



This document is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on 02/29/2016 and available online at <http://federalregister.gov/a/2016-04338>, and on FDsys.gov

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities--Stepping-up Technology Implementation

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

ACTION: Notice.

Overview Information:

Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities--Stepping-up Technology Implementation

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

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:
84.327S.

Dates:

Applications Available: [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: [INSERT DATE 105 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purposes of the Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities Program are to: (1) improve results for students with disabilities by promoting the development, demonstration, and use of technology; (2) support educational activities designed to be of educational value in the classroom for students with disabilities; (3) provide support for captioning and video description that is appropriate for use in the classroom; and (4) provide accessible educational materials to students with disabilities in a timely manner.

Priorities: This competition has one absolute priority and one competitive preference priority. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), the absolute priority is from allowable activities specified in the statute (see sections 674 and 681(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.)). In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(ii), the competitive preference priority is from 34 CFR 75.226.

Absolute Priority: For FY 2016 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:

Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities--Stepping-up Technology Implementation.

Background:

The purpose of this priority is to fund cooperative agreements to: (a) identify strategies needed to effectively implement evidence-based technology tools¹ that benefit students with disabilities; and (b) develop and disseminate products² that will help a broad range of schools and early intervention programs to effectively implement these technology tools. As Congress recognized in IDEA, "almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by ... supporting

¹ For the purposes of this priority, "technology tools" may include, but are not limited to, digital math text readers for students with visual impairment, reading software to improve literacy and communication development, text-to-speech software to improve reading performance, infant stimulation tools, and other technology tools. These tools must assist or otherwise benefit students with disabilities.

² For the purposes of this priority, "products" may include, but are not limited to, instruction manuals, lesson plans, demonstration videos, ancillary instructional materials, and professional development modules such as collaborative groups, coaching, mentoring, or online supports.

the development and use of technology, including assistive technology devices and assistive technology services, to maximize accessibility for children with disabilities” (section 601(c)(5)(H) of IDEA).

The use of technology, including assistive technology devices and assistive technology services, enhances instruction and access to the general education curriculum. Technology can be the great equalizer in a classroom for students with disabilities. Educators often face major obstacles when it comes to engaging and motivating students who struggle with the general education curriculum. Innovative technology tools, programs, and software can be used to promote engagement and enhance the learning experience (Brunvand & Byrd, 2011). Additionally, the development of newer technologies for, and their presence in, early childhood education settings is rapidly increasing. When media-rich content is integrated into the curriculum and supported with adult guidance, technology experiences for young children are associated with better language, literacy, and mathematics outcomes. Additionally, technology integration in early childhood settings has been linked to increased social awareness and collaborative behaviors, improved abstract reasoning and

problem solving abilities, and enhanced visual-motor coordination (McManis & Gunnewig, 2012).

Technologies can also offer opportunities to support State educational agencies' (SEAs') and local educational agencies' (LEAs') Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility plans by: (a) improving student learning and engagement; (b) accommodating the special needs of students; (c) facilitating student and teacher access to digital content and resources;³ and (d) improving the quality of instruction through personalized learning and data (Duffey & Fox, 2012; Fletcher, Schaffhauser, & Levi, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Notwithstanding the potential benefits in using technology to improve learning outcomes, research suggests that implementation can be a significant challenge. For example, data from a survey of more than 1,000 kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) teachers, principals, and assistant principals indicated that simply providing teachers with technology does not ensure that it will be used (Grunwald & Associates, 2010). Additionally, Perlman and Redding

³ For the purposes of this priority, "resources" include, but are not limited to, school leadership support, professional development support to school staff, and a plan for integrating technology into the classroom curriculum.

(2011) found that in order to be used most effectively, technology must be implemented in ways that align with curricular and teacher goals and must offer students opportunities to use these tools in their learning. Even as schools have started to deliver coursework online, and the number of students involved in online learning has grown, many of these online learning technologies have not been designed to be accessible to students with disabilities (Center on Online Learning and Students with Disabilities, 2012). These findings demonstrate a need for products and resources that can ensure technology tools for students with disabilities are implemented effectively.

Since 1998, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has supported technology and media service projects through the Steppingstones of Technology Innovation for Children with Disabilities (Steppingstones) program. The projects funded under the Steppingstones program developed and evaluated numerous innovative technology tools designed to improve results for children with disabilities in areas such as Web-based learning and assessment materials, instructional software, assistive technology devices, methods for using off-the-shelf hardware and software to improve learning, and methods for integrating technology

into instruction. The Stepping-up Technology Implementation program is building on the technology development efforts under the Steppingstones program by identifying, developing, and disseminating products and resources that promote the effective implementation⁴ of evidence-based instructional and assistive technology tools in early childhood or K-12 settings.⁵

Priority:

The purpose of this priority is to fund cooperative agreements to: (a) identify strategies needed to effectively implement evidence-based technology tools that benefit students with disabilities; and (b) develop and disseminate products (e.g., instruction manuals, lesson plans, demonstration videos, ancillary instructional materials) that will help early childhood or K-12 settings to effectively implement these technology tools.

⁴ In this context, "effective implementation" means "making better use of research findings in typical service settings through the use of processes and activities (such as accountable implementation teams) that are purposeful and described in sufficient detail such that independent observers can detect the presence and strength of these processes and activities" (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005).

⁵ For the purposes of this priority, "settings" include any place where instruction or intervention occurs, such as general education classrooms, special education classrooms, early childhood settings, or natural environments for infants and toddlers.

To be considered for funding under this absolute priority, applicants must meet the application requirements. Any project funded under this priority must also meet the programmatic and administrative requirements specified in the priority.

Application Requirements: An applicant must include in its application--

(a) A project design supported by strong theory (as defined in this notice);

(b) A logic model (as defined in this notice) or conceptual framework that depicts at a minimum, the goals, activities, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project;

Note: The following Web sites provide more information on logic models:

www.researchutilization.org/matrix/logicmodel_resource3c.html and www.osepideasthatwork.org/logicModel/index.asp.

(c) A plan to implement the activities described in the Project Activities section of this priority;

(d) A plan, linked to the proposed project's logic model, for a formative evaluation of the proposed project's activities. The plan must describe how the formative evaluation will use clear performance objectives to ensure continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed

project, including objective measures of progress in implementing the project and ensuring the quality of products and services;

(e) Documentation that the technology tool is evidence-based (as defined in this notice) and that it can be implemented to improve early childhood outcomes, academic achievement, and college- and career-readiness.

(f) A plan for recruiting and selecting⁶ the following:

(1) Three development schools. Development schools are the sites in which iterative development⁷ of the implementation of evidence-based technology tools and products will occur. The project must start implementing the technology tool with one development school in year one of the project period and two additional development schools in year two.

(2) Four pilot schools. Pilot schools are the sites in which try-out, formative evaluation, and refinement of

⁶ For more information on recruiting and selecting sites, refer to Assessing Sites for Model Demonstration: Lessons Learned from OSEP Grantees at http://mdcc.sri.com/documents/reports/MDCC_Site_Assessment_Brief_09-30-11.pdf.

⁷ For the purposes of this priority, "iterative development" refers to a process of testing, systematically securing feedback, and then revising the educational intervention that leads to revisions in the intervention to increase the likelihood that it will be implemented with fidelity (Diamond & Powell, 2011).

technology tools and products will occur. The project must work with the four pilot schools during years three and four of the project period.

(3) Ten dissemination schools. Dissemination schools will be selected if the project is extended for a fifth year. Dissemination schools will be used to conduct the final test of the effectiveness of the products and the final opportunity for the project to refine the tools and products for use by teachers, but will receive less technical assistance (TA) from the project than the development or pilot schools. Also, at this stage, dissemination schools will extend the benefits of the technology tool to additional students. To be selected as a dissemination school, eligible schools and LEAs must commit to working with the project to implement the evidence-based technology tools and products. A school may not serve in more than one category (i.e., development, pilot, dissemination).

(g) School site information (e.g., early childhood setting; elementary, middle, or high school; persistently lowest-achieving school (as defined in this notice); high-needs school (as defined in this notice)) about the diversity of the development, pilot, and dissemination

schools; student demographics (e.g., race or ethnicity, percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch); and other pertinent data.

(h) A budget for attendance at the following:

(1) A one and one-half day kick-off meeting to be held in Washington, DC, after receipt of the award, and an annual planning meeting held in Washington, DC, with the OSEP project officer and other relevant staff during each subsequent year of the project period.

Note: Within 30 days of receipt of the award, a post-award teleconference must be held between the OSEP project officer and the grantee's project director or other authorized representative.

(2) A three-day project directors' conference in Washington, DC, during each year of the project period.

(3) Two two-day trips annually to attend Department briefings, Department-sponsored conferences, and other meetings, as requested by OSEP.

Project Activities. To meet the requirements of this priority, the project, at a minimum, must conduct the following activities:

(a) Recruit a minimum of three development schools in one LEA and four pilot schools across at least two LEAs in

accordance with the plan proposed under paragraph (f) of the Application Requirements section of this notice.

Note: Final site selection will be determined in consultation with the OSEP project officer following the kick-off meeting.

(b) Identify resources and develop products to support sustained implementation of the selected technology tool. Development of the products must be an iterative process beginning in a single development school and continuing through repeated cycles of development and refinement in the other development schools, followed by a formative evaluation and further refinement in the pilot schools. The products must include, at a minimum, the following components to support implementation of the technology tool:

(1) An instrument or method for assessing the (i) need for the technology tool, and (ii) readiness to implement it. Instruments and methods may include resource inventory checklists, school self-study guides, surveys of teacher interest, detailed descriptions of the technology tool for review by school staff, and similar approaches used singly or in combination.

(2) Methods and manuals to support the implementation of the technology tool.

(3) Professional development activities necessary for teachers to implement the technology tool with fidelity and integrate it into the curriculum.

(c) Collect and analyze data on the effect of the technology tool on early childhood development, academic achievement, or college- and career-readiness.

(d) Collect formative and summative evaluation data from the development schools and pilot schools to refine and evaluate the products.

(e) If the project is extended to a fifth year, provide the products and the technology tool to no fewer than 10 dissemination schools that are not the same schools used as development and pilot schools.

(f) Collect summative data about the success of the products in supporting implementation of the technology tool in the dissemination schools; and

(g) By the end of the project period, projects must provide information on:

(1) The products and resources that will enable other schools or programs to implement and sustain implementation of the technology tool.

(2) How the technology tool has improved early childhood development, academic achievement, or college- and career-readiness for children with disabilities.

(3) A strategy for disseminating the technology tool and accompanying products beyond the schools directly involved in the project.

Cohort Collaboration and Support.

OSEP Project Officer(s) will provide coordination support among the projects. Each project funded under this priority must--

(a) Participate in monthly conference call discussions to share and collaborate around implementation and specific project issues; and

(b) Provide information bi-annually using a template that captures descriptive data on project site selection, processes for installation of technology, and the use of technology and sustainability (i.e., the process of technology implementation).

Note: The following website provides more information about implementation research:

[http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/learn-implementation.](http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/learn-implementation)

Fifth Year of the Project:

The Secretary may extend a project one year beyond 48 months to work with dissemination schools if the grantee is achieving the intended outcomes and making a positive contribution to the implementation of an evidence-based technology tool in the development and pilot schools. Each applicant must include in its application a plan for the full 60-month award. In deciding whether to continue funding the project for the fifth year, the Secretary will consider the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a), and in addition--

(a) The recommendation of a review team consisting of the OSEP project officer and other experts selected by the Secretary. This review will be held during the last half of the third year of the project period;

(b) The timeliness and effectiveness with which all requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the project; and

(c) Evidence of the degree to which the project's activities have contributed to changed practices and improved early childhood outcomes, academic achievement, or college- and career-readiness for students with disabilities.

Competitive Preference Priority-- Evidence of Promise

(2 Points).

Projects based upon supporting evidence of effectiveness that meets the conditions set out in the definition of "evidence of promise" (as defined in this notice).

Note: An applicant addressing this competitive preference priority must identify no more than two study citations that meet this standard.

References:

Brunvand, S., & Byrd, S. (2011). Using VoiceThread to promote learning engagement and success for all students. Teaching Exceptional Children, 43(4), 28-37.

Center for Online Learning and Students with Disabilities (COLSD). (2012). The foundation of online learning for students with disabilities (COLSD White Paper). Lawrence, KS: Author. Retrieved from http://centerononlinelearning.org/wp-content/uploads/Foundation_7_2012.pdf.

Diamond, K. E., & Powell, D. R. (2011). An iterative approach to the development of a professional

development intervention for head start teachers.
Journal of Early Intervention, 33(1), 75-93.

Duffey, D., & Fox, C. (2012). National Educational Technology Trends 2012: State Leadership Empower Educators, Transforming Teaching and Learning. Washington, DC: State Educational Technology Directors Association (SEDTA). Retrieved from www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED536746.pdf.

Fixsen, D. L., Naoom, S. F., Blase, K. A., Friedman, R. M., & Wallace, F. (2005). Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, The National Implementation Research Network.

Fletcher, G., Schaffhauser, D. & Levi, D. (2012). Out of print: Reimagining the K-12 textbook in a digital age. Washington, DC: State Educational Technology Directors Association (SEDTA). Retrieved from www.setda.org/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=321&name=DLFE-1587.pdf.

Grunwald & Associates. (2010). Educators, technology, and 21st century skills: Dispelling five myths. Retrieved from Walden University, Richard W. Riley

College of Education website:

www.WaldenU.edu/fivemyths.

McManis, L. D., & Gunnewig, S. B. (2012). Finding the education in educational technology with early learners. Young Children, 67(3), 14-24.

Perlman, C. L., & Redding, S. (Eds.). (2011). Choosing and implementing technology wisely. Handbook on Effective Implementation of School Improvement Grants. Lincoln, IL: Academic Development Institute. Retrieved from www.centerii.org/handbook.

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology. (2010). Transforming American Education: Learning Powered by Technology. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from www.ed.gov/sites/default/files/netp2010.pdf.

Definitions:

These definitions are from 34 CFR 77.1 and the Department's notice of final supplemental priorities and definitions for discretionary grant programs (Supplemental Priorities), published in the Federal Register on December 10, 2014 (79 FR 73425), as marked.

The following definitions are from 34 CFR 77.1:

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

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

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

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

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

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

High-needs school means a Title I school that has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, low graduation rates (“low-achieving subgroup” high-needs school).

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.

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

Randomized controlled trial means a study that employs random assignment of, for example, students, teachers, classrooms, schools, or districts to receive the intervention being evaluated (the treatment group) or not

to receive the intervention (the control group). The estimated effectiveness of the intervention is the difference between the average outcomes for the treatment group and for the control group. These studies, depending on design and implementation, can meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

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

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

What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards means the standards set forth in the What Works Clearinghouse Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 3.0, March 2014), which can be found at the following link:
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>.

The following definitions are from the Supplemental Priorities:

Persistently lowest-achieving school means, as determined by the State--

(a) (1) Any Title I school that has been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA) and that--

(i) Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater; or

(ii) Is a high school that has had a graduation rate, as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b), that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; and

(2) Any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that--

(i) Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the lowest-achieving five secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, whichever number of schools is greater; or

(ii) Is a high school that has had a graduation rate, as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b), that is less than 60 percent over a number of years.

(b) To identify the lowest-achieving schools, a State

must take into account both--

(i) The academic achievement of the "all students" group in a school in terms of proficiency on the State's assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; and

(ii) The school's lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group.

Priority schools means schools that, based on the most recent data available, have been identified as among the lowest-performing schools in the State. The total number of priority schools in a State must be at least five percent of the Title I schools in the State. A priority school is--

(a) A school among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the State based on the achievement of the "all students" group in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments that are part of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, combined, and has demonstrated a lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group;

(b) A Title I-participating or Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; or

(c) A Tier I or Tier II school under the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program that is using SIG funds to implement a school intervention model.

Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking: Under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. 553) the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed priorities and requirements. Section 681(d) of IDEA, however, makes the public comment requirements of the APA inapplicable to the priorities in this notice.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1474 and 1481.

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 in 2 CFR part 3474.

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 (IHEs) only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative agreements.

Estimated Available Funds: \$1,414,056.

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

Estimated Range of Awards: \$450,000 to \$500,000 per year.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$471,352 per year.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application that proposes a budget exceeding \$500,000 for a single budget period of 12 months.

Estimated Number of Awards: 3.

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

Project Period: Up to 48 months with an optional additional 12 months based on performance. Applications must include plans for both the 48-month award and the 12-month extension.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: SEAs; LEAs, including public charter schools that are considered LEAs under State law; IHEs; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; outlying areas; freely associated States; Indian tribes or tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

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

3. Other General Requirements:

(a) Recipients of funding under this program must make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities (see section 606 of IDEA).

(b) Each applicant for, and recipient of, funding under this competition must involve individuals with disabilities, or parents of individuals with disabilities ages birth through 26, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project (see section 682(a)(1)(A) of IDEA).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package: You can obtain an application package via the Internet or from the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs). To obtain a copy

via the Internet, use the following address:
www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/grantapps/index.html. To
obtain a copy from ED Pubs, write, fax, or call the
following: ED Pubs, U.S. Department of Education, P.O. Box
22207, Alexandria, VA 22304. Telephone, toll free: 1-877-
433-7827. FAX: (703) 605-6794. If you use a
telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text
telephone (TTY), call, toll free: 1-877-576-7734.

You can contact ED Pubs at its Web site, also:
www.EDPubs.gov or at its email address:
edpubs@inet.ed.gov.

If you request an application from ED Pubs, be sure to
identify this competition as follows: CFDA number 84.327S.

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
person or team listed under Accessible Format in section
VIII of this notice.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission:

Requirements concerning the content of an application,
together with the forms you must submit, are in the
application package for this competition.

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. You must limit Part III 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.
- Double-space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, reference citations, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.
- Use a font that is 12 point or larger.
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial. An application submitted in any other font (including Times Roman or Arial Narrow) will not be accepted.

The page limit and double-spacing requirements do not apply to Part I, the cover sheet; Part II, the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; Part IV, the assurances and certifications; or the abstract (follow the guidance provided in the application package for completing the abstract), the table of contents, the list of priority requirements, the resumes, the reference

list, the letters of support, or the appendices. However, the page limit and double-spacing requirements do apply to all of Part III, the application narrative, including all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.

We will reject your application if you exceed the page limit in the application narrative section or if you apply standards other than those specified in this notice and the application package.

3. Submission Dates and Times:

Applications Available: [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Applications for grants under this competition 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 person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice. If the Department provides an accommodation or auxiliary aid to an individual with a disability in connection with the application process, the individual's application remains subject to all other requirements and limitations in this notice.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: [INSERT DATE 105 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

4. Intergovernmental Review: This competition 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: We reference 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--

- a. Have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);
- b. Register both your DUNS number and TIN with the System for Award Management (SAM) (formerly the Central Contractor Registry), the Government's primary registrant database;
- c. Provide your DUNS number and TIN on your application; and
- d. Maintain an active SAM registration with current information while your application is under review by the Department and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.

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

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

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

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

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

Information about SAM is available at www.SAM.gov. To further assist you with obtaining and registering your DUNS number and TIN in SAM or updating your existing SAM account, we have prepared a SAM.gov Tip Sheet, which you can find at: <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 competition 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 Stepping-up Technology Implementation competition, CFDA number 84.327S, 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 Stepping-up Technology Implementation competition at www.Grants.gov. You must search for the downloadable application package for this competition by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.327, not 84.327S).

Please note the following:

- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.
- Applications received by Grants.gov are date and time stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted and must be date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as

otherwise noted in this section, we will not accept your application if it is received--that is, date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system--after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors, including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this competition to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov under News and Events on the Department's G5

system home page at www.G5.gov. In addition, for specific guidance and procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov, please refer to the Grants.gov Web site at: www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

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

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

- You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a read-only, non-modifiable Portable Document Format (PDF). Do not upload an interactive or fillable PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable

PDF (e.g., Word, Excel, WordPerfect, etc.) or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material. Please note that this could result in your application not being considered for funding because the material in question—for example, the project narrative—is critical to a meaningful review of your proposal. For that reason it is important to allow yourself adequate time to upload all material as PDF files. The Department will not convert material from other formats to PDF. Additional, detailed information on how to attach files is in the application instructions.

- 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 of the Grants.gov validation requirements or there were any errors (such as submission of your application by someone other than a registered Authorized Organization Representative or inclusion of an attachment with a file name that contains

special characters). You will be given an opportunity to correct any errors and resubmit, but you must still meet the deadline for submission of applications.

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

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

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

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues with the Grants.gov System: If you are experiencing

problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1-800-518-4726. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and must keep a record of it.

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

If you submit an application after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date, please contact the person 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 that 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 a determination is made on 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: Terry Jackson, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5158, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-5076. FAX: (202) 245-7590.

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 84.327S)
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 84.327S)
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 75.210 and are listed in the application package.

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).

3. Additional Review and Selection Process Factors:

In the past, the Department has had difficulty finding peer reviewers for certain competitions because so many individuals who are eligible to serve as peer reviewers have conflicts of interest. The standing panel requirements under section 682(b) of IDEA also have placed additional constraints on the availability of reviewers. Therefore, the Department has determined that for some discretionary grant competitions, applications may be separated into two or more groups and ranked and selected for funding within specific groups. This procedure will make it easier for the Department to find peer reviewers by ensuring that greater numbers of individuals who are eligible to serve as reviewers for any particular group of applicants will not have conflicts of interest. It also will increase the quality, independence, and fairness of the review process, while permitting panel members to review applications under discretionary grant competitions for which they also have submitted applications. However, if the Department decides to select an equal number of applications in each group for funding, this may result in different cut-off points for fundable applications in each

group.

4. Risk Assessment and Special Conditions:

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

VI. Award Administration Information

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

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

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other

requirements in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

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

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

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multi-year 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 established a data collection period.

4. Performance Measures: Under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), the Department has established a set of performance measures, including long-term measures, that are designed to yield information on various aspects of the effectiveness and quality of the Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities program. These measures are included in the application package and focus on the extent to which projects are of high quality, are relevant to improving outcomes of children with disabilities, contribute to improving outcomes for children with disabilities, and generate evidence of validity and availability to appropriate populations. Projects funded under this competition are required to submit data on these measures as directed by OSEP:

Program Performance Measure #1: The percentage of educational technology, media, and materials projects judged to be of high quality.

Program Performance Measure #2: The percentage of educational technology, media, and materials projects judged to be of high relevance to improving outcomes of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

Program Performance Measure #3: The percentage of educational technology, media, and materials projects that produce findings, products, and other services that contribute to improving results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

Program Performance Measure #4: The percentage of educational technology, media, and materials projects that validate their products and services.

Program Performance Measure #5: The percentage of educational technology, media, and materials projects that make validated technologies available for widespread use.

Grantees will be required to report information on their project's performance in annual performance reports and additional performance data to the Department (34 CFR 75.590 and 75.591).

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 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. Agency Contact

For Further Information Contact: Terry Jackson, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., room 5158, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-5076. Telephone: (202) 245-6039.

If you use a TDD or a TTY, call the Federal Relay Service (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) by contacting the Grants and Contracts Services Team, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW., room 5037, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-2550. 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: February 23, 2016

Michael K. Yudin,
Assistant Secretary for Special
Education and Rehabilitative
Services.

[FR Doc. 2016-04338 Filed: 2/26/2016 8:45 am; Publication Date: 2/29/2016]