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 SIP (CFDA number 84.031A) 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 84.031A).

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 program 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: 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). 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 application 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 then 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 one of 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: James E. Laws, Jr., U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., Room 4C144, Washington, DC 20202. FAX: (202) 401-8466.

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 84.031A), 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 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 84.031A), 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 program are from 34 CFR 607.22 (a) through (g), and from 34 CFR 75.210. Applicants must address each of the following selection criteria (separately for each proposed activity). The total weight of the selection criteria is 100 points; the maximum score for each criterion is noted in parentheses.

(a) *Quality of the Applicant's Comprehensive Development Plan.* (Maximum 20 Points) The extent to which—

(1) The strengths, weaknesses, and significant problems of the institution's academic programs, institutional management, and fiscal stability are clearly and comprehensively analyzed and result from a process that involved major constituencies of the institution;

(2) The goals for the institution's academic programs, institutional management, and fiscal stability are realistic and based on comprehensive analysis;

(3) The objectives stated in the plan are measurable, related to institutional goals, and, if achieved, will contribute to the growth and self-sufficiency of the institution; and

(4) The plan clearly and comprehensively describes the methods and resources the institution will use to institutionalize practice and improvements developed under the

proposed project, including, in particular, how operational costs for personnel, maintenance, and upgrades of equipment will be paid with institutional resources.

(b) *Quality of the Project Design.* (Maximum 10 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 extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory (as defined in this notice).

(c) *Quality of Activity Objectives.* (Maximum 15 Points) The extent to which the objectives for each activity are—

(1) Realistic and defined in terms of measurable results; and

(2) Directly related to the problems to be solved and to the goals of the comprehensive development plan.

(d) *Quality of Implementation Strategy.* (Maximum 15 Points) The extent to which—

(1) The implementation strategy for each activity is comprehensive;

(2) The rationale for the implementation strategy for each activity is clearly described and is supported by the results of relevant studies or projects; and

(3) The timetable for each activity is realistic and likely to be attained.

(e) *Quality of Key Personnel.* (Maximum 8 Points) The extent to which—

(1) The past experience and training of key professional personnel are directly related to the stated activity objectives; and

(2) The time commitment of key personnel is realistic.

(f) *Quality of Project Management Plan.* (Maximum 10 Points) The extent to which—

(1) Procedures for managing the project are likely to ensure efficient and effective project implementation; and

(2) The project coordinator and activity directors have sufficient authority to conduct the project effectively, including access to the president or chief executive officer.

(g) *Quality of Evaluation Plan.* (Maximum 15 Points) The extent to which—

(1) The data elements and the data collection procedures are clearly described and appropriate to measure the attainment of activity objectives and to measure the success of the project in achieving the goals of the comprehensive development plan; and

(2) The data analysis procedures are clearly described and are likely to produce formative and summative results on attaining activity objectives

and measuring the success of the project on achieving the goals of the comprehensive development plan.

(h) *Budget.* (Maximum 7 Points) The extent to which the proposed costs are necessary and reasonable in relation to the project's objectives and scope.

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 also 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).

A panel of three non-Federal reviewers will review and score each application in accordance with the selection criteria in 34 CFR 607.22(a) through (g) and 34 CFR 75.210. A rank order funding slate will be made from this review. Awards will be made in rank order according to the average score received from the peer review.

Tie-breaker for Development Grants.

In tie-breaking situations for development grants, 34 CFR 607.23(b) requires that we award one additional point to an application from an IHE that has an endowment fund of which the current market value, per FTE enrolled student, is less than the average current market value of the endowment funds, per FTE enrolled student, at comparable type institutions that offer similar instruction. We award one additional point to an application from an IHE that has expenditures for library materials per FTE enrolled student that are less than the average expenditure for library materials per FTE enrolled student at similar type institutions. We also add one additional point to an application from an IHE that proposes to carry out one or more of the following activities—

- (1) Faculty development;
- (2) Funds and administrative management;
- (3) Development and improvement of academic programs;
- (4) Acquisition of equipment for use in strengthening management and academic programs;

(5) Joint use of facilities; and

(6) Student services.

For the purpose of these funding considerations, we use 2014–2015 data.

If a tie remains after applying the tie-breaker mechanism above, priority will be given to applicants that have the lowest endowment values per FTE enrolled student.

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.

4. Integrity and Performance System: If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$150,000), under 2 CFR 200.205(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards—that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant—before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through SAM. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

Please note that, if the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from the Federal Government exceeds \$10,000,000, the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, require you to report certain integrity information to FAPIIS semiannually. Please review the requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, if this grant plus all the other Federal funds you receive exceed \$10,000,000.

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 and 34 CFR 607.31. 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/appforms.html.

4. Performance Measures: The Secretary has established the following key performance measures for assessing the effectiveness of SIP:

a. The percentage change, over the five-year period, of the number of full-time degree-seeking undergraduates enrolled at SIP institutions. Note that this is a long-term measure that will be used to periodically gauge performance;

b. The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students at four-year SIP institutions who were in their first year of postsecondary enrollment in the previous year and are enrolled in the current year at the same SIP institution;

c. The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students at two-year SIP institutions who were in their first year of postsecondary enrollment in the previous year and are enrolled in the current year at the same SIP institution;

d. The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled at four-year SIP institutions graduating within six years of enrollment; and

e. The percentage of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled at two-year SIP institutions graduating within three years of enrollment.

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:

Nalini Lamba-Nieves and Jymece Seward, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., Room 4C103, Washington, DC 20202. You may contact these individuals at the following email addresses and telephone numbers:

Nalini.Lamba-Nieves@ed.gov, (202) 453-7953

Jymece.Seward@ed.gov, (202) 453-6138

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

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, audiotape, or compact disc) on request to one of the 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 this 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 feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Dated: February 24, 2017.

Linda Byrd-Johnson,

Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary, Higher Education Programs, and Senior Director, Student Service.

[FR Doc. 2017-04000 Filed 2-28-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[Docket No. ED-2017-ICCD-0012]

Agency Information Collection Activities; Comment Request; Teacher Incentive Fund Annual Performance Report

AGENCY: Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII), Department of Education (ED).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, ED is proposing a revision of an existing information collection.

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before May 1, 2017.

ADDRESSES: To access and review all the documents related to the information collection listed in this notice, please use <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching the Docket ID number ED-2017-ICCD-0012. Comments submitted in response to this notice should be submitted electronically through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> by selecting the Docket ID number or via postal mail, commercial delivery, or hand delivery. *Please note that comments submitted by fax or email and those submitted after the comment period will not be accepted.* Written requests for information or comments submitted by postal mail or delivery should be addressed to the Director of the Information Collection Clearance Division, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., LBJ, Room 226-62, Washington, DC 20202-4537. **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For specific questions related to collection activities, please contact Tyra Stewart, 202-260-1847.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Department of Education (ED), in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)), provides the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed, revised, and continuing collections of information. This helps the Department assess the impact of its information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. It also helps the public understand the Department's information collection requirements and provide the requested data in the desired format. ED is soliciting comments on the proposed information collection request (ICR) that is described below. The Department of Education is especially interested in public comment addressing the following issues: (1) Is this collection necessary to the proper functions of the Department; (2) will this information be processed and used in a timely manner; (3) is the estimate of burden accurate; (4) how might the Department enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (5) how might the Department minimize the burden of this collection on the respondents, including through the use of information technology. Please note that written comments received in response to this notice will be considered public records.

Title of Collection: Teacher Incentive Fund Annual Performance Report.

OMB Control Number: 1855-0030.

Type of Review: A revision of an existing information collection.

Respondents/Affected Public: State, Local, and Tribal Governments.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Responses: 45.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Burden Hours: 2,070.

Abstract: The Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) is a competitive grant program. The purpose of the TIF program is to support projects that develop and implement performance-based compensation systems (PBCSs) for teachers and principals in order to increase educator effectiveness and student achievement in high-need schools. The Department will use the data collected through the performance reports to determine the progress of each grant and to determine the continuation of funding each year.

Dated: February 23, 2017.

Tomakie Washington,

Acting Director, Information Collection Clearance Division, Office of the Chief Privacy Officer, Office of Management.

[FR Doc. 2017-03921 Filed 2-28-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Strengthening Institutions Program

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

Overview Information:
Strengthening Institutions Program.
Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2017.
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.031F.

DATES:

Applications Available: March 1, 2017.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: April 17, 2017.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: June 16, 2017.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) provides grants to eligible institutions of higher education (IHEs) to help them become self-sufficient and expand their capacity to serve low-income students by providing funds to improve and strengthen the institution's academic quality, institutional management, and fiscal stability.

Note: The Department of Education (Department) is conducting two separate competitions for SIP grants in 2017. In this competition (CFDA number 84.031F), applicants must address an absolute priority. The separate competition under CFDA number 84.031A does not include any priorities. The 84.031A competition will be announced in a separate **Federal Register** notice. Applicants may apply for grants in both the 84.031A and 84.031F competitions but can only receive one grant.

Background: The SIP Program is critical to the Department's efforts to improve college completion for students who have been traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education. In recent years, SIP competitions have given priority to applicants proposing evidence-based interventions. This competition, which provides larger awards than are available under the 84.031A competition, maintains that recent emphasis and goes one step further, by encouraging applicants to commit to conducting rigorous evaluations of those interventions.

In responding to the absolute priority, we encourage applicants to not just identify the proposed evidence-based interventions, but also to describe how those interventions will be implemented in a way that will change institutional