

Dated: March 16, 2018.

Aaron Siegel,

Alternate OSD Federal Register, Liaison
Officer, Department of Defense.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Application for New Awards; Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter Schools Program (CSP)—Grants for Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities

AGENCY: Office of Innovation and Improvement, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education is issuing a notice inviting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2018 for CSP—Grants for Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities (Credit Enhancement), Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 84.354A.

DATES:

Applications Available: March 21, 2018.

Date of Pre-Application Meeting: The Credit Enhancement program intends to hold a webinar designed to provide technical assistance to interested applicants. Detailed information regarding this webinar will be provided on the Credit Enhancement web page at <https://innovation.ed.gov/what-we-do/charter-schools/credit-enhancement-for-charter-school-facilities-program/applicant-info-and-eligibility/>.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: May 11, 2018.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: July 5, 2018.

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the **Federal Register** on February 12, 2018 (83 FR 6003) and available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-12/pdf/2018-02558.pdf.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Clifton Jones, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Room 4W244, Washington, DC 20202-5970. Telephone: (202) 205-2204 or by email: Clifton.Jones@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 Credit Enhancement program provides grants to eligible entities to demonstrate innovative methods of helping charter schools to address the cost of acquiring, constructing, and renovating facilities by enhancing the availability of loans and bond financing.

Background: Since FY 2002, the Department has made new Credit Enhancement grants each year, which has resulted in a portfolio of grantees using Federal funds to enhance the credit of charter schools so that they can access private-sector and other non-Federal capital in order to acquire, construct, and renovate facilities at a reasonable cost.

This notice contains application requirements from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA),¹ and selection criteria and a competitive preference priority for charter schools operating in high-need communities and geographic areas from program regulations at 34 CFR part 225. This notice also includes an invitational priority that encourages applicants to partner with other entities to leverage new or previously untapped capital and other resources to expand support to more schools and students as well as improve their ability to support schools and students. Under this priority, an applicant could propose, for example, to partner with a newly created State-funded credit enhancement program designed to improve charter schools' credit ratings on bonds, thereby enabling charter school facility financing at lower interest rates and lower borrowing costs.

Priorities: This competition includes one competitive preference priority and one invitational priority.

Competitive Preference Priority: In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(ii), this priority is from 34 CFR 225.12. For FY 2018 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is a competitive preference priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), we award up to an additional 15 points to an application, depending on how well the application addresses the priority.

This priority is:

The capacity of charter schools to offer public school choice in those

communities with the greatest need for this choice based on—

(1) The extent to which the applicant would target services to geographic areas in which a large proportion or number of public schools have been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB);

(2) The extent to which the applicant would target services to geographic areas in which a large proportion of students perform below proficient on State academic assessments; and

(3) The extent to which the applicant would target services to communities with large proportions of students from low-income families.

Note: With regard to paragraph (1), consistent with the ESSA, if applicants will be operating in States that have identified schools for comprehensive support and improvement or targeted support and improvement under the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, “improvement, corrective action, or restructuring” refers to schools identified for “comprehensive support and improvement or targeted support and improvement” under the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA. If applicants will be operating in States that are delaying, as permitted by the Department, the identification of schools for comprehensive support and improvement or targeted support and improvement until school year 2018–2019, the Department will award competitive preference points under paragraph (1) to allow those applicants to target services to geographic areas in which a large proportion of public schools are, at the time of submission of an application under this competition: (i) Elementary and secondary schools identified as in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under the ESEA, as amended by NCLB; or (ii) elementary and secondary schools identified as a priority or focus school by the State prior to August 1, 2016 under ESEA flexibility. After school year 2018–2019, the Department will require a grantee that is operating in States that are delaying identification of schools, and that receives points under this priority, to amend its approved application, as needed, to describe how it will target services to geographic areas in which a large proportion of public schools are elementary and secondary schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement under the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA.

Invitational Priority: For FY 2018 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is an invitational priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give an application that meets this invitational priority a competitive or

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, references to the ESEA are to the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA.

absolute preference over other applications.

This priority is:

Projects proposing the development of one or more partnerships that will enable the applicant to leverage newly created or previously untapped sources of capital or other assistance, which may include non-Federal programs, in financing charter school facilities in geographic areas and communities described in the competitive preference priority.

Definitions: The following definition is from section 4310 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7221i(2)).

Charter school means a public school that—

(a) In accordance with a specific State statute authorizing the granting of charters to schools, is exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools, but not from any rules relating to the other requirements in section 4310 of the ESEA;

(b) Is created by a developer as a public school, or is adapted by a developer from an existing public school, and is operated under public supervision and direction;

(c) Operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives determined by the school's developer and agreed to by the authorized public chartering agency;

(d) Provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both;

(e) Is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;

(f) Does not charge tuition;

(g) Complies with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 *et seq.*), title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d *et seq.*), title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 *et seq.*), section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*), section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (commonly referred to as the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974"), and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1411 *et seq.*);

(h) Is a school to which parents choose to send their children, and that—

(1) Admits students on the basis of a lottery, consistent with section 4303(c)(3)(A) (20 U.S.C. 7221b(c)(3)(A)), if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated; or

(2) In the case of a school that has an affiliated charter school (such as a school that is part of the same network of schools), automatically enrolls students who are enrolled in the immediate prior grade level of the affiliated charter school and, for any additional student openings or student openings created through regular attrition in student enrollment in the affiliated charter school and the enrolling school, admits students on the basis of a lottery as described in clause (1);

(i) Agrees to comply with the same Federal and State audit requirements as do other elementary schools and secondary schools in the State, unless such State audit requirements are waived by the State;

(j) Meets all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements;

(k) Operates in accordance with State law;

(l) Has a written performance contract with the authorized public chartering agency in the State that includes a description of how student performance will be measured in charter schools pursuant to State assessments that are required of other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school; and

(m) May serve students in early childhood education programs or postsecondary students.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 7221c.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 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 225.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: The Administration has requested \$500,000,000 for the CSP for FY 2018, of which we would use an estimated \$65,000,000 for new awards under 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 subsequent years from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$4,000,000 to \$12,000,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$9,000,000.

Maximum Award: We will not make an award exceeding \$12,000,000 for a single grant project period.

Estimated Number of Awards: 7.

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

Project Period: From the start date indicated on the grant award document until the Federal funds and earnings on those funds have been expended for the grant purposes or until financing facilitated by the grant has been retired, whichever is later.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants:

(a) A public entity, such as a State or local governmental entity;

(b) A private, nonprofit entity; or

(c) A consortium of entities described in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section.

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

3. **Subgrantees:** A grantee under this competition may not award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application.

4. **Other:** The charter schools that a grantee selects to benefit from this program must meet the definition of "charter school" in section 4310 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 7221i).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission

Instructions: For information on how to submit an application please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the **Federal Register** on February 12, 2018 (83 FR 6003) and available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-12/pdf/2018-02558.pdf.

2. **Content and Form of Application Submission:** Each Credit Enhancement program application must include the following specific elements:

(a) A statement identifying the activities that the eligible entity proposes to carry out with funds received under the program, including

how the eligible entity will determine which charter schools will receive assistance, and how much and what types of assistance charter schools will receive.

(b) A description of the involvement of charter schools in the application's development and the design of the proposed activities.

(c) A description of the eligible entity's expertise in capital market financing. (Consortium applicants must provide this information for each of the participating organizations.)

(d) A description of how the proposed activities will leverage the maximum amount of private-sector financing capital relative to the amount of government funding used and otherwise enhance credit available to charter schools, including how the eligible entity will offer a combination of rates and terms more favorable than the rates and terms that a charter school could receive without assistance from the eligible entity under this section.

(e) A description of how the eligible entity possesses sufficient expertise in education to evaluate the likelihood of success of a charter school program for which facilities financing is sought.

(f) In the case of an application submitted by a State governmental entity, a description of the actions that the eligible entity has taken, or will take, to ensure that charter schools within the State receive the funding that charter schools need to have adequate facilities.

(g) In the case of applicants applying as a consortium, applicants must also submit consortium agreements as part of their application package. These applicants must either designate one member of the group to apply for the grant or establish a separate legal entity to apply for the grant. All members of the consortium must then enter into an agreement that details the activities that each member of the group plans to perform and that binds each member to the application statements and assurances. This consortium agreement must be submitted as part of the consortium's application. The Department's administrative regulations at 34 CFR 75.127–129 provide more details about the requirements that govern group/consortium applications.

3. Submission of Proprietary Information: Given the types of projects that may be proposed in applications for the Credit Enhancement program, your application may include business information that you consider proprietary. In 34 CFR 5.11, we define "business information" and describe the process we use in determining whether any of that information is proprietary

and, thus, protected from disclosure under Exemption 4 of the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended).

Because we plan to make successful applications available to the public, you may wish to request confidentiality of business information.

Consistent with Executive Order 12600, please designate in your application any information that you feel is exempt from disclosure under Exemption 4. In the appropriate Appendix section of your application, under "Other Attachments Form," please list the page number or numbers on which we can find this information. For additional information please see 34 CFR 5.11(c).

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 competition.

5. Funding Restrictions: (a) *Reserve accounts.* An eligible entity receiving a grant must, in accordance with State and local law, directly or indirectly, alone or in collaboration with others, deposit the funds received, other than funds used for administrative costs, in a reserve account established and maintained by the eligible entity. Amounts deposited in such account must be used by the eligible entity for one or more of the following purposes:

- (1) Guaranteeing, insuring, and reinsuring bonds, notes, evidences of debt, loans, and interests therein.
- (2) Guaranteeing and insuring leases of personal and real property.
- (3) Facilitating financing by identifying potential lending sources, encouraging private lending, and other similar activities that directly promote lending to, or for the benefit of, charter schools.

(4) Facilitating the issuance of bonds by charter schools, or by other public entities for the benefit of charter schools, by providing technical, administrative, and other appropriate assistance (including the recruitment of bond counsel, underwriters, and potential investors and the consolidation of multiple charter school projects within a single bond issue).

Funds received and deposited in the reserve account must be invested in obligations issued or guaranteed by the United States or a State, or in other similarly low-risk securities. Any earnings on funds received must be deposited in the reserve account and used in accordance with this program.

(b) *Charter school objectives.* An eligible entity receiving a grant must use the funds deposited in the reserve account to assist one or more charter schools to access private-sector capital to accomplish one or more of the following objectives:

- (1) The acquisition (by purchase, lease, donation, or otherwise) of an interest (including an interest held by a third party for the benefit of a charter school) in improved or unimproved real property that is necessary to commence or continue the operation of a charter school.
- (2) The construction of new facilities, or the renovation, repair, or alteration of existing facilities, necessary to commence or continue the operation of a charter school.
- (3) The predevelopment costs required to assess sites and to commence or continue the operation of a charter school.

(c) *Other.* Grantees must ensure that all costs incurred using funds from the reserve account are reasonable. Under 20 U.S.C. 7221c(g), an eligible entity may use not more than 2.5 percent of the funds received under this grant for the administrative costs of carrying out its project responsibilities.

We specify unallowable costs in 34 CFR 225.21.

The full faith and credit of the United States are not pledged to the payment of funds under such obligation. In the event of a default on any debt or other obligation, the United States has no liability to cover the cost of the default.

Applicants that are selected to receive an award must enter into a written Performance Agreement with the Department prior to drawing down funds, unless the grantee receives written permission from the Department in the interim to draw down a specific limited amount of funds. Grantees must maintain and enforce standards of conduct governing the performance of their employees, officers, directors, trustees, and agents engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts or agreements related to this grant. The standards of conduct must mandate disinterested decision-making. The Secretary, in accordance with chapter 37 of title 31 of the United States Code, will collect all or a portion of the funds in the reserve account established with grant funds (including any earnings on those funds) if the Secretary determines that: (1) The grantee has permanently ceased to use such funds to accomplish the purposes described in the authorizing statute and the Performance Agreement; or (2) not earlier than two years after the date on which it first receives these funds, the

grantee has failed to make substantial progress in undertaking the grant project.

6. *Recommended Page Limit:* The application narrative 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 to 40 pages and (2) use the following standards:

- A “page” is 8.5” × 11”, on one side only, with 1” margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.

- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.

- 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.

Furthermore, applicants are strongly encouraged to include a table of contents that specifies where each required part of the application is located.

V. Application Review Information

1. *Selection Criteria:* The selection criteria for this competition are from program regulations at 34 CFR 225.11. The Secretary awards up to 100 points for addressing these criteria. The maximum possible score for addressing each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion also includes the factors that the reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets the criterion. We encourage applicants to make explicit connections to the selection criteria and factors in their applications.

The Secretary uses the following criteria to evaluate an application for a Credit Enhancement grant:

(a) *Quality of project design and significance (35 points):*

In determining the quality of project design and significance, the Secretary considers—

(1) The extent to which the grant proposal would provide financing to charter schools at better rates and terms than they can receive absent assistance through the program;

(2) The extent to which the project goals, objectives, and timeline are clearly specified, measurable, and appropriate for the purpose of the program;

(3) The extent to which the project implementation plan and activities, including the partnerships established,

are likely to achieve measurable objectives that further the purposes of the program;

(4) The extent to which the project is likely to produce results that are replicable;

(5) The extent to which the project will use appropriate criteria for selecting charter schools for assistance and for determining the type and amount of assistance to be given;

(6) The extent to which the proposed activities will leverage private or public-sector funding and increase the number and variety of charter schools assisted in meeting their facilities needs more than would be accomplished absent the program;

(7) The extent to which the project will serve charter schools in States with strong charter laws, consistent with the criteria for such laws in section 4303(g)(2) of the ESEA; and

(8) The extent to which the requested grant amount and the project costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the project.

(b) *Quality of project services (15 points):*

In determining the quality of the project services, the Secretary considers—

(1) The extent to which the services to be provided by the project reflect the identified needs of the charter schools to be served;

(2) The extent to which charter schools and chartering agencies were involved in the design of, and demonstrate support for, the project;

(3) The extent to which the technical assistance and other services to be provided by the proposed grant project involve the use of cost-effective strategies for increasing charter schools' access to facilities financing, including the reasonableness of fees and lending terms; and

(4) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed grant project are focused on assisting charter schools with a likelihood of success and the greatest demonstrated need for assistance under the program.

(c) *Capacity (35 points):*

In determining an applicant's business and organizational capacity to carry out the project, the Secretary considers—

(1) The amount and quality of experience of the applicant in carrying out the activities it proposes to undertake in its application, such as enhancing the credit on debt issuances, guaranteeing leases, and facilitating financing;

(2) The applicant's financial stability;

(3) The ability of the applicant to protect against unwarranted risk in its

loan underwriting, portfolio monitoring, and financial management;

(4) The applicant's expertise in education to evaluate the likelihood of success of a charter school;

(5) The ability of the applicant to prevent conflicts of interest, including conflicts of interest by employees and members of the board of directors in a decision-making role;

(6) If the applicant has co-applicants (consortium members), partners, or other grant project participants, the specific resources to be contributed by each co-applicant (consortium member), partner, or other grant project participant to the implementation and success of the grant project;

(7) For State governmental entities, the extent to which steps have been or will be taken to ensure that charter schools within the State receive the funding needed to obtain adequate facilities; and

(8) For previous grantees under the charter school facilities programs, their performance in implementing these grants.

(d) *Quality of project personnel (15 points):*

In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers—

(1) The qualifications of project personnel, including relevant training and experience, of the project manager and other members of the project team, including consultants or subcontractors; and

(2) The staffing plan for the grant project.

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

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

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 the System for Award Management. 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. Open Licensing Requirements:

Unless an exception applies, if you are awarded a grant under this competition, you will be required to openly license to the public grant deliverables created in whole, or in part, with Department grant funds. When the deliverable consists of modifications to pre-existing works, the license extends only to those modifications that can be separately identified and only to the extent that open licensing is permitted under the terms of any licenses or other legal restrictions on the use of pre-existing works. For additional information on the open licensing requirements please refer to 2 CFR 3474.20(c).

4. *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) If you receive a grant under this competition, you must submit an annual report that complies with the reporting requirements for Credit Enhancement grantees in section 4304(h)(2) of the ESEA and the performance and financial expenditure reporting requirements in 34 CFR 75.720. At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. 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.

5. Performance Measures:

(a) *Program Performance Measures.* The performance measures for this program are: (1) The amount of funding grantees leverage for charter schools to acquire, construct, and renovate school facilities and (2) the number of charter schools served. Grantees must provide information that is responsive to these measures as part of their annual performance reports.

(b) *Project-Specific Performance Measures.* Applicants must propose project-specific performance measures and performance targets consistent with the objectives of the project and program. Applicants must provide the following information as directed under 34 CFR 75.110(b):

(1) *Project Performance Measures.* How each proposed project-specific

performance measure would accurately measure the performance of the project and how the proposed project-specific performance measure would be consistent with the performance measures established for the program funding the competition.

(2) *Project Performance Targets.* Why each proposed performance target is ambitious yet achievable compared to the baseline for the performance measure and when, during the project period, the applicant would meet the performance target(s).

Note: The Secretary encourages applicants to consider measures and targets tied to their grant activities (for instance, if an applicant is using eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch to measure the number of low-income families served by the project, the applicant could provide a percentage for students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch), during the grant period. The measures should be sufficient to gauge the progress throughout the grant period, and show results by the end of the grant period.

(3) *Data Collection and Reporting.* (i) The data collection and reporting methods the applicant would use and why those methods are likely to yield reliable, valid, and meaningful performance data; and

(ii) The applicant's capacity to collect and report reliable, valid, and meaningful performance data, as evidenced by high-quality data collection, analysis, and reporting in other projects or research.

Note: If applicants do not have experience with collection and reporting of performance data through other projects or research, they should provide other evidence of their capacity to successfully carry out data collection and reporting for their proposed project.

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) 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**. You may access the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations 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 Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have

Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

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

Dated: March 16, 2018.

Margo Anderson,

Acting Assistant Deputy Secretary for Innovation and Improvement.

[FR Doc. 2018-05748 Filed 3-20-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Supporting Effective Educator Development Program

AGENCY: Office of Innovation and Improvement, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education is issuing a notice inviting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2018 for the Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) program, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 84.423A.

DATES:

Applications Available: March 21, 2018.

Date of Informational Webinar: The SEED program intends to hold a webinar designed to provide technical assistance to interested applicants. Detailed information regarding this webinar will be provided on the SEED web page at <http://innovation.ed.gov/what-we-do/teacher-quality/supporting-effective-educator-development-grant-program/>.

Deadline for Notice of Intent to Apply: April 5, 2018.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: May 17, 2018.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: July 19, 2018.

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the **Federal Register** on February 12, 2018 (83 FR 6003) and available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-12/pdf/2018-02558.pdf.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Richard Wilson, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Room 4W111, Washington, DC 20202-

5960. Telephone: (202) 453-6709 or by email: SEED@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 SEED program, authorized under section 2242 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA or Act), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (20 U.S.C. 6672),¹ provides funding to increase the number of highly effective educators by supporting the implementation of Evidence-Based² practices that prepare, develop, or enhance the skills of educators. These grants will allow eligible entities to develop, expand, and evaluate practices that can serve as models that can be sustained and disseminated.

Priorities: This competition includes two absolute priorities, one competitive preference priority, and one invitational priority. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(iv), Absolute Priority 1, which requires moderate evidence, and Absolute Priority 2, which requires promising evidence, are from section 2242 of the ESEA (20 U.S.C. 6672) and 34 CFR 75.226. The competitive preference priority is from the Department's notice of final supplemental priorities and definitions, published in the **Federal Register** on March 2, 2018 (83 FR 9096) (Supplemental Priorities). Under the SEED grant competition, each of the two absolute priorities constitutes its own funding category. The Secretary intends to award grants under each absolute priority for which applications of sufficient quality are submitted.

Absolute Priorities: For FY 2018 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are absolute priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet one of these priorities. Applicants may address only one absolute priority and must clearly indicate the specific absolute priority their project addresses.

These priorities are:

Absolute Priority 1—Supporting Effective Teachers.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all references to the ESEA or the Act are to the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA.

² Throughout this notice, all defined terms are denoted with capitals.

This priority is for projects that will implement activities that are supported by Moderate Evidence. Applicants under this priority may propose one or more of the following activities:

(1) Providing teachers from nontraditional preparation and certification routes or pathways to serve in traditionally underserved Local Educational Agencies (LEAs);

(2) Providing teachers with Evidence-Based Professional Development activities that address literacy, numeracy, remedial, or other needs of LEAs and the students the agencies serve; or

(3) Providing teachers with Evidence-Based professional enhancement activities, which may include activities that lead to an advanced credential.

Note: An LEA includes a public charter school that operates as an LEA.

Absolute Priority 2—Supporting Effective Principals or Other School Leaders.

This priority is for projects that will implement activities that are supported by Promising Evidence. Applicants under this priority may propose one or more of the following activities:

(1) Providing principals or other School Leaders from nontraditional preparation and certification routes or pathways to serve in traditionally underserved LEAs;

(2) Providing principals or other School Leaders with Evidence-Based Professional Development activities that address literacy, numeracy, remedial, or other needs of LEAs and the students the agencies serve; or

(3) Providing principals or other School Leaders with Evidence-Based professional enhancement activities, which may include activities that lead to an advanced credential.

Note: An applicant must identify at least one but no more than two citations for the purposes of meeting the evidence requirement for the priority the applicant addresses, Moderate Evidence for Absolute Priority 1 or Promising Evidence for Absolute Priority 2. An applicant should clearly identify these citations in the Evidence form. The Department will not review a citation that an applicant fails to clearly identify for review. Studies included for review may have been conducted by the applicant or by a third party.

In addition to including up to two citations, an applicant must provide a description of: (1) The positive outcome(s) and practice(s) the applicant intends to replicate under its SEED grant and (2) the relevance of the outcome(s) and practice(s) to the SEED program. For an applicant addressing Absolute Priority 1 to meet the definition of Moderate Evidence, the