

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. 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) by contacting the Management Support Services Team, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., room 5113, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-2500. Telephone: (202) 245-7363. If you use a TDD or a TTY, call the FRS, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

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: May 17, 2017.

Ruth E. Ryder,

Deputy Director, Office of Special Education Programs, delegated the duties of the Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 2017-10423 Filed 5-19-17; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Veterans Upward Bound Program

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department is issuing a notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2017 for the Veterans Upward Bound Program, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 84.047V.

Dates:

Applications Available: May 22, 2017.

Deadline for Transmittal of

Applications: June 21, 2017.

Deadline for Intergovernmental

Review: August 21, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kenneth Foushee, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., room 5E113, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 453-7417 or by email: Kenneth.Foushee@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.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The Upward Bound (UB) Program is one of the seven programs known as the Federal TRIO Programs. The UB Program is a discretionary grant program that supports projects designed to provide students with the skills and motivation necessary to complete a program of secondary education and to enter into, and succeed in, a program of postsecondary education. There are three types of grants under the UB Program: UB; Veterans UB; and UB Math and Science (UBMS) grants. In this notice we invite applications for Veterans UB (VUB) grants only. The invitations to apply for UB and UBMS grants were published in an earlier issue of the **Federal Register**.

The VUB Program supports projects designed to prepare, motivate, and assist military veterans in the development of academic and other skills necessary for acceptance into and success in a program of postsecondary education.

VUB grantees are required to provide the services listed in section 402C(b) and (c) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA) (20 U.S.C. 1070a-13), and in 34 CFR 645.15.

Grantees may also provide the permissible services in section 402C(d) of the HEA.

Background:

The VUB Program is a critical component of the Department's efforts to improve college readiness, college access, college selection, and degree completion for veterans. To more strategically align the VUB Program with broader reform strategies intended to improve postsecondary access and completion, and consistent with the Department's increasing emphasis on promoting evidence-based practices through our grant competitions, the Secretary will also evaluate applications on the extent to which the components of the proposed project are supported by "strong theory"—that is, a rationale for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice that includes a logic model. We encourage applicants to read carefully the Selection Criteria section of this notice. Resources to assist applicants in creating a logic model can be found here: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2014007.pdf.

Definitions:

These definitions 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.

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

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 20 U.S.C. 1070a-13.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 75 (except for 75.215 through 75.221), 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. (d) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 645.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian Tribes.

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

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.
Estimated Available Funds:

\$14,220,358.

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: \$257,500 to \$558,804.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$288,842.

Maximum Award: We will fund a successful application only up to the applicable maximum award amount listed here for a single budget period of 12 months to serve the minimum number of applicable participants.

- For an applicant that is not currently receiving a VUB Program grant, the minimum number of participants is 125 for the maximum award amount of \$257,500.

- For an applicant that is currently receiving a VUB Program grant, the minimum number of participants is the number of participants served in FY 2016 for the maximum award amount equal to the applicant's base award amount for FY 2016.

Estimated Number of Awards: 49.

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

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* Institutions of higher education; public and private agencies; organizations including community-based organizations with experience in serving disadvantaged youth; combinations of such institutions, agencies, and organizations; and secondary schools.

2. *Cost Sharing or Matching:* This program does not require cost sharing or matching.

3. *Other:* An applicant may submit more than one application for a VUB Program grant so long as each application describes a project that serves a different target area (34 CFR 645.20(a)). The term "target area" is defined as a discrete local or regional geographical area designated by the applicant as the area to be served by a VUB project (34 CFR 645.6(b)). The Secretary is not designating any additional populations for which an applicant may submit a separate application under this competition (34 CFR 645.20(b)).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package:* Kenneth S. Foushee, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., Room 5E113, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 453-7417 or by email: Kenneth.Foushee@ed.gov.

If you use a TDD or a TTY, call the 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 contact person listed in this section.

2. *Content and Form of Application Submission:* Requirements concerning the content and form 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 recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative, which includes the budget narrative, to no more than 65 pages and (2) 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" 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, including charts, tables, figures, and graphs. Titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions may be singled spaced.

- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger, or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).

- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to Part I, the Application for Federal Assistance Face Sheet (SF 424); Part II, the Budget Information Summary form (ED Form 524); Part III, the VUB Program Profile form; Part III, the one-page Project Abstract form; and Part IV, the Assurances and Certifications. The recommended page limit also does not apply to a table of contents, which you should include in the application narrative. You must include your complete response to the selection criteria in Part III, the application narrative.

3. *Submission Dates and Times:*

Applications Available: May 22, 2017.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: June 21, 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 the program contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. 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: August 21, 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:* We specify unallowable costs in 34 CFR 645.41. We reference additional regulations outlining funding restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

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

- Have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);
- Register both your DUNS number and TIN with the System for Award Management (SAM), the Government's primary registrant database;
- Provide your DUNS number and TIN on your application; and
- 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: <http://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 VUB Program, CFDA number 84.047V, 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 the VUB Program 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 84.047, not 84.047V).

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.

- 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 resubmitted 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 program contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** 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 *Grants.gov* 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 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: Gaby Watts, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., Room 5E119, Washington, DC 20202. Fax: (202) 260-7464.

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 84.047V), 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 84.047V), 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 grant 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 following selection criteria are from 34 CFR

645.31 and 34 CFR 75.210. A maximum of 105 points may be awarded to an application based on the applicant's response to these selection criteria.

(a) *Need for the project* (24 points). The Secretary evaluates the need for a VUB project in the proposed target area on the basis of clear evidence that shows—

(1) The proposed target area lacks the services for eligible veterans that the applicant proposes to provide;

(2) A large number of veterans who reside in the target area are low income and potential first generation college students;

(3) A large number of veterans who reside in the target area who have not completed high school or have completed high school but have not enrolled in a program of postsecondary education; and

(4) Other indicators of need for a VUB project, including the presence of unaddressed academic or socio-economic problems of veterans in the area.

(b) *Objectives* (9 points). The Secretary evaluates the quality of the applicant's objectives and proposed targets (percentages) in the following areas on the basis of the extent to which they are both ambitious, as related to the need data provided under paragraph (a) of this section, and attainable, given the project's plan of operation, budget, and other resources:

(1) Academic performance (standardized test scores) (2 points);

(2) Education program retention and completion (3 points);

(3) Postsecondary enrollment (3 points); and

(4) Postsecondary completion (1 point).

(c) *Plan of operation* (30 points). The Secretary determines the quality of the applicant's plan of operation by assessing the quality of—

(1) The plan to inform the faculty and staff at the applicant institution or agency and the interested individuals and organizations throughout the target area of the goals and objectives of the project (3 points);

(2) The plan for identifying, recruiting, and selecting participants to be served by the project (3 points);

(3) The plan for assessing individual participant needs and for monitoring the academic progress of participants while they are in VUB (3 points);

(4) The plan for locating the project within the applicant's organizational structure (3 points);

(5) The curriculum, services and activities that are planned for participants in both the academic year and summer components (3 points);

(6) The planned timelines for accomplishing critical elements of the project (3 points);

(7) The plan to ensure effective and efficient administration of the project, including, but not limited to, financial management, student records management, and personnel management (3 points);

(8) The applicant's plan to use its resources and personnel to achieve project objectives and to coordinate the VUB project with other projects for disadvantaged students (3 points);

(9) The plan to work cooperatively with parents and key administrative, teaching, and counseling personnel at the target schools to achieve project objectives (3 points); and

(10) A follow-up plan for tracking graduates of VUB as they enter and continue in postsecondary education (3 points).

(d) *Applicant and community support* (16 points). The Secretary evaluates the applicant and community support for the proposed project on the basis of the extent to which—

(1) The applicant is committed to supplementing the project with resources that enhance the project such as: space, furniture and equipment, supplies, and the time and effort of personnel other than those employed in the project (8 points).

(2) Resources secured through written commitments from community partners (8 points).

(i) An applicant that is an institution of higher education must include in its application commitments from the target schools and community organizations;

(ii) An applicant that is a secondary school must include in its application commitments from institutions of higher education, community organizations, and, as appropriate, other secondary schools and the school district;

(iii) An applicant that is a community organization must include in its application commitments from the target schools and institutions of higher education.

(e) *Quality of personnel* (8 points). To determine the quality of personnel the applicant plans to use, the Secretary looks for information that shows—

(1) The qualifications required of the project director, including formal training or work experience in fields related to the objectives of the project and experience in designing, managing, or implementing similar projects (3 points);

(2) The qualifications required of each of the other personnel to be used in the project, including formal training or

work experience in fields related to the objectives of the project (3 points); and

(3) The quality of the applicant's plan for employing personnel who have succeeded in overcoming barriers similar to those confronting the project's target population (2 points).

(f) *Budget and cost effectiveness* (5 points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine the extent to which—

(1) The budget for the project is adequate to support planned project services and activities (3 points); and

(2) Costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives and scope of the project (2 points).

(g) *Evaluation plan* (8 points). The Secretary evaluates the quality of the evaluation plan for the project on the basis of the extent to which the applicant's methods of evaluation—

(1) Are appropriate to the project and include both quantitative and qualitative evaluation measures (4 points); and

(2) Examine in specific and measurable ways the success of the project in making progress toward achieving its process and outcomes objectives (4 points).

(h) *Quality of project design* (5 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).

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 assistance from the Department of Education (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

For this competition, a panel of non-Federal reviewers will review each application in accordance with the selection criteria. The individual scores of the reviewers will be added and the sum divided by the number of reviewers

to determine the average peer reviewer score received in the review process. Additionally, in accordance with 34 CFR 645.32, the Secretary will award prior experience points to applicants that conducted a VUB Program project during budget periods 2013–14, 2014–15, and 2015–16, based on their documented experience. Prior experience points, if any, will be added to the application's averaged reader score to determine the total score for each application.

If there are insufficient funds for all applications with the same total scores, the Secretary will choose among the tied applications so as to serve geographic areas and eligible populations that have been underserved by the VUB Program.

3. Risk Assessment and Special Conditions: Consistent with 2 CFR 200.205, before awarding grants under this program 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. 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.

(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 success of the VUB Program will be measured by the percentage of VUB participants who enroll in and complete a postsecondary education program. The following performance measures have been developed to track progress toward achieving program success:

(a) The percentage of VUB participants who enrolled in a program of postsecondary education.

(b) The percentage of VUB participants who enrolled in a program of postsecondary education and who attained either an associate's degree within three years or a bachelor's degree within six years.

(c) The percentage of VUB participants who enrolled in a program of postsecondary education and who in the first year of the program placed into college-level math and English without the need for remediation.

(d) The percentage of VUB participants who enrolled in a program of postsecondary education and graduated on time—within four years for a bachelor's degree and within two years for an associate's degree.

(e) The cost per successful participant.

Note: To assess the fifth performance measure on efficiency of the program, the Department will track the average cost, in Federal funds, of achieving a successful outcome, where a successful outcome is defined as enrollment in postsecondary education by a VUB participant no later than one year after program completion. These performance measures constitute the Department's indicators of the success of the VUB program.

Grant recipients must collect and report data on the steps they have taken toward achieving these goals. Accordingly, we request that applicants include these performance measures in conceptualizing the design, implementation, and evaluation of their proposed projects.

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 management requirements, the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation grant, 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. 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 computer disc) on request to the program contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

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: May 17, 2017.

Lynn B. Mahaffie,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Personnel Development To Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities—National Center for the Development and Dissemination of Digital Open Educational Tools and Resources Supported by Evidence To Enhance Personnel Preparation and Professional Development for Educators of Students With Disabilities

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

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education is issuing a notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2017 for Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities—National Center for the Development and Dissemination of Digital Open Educational Tools and Resources Supported by Evidence to Enhance Personnel Preparation and Professional Development for Educators of Students with Disabilities, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 84.325E.

DATES: Applications Available: May 22, 2017.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: July 6, 2017.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: September 5, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Sarah Allen, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., Room 5144, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-5108. Telephone: (202) 245-7875. Email: Sarah.Allen@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.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purposes of this program are to (1) help address State-identified needs for personnel preparation in special education, early intervention, related services, and regular education to work with children, including infants and toddlers, with disabilities; and (2) ensure that those personnel have the necessary skills and knowledge, derived from practices that have been determined through scientifically based research and experience, to be successful in serving those children.

Priority: In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), this priority is from allowable activities specified in the statute (see sections 662 and 681 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); 20 U.S.C. 1462 and 20 U.S.C. 1481).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2017 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is:

National Center for the Development and Dissemination of Digital Open Educational Tools and Resources Supported by Evidence to Enhance Personnel Preparation and Professional Development for Educators of Students with Disabilities (Center).

Background:

The purpose of this priority is to fund a cooperative agreement to establish and operate a center that will design, develop, and disseminate digital¹ open

¹“Digital” means any instructional practice that effectively uses technology to strengthen a student’s learning experience and encompasses a wide spectrum of tools and practices (e.g., interactive learning resources, software, access to databases)(Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015).

educational² tools and resources to build the capacity of educators to use practices supported by evidence (as defined in this notice) and improve results for students with disabilities.

Educators’³ use of instructional and intervention practices supported by evidence is a critical factor in improving developmental and learning outcomes (e.g., academic, social, emotional, behavioral) for all students, especially students with disabilities. Effective educators support students’ growth toward improved outcomes and also tend to play an important role in supporting the families of students with disabilities (Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2010; Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2012).

While there are a wide range of proven strategies that may be used to support and enhance the overall effectiveness of educators, digital learning tools and resources are playing an increasingly important role in building the capacity of educators to use practices supported by evidence and improve results for students with disabilities. Educators need access to high-quality digital learning tools and resources that can be used to supplement both formal and informal pre-service and in-service training on best practices in improving results for students with disabilities. Resources are most effective when they are accessible and linked to clearly defined learning outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Since 2001, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has funded national centers dedicated to improving education outcomes for all children, especially those with disabilities birth through age 21 years, through the use of effective practices supported by evidence and interventions delivered through a variety of online means (e.g., <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/>). These digital tools and resources (e.g., modules, case studies) are widely used by faculty at institutions of higher education (IHEs) to enhance pre-service training courses for educators. However, the demand for high-quality digital learning tools and resources continues to grow, speaking to the need to develop more content addressing new topics and

²“Open educational resources” (OER) are teaching and learning materials that are in the public domain or have been released under a license that permits their free use, reuse, modification, and sharing with others.

³For the purpose of this priority, “educators” refers to general and special education teachers and leaders (e.g., principals and assistant principals), related services providers, and other personnel serving students with disabilities and their families.