



4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; International Research and Studies Program--Research, Studies, and Surveys; and Specialized Instructional Materials

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is issuing a notice inviting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2020 for the International Research and Studies (IRS) program, Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 84.017A. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1840-0795.

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

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Pre-Application Webinar Information: The Department will hold a pre-application meeting via webinar for prospective applicants. Detailed information regarding the webinar will be provided on the website for the IRS program at www.ed.gov/programs/iegpsirs/index.html.

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 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768), and available at www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg.FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cheryl E. Gibbs, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 257-09, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 453-5690. Email: cheryl.gibbs@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 IRS program provides grants to institutions, public and private agencies, organizations, and individuals to conduct research and studies to improve and strengthen instruction in modern foreign languages, area studies, and other international fields.

The research and studies may include, but are not limited to—

(a) Studies and surveys to determine needs for increased or improved instruction in modern foreign languages, area studies, or other international fields, including the demand for foreign language, area, or other international specialists in government, education, and the private sector;

(b) Research on more effective methods of providing instruction and achieving competency in foreign languages, area studies, or other international fields;

(c) Research on applying performance tests and standards across all areas of foreign language instruction and classroom use;

(d) Developing and publishing specialized materials for use in foreign language, area studies, and other international fields or for training foreign language, area, and other international specialists;

(e) Studies and surveys to assess the use of graduates of programs supported under title VI of the HEA by governmental, educational, and private-sector organizations and other studies assessing the outcomes and effectiveness of supported programs;

(f) Comparative studies of the effectiveness of strategies to provide international capabilities at institutions of higher education;

(g) Evaluation of the extent to which programs assisted under title VI of the HEA that address national needs would not otherwise be offered;

(h) Studies and surveys of the use of technologies in foreign language, area studies, and international studies programs;

(i) Studies and evaluations of effective practices in the dissemination of international information, materials, research, teaching strategies, and testing techniques throughout the educational community, including elementary and secondary schools;

(j) Evaluations of the extent to which programs assisted under title VI of the HEA reflect diverse perspectives and a wide range of views and generate debate on world regions and international affairs, as described in the grantee's application;

(k) Systematic collection, analysis, and dissemination of data that contribute to achieving the purposes of title VI, part A of the HEA; and

(l) Support for programs or activities to make data collected, analyzed, or disseminated under 20 U.S.C. 1125 publicly available and easy to understand.

Priorities: Under this competition there are three competitive preference priorities. In accordance with 34

CFR 75.105(b) (2) (ii), these priorities are from regulations (34 CFR 660.1).

In this competition, the Department invites applicants to submit an application to request support for either a Research, Studies, and Surveys project or a Specialized Instructional Materials project. Applicants must provide in section 15 of the SF 424 Application for Federal Assistance, a description that clearly identifies the type of IRS project for which funding is requested. Additional submission details are included in the application package.

Competitive Preference Priorities: For FY 2020 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, these priorities are competitive preference priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c) (2) (i), we award an additional five points to an application that meets one of Competitive Preference Priority 1, Competitive Preference 2, or Competitive Preference Priority 3. An applicant may receive points under only one competitive preference priority. In the application project abstract, you must indicate the selected competitive preference priority being addressed by the FY 2020 proposed project and provide a substantive description of how the project activities meet the priority.

These priorities are:

Competitive Preference Priority 1. (5 points)

Research on more effective methods of providing instruction and achieving competency in modern foreign languages, area studies, or other international fields.

Competitive Preference Priority 2. (5 points)

Studies and surveys to assess the use of graduates of programs supported under title VI of the HEA by governmental, educational, and private-sector organizations and other studies assessing the outcomes and effectiveness of supported programs.

Competitive Preference Priority 3. (5 points)

Developing and publishing specialized materials for use in foreign language, area studies, and other international fields or for training foreign language, area, and other international specialists.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1125.

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 parts 655 and 660.

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

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: \$900,000.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2021 from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$36,000 - \$60,000 for each 12-month budget period.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$48,000.

Estimated Number of Awards: 18.

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

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: Public and private agencies, organizations, institutions, and individuals.

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

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission Instructions: Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on February 13, 2019 (84 FR 3768), and available at www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2019-02-13/pdf/2019-02206.pdf, which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application.

2. Submission of Proprietary Information: Given the types of projects that may be proposed in applications for the IRS grant competition, 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 post on our website a selection of FY 2020 IRS funded abstracts and applications' narrative sections, you may wish to request confidentiality of business information.

Consistent with Executive Order 12600, please designate in your application any information that you believe 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).

3. Intergovernmental Review: This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79.

4. Funding Restrictions: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

5. Recommended Page Limit: The application narrative (Part III of the application) is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate the application. We recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative to no more than 30 pages and (2) use the following standards:

- A page is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, except 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.

The recommended page limit does not apply to Part I, Application for Federal Assistance cover sheet (SF 424); the Supplemental Information For SF 424B; Part II, ED 524 (Summary Budget A) and the detailed budget justification (Summary Budget C); or Part IV, assurances and certifications. The recommended page limit also does not apply to the project abstract, curriculum vitae, or letters of support. However, the recommended page limit does apply to the entire application narrative.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 655.31, 660.31, 660.32, and 660.33. The total maximum score for the selection criteria and the selected competitive preference priority is 100 points for applications for research, studies, and surveys; and the total maximum score for the selection criteria and the selected competitive preference priority is 100 points for specialized instructional materials

projects. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses.

Note: Applications for a research project, study, or a survey will be evaluated using the criteria in 34 CFR 655.31 and 660.32. Applications for the development of specialized instructional materials will be evaluated using the selection criteria in 34 CFR 655.31 and 660.33.

The Secretary uses the following criteria to evaluate applications for a research project, study, or a survey:

(a) Plan of operation (up to 10 points).

(1) The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows the quality of the plan of operation for the project.

(2) The Secretary looks for information that shows-

(i) High quality in the design of the project;

(ii) An effective plan of management that ensures proper and efficient administration of the project;

(iii) A clear description of how the objectives of the project relate to the purpose of the program;

(iv) The way the applicant plans to use its resources and personnel to achieve each objective; and

(v) A clear description of how the applicant will provide equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have been

traditionally underrepresented, such as members of racial or ethnic minority groups, women, and handicapped persons.

(b) Quality of key personnel (up to 10 points).

(1) The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows the quality of the key personnel the applicant plans to use on the project.

(2) The Secretary looks for information that shows—

(i) The qualifications of the project director (if one is to be used);

(ii) The qualifications of each of the other key personnel to be used in the project. In the case of faculty, the qualifications of the faculty and the degree to which that faculty is directly involved in the actual teaching and supervision of students;

(iii) The time that each person referred to in paragraphs (b) (2) (i) and (ii) of this section plans to commit to the project; and

(iv) The extent to which the applicant, as part of its nondiscriminatory employment practices, encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have been traditionally underrepresented, such as members of racial or ethnic minority groups, women, handicapped persons, and the elderly.

(3) To determine the qualifications of a person, the Secretary considers evidence of past experience and training, in fields related to the objectives of the project, as well as other information that the applicant provides.

(c) Budget and cost effectiveness (up to 5 points).

(1) The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows that the project has an adequate budget and is cost effective.

(2) The Secretary looks for information that shows—

(i) The budget for the project is adequate to support the project activities; and

(ii) Costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives of the project.

(d) Evaluation plan (up to 10 points).

(1) The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows the quality of the evaluation plan for the project.

(2) The Secretary looks for information that shows methods of evaluation that are appropriate for the project and, to the extent possible, are objective and produce data that are quantifiable.

(e) Adequacy of resources (up to 5 points).

(1) The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows that the applicant plans to devote adequate resources to the project.

(2) The Secretary looks for information that shows—

(i) Other than library, facilities that the applicant plans to use are adequate (language laboratory, museums, etc.); and

(ii) The equipment and supplies that the applicant plans to use are adequate.

(f) Need for the project (up to 10 points).

The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows—

(1) A need for the proposed project in the field of study on which the project focuses; and

(2) That the proposed project will provide information about the present and future needs of the United States for study in foreign language and other international fields.

(g) Usefulness of expected results (up to 10 points).

The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows the extent to which the results of the proposed project are likely to be used by other research projects or programs with similar objectives.

(h) Development of new knowledge (up to 10 points).

The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows that the extent to which the proposed project is likely to develop new knowledge that will contribute to the purposes of the International Education Program authorized by part A of title VI of the HEA.

(i) Formulation of problems and knowledge of related research (up to 10 points).

The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows that problems, questions, or hypotheses to be dealt with by the applicant—

- (1) Are well formulated; and
- (2) Reflect adequate knowledge of related research.

(j) Specificity of statement of procedures (up to 5 points).

The Secretary reviews each application for the specificity and completeness of the statement of procedures to be followed, including a discussion of such components as sampling techniques, controls, data to be gathered, and statistical and other analyses to be undertaken.

(k) Adequacy of methodology and scope of project (up to 10 points).

The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows—

- (1) The adequacy of the proposed teaching, testing,

and research methodology; and

(2) The size, scope, and duration of the proposed project.

The Secretary uses the following criteria to evaluate applications for development of specialized instructional materials:

(a) Plan of operation (up to 10 points).

(1) The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows the quality of the plan of operation for the project.

(2) The Secretary looks for information that shows-

(i) High quality in the design of the project;

(ii) An effective plan of management that ensures proper and efficient administration of the project;

(iii) A clear description of how the objectives of the project relate to the purpose of the program;

(iv) The way the applicant plans to use its resources and personnel to achieve each objective; and

(v) A clear description of how the applicant will provide equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have been traditionally underrepresented, such as members of racial or ethnic minority groups, women, and handicapped persons.

(b) Quality of key personnel (up to 10 points).

(1) The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows the quality of the key personnel the applicant plans to use on the project.

(2) The Secretary looks for information that shows—

(i) The qualifications of the project director (if one is to be used);

(ii) The qualifications of each of the other key personnel to be used in the project. In the case of faculty, the qualifications of the faculty and the degree to which that faculty is directly involved in the actual teaching and supervision of students;

(iii) The time that each person referred to in paragraphs (b) (2) (i) and (ii) of this section plans to commit to the project; and

(iv) The extent to which the applicant, as part of its nondiscriminatory employment practices, encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have been traditionally underrepresented, such as members of racial or ethnic minority groups, women, handicapped persons, and the elderly.

(3) To determine the qualifications of a person, the Secretary considers evidence of past experience and training, in fields related to the objectives of the

project, as well as other information that the applicant provides.

(c) Budget and cost effectiveness (up to 5 points).

(1) The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows that the project has an adequate budget and is cost effective.

(2) The Secretary looks for information that shows—

(i) The budget for the project is adequate to support the project activities; and

(ii) Costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives of the project.

(d) Evaluation plan (up to 10 points).

(1) The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows the quality of the evaluation plan for the project.

(2) The Secretary looks for information that shows methods of evaluation that are appropriate for the project and, to the extent possible, are objective and produce data that are quantifiable.

(e) Adequacy of resources (up to 5 points).

(1) The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows that the applicant plans to devote adequate resources to the project.

(2) The Secretary looks for information that shows—

(i) Other than library, facilities that the applicant plans to use are adequate (language laboratory, museums, etc.); and

(ii) The equipment and supplies that the applicant plans to use are adequate.

(f) Need for the project (up to 10 points).

The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows that—

(1) The proposed materials are needed in the educational field of study on which the project focuses; and

(2) The language or languages, the area, region, or country, or the issues or studies for which the materials are to be developed, are of sufficient priority and significance to the national interest to warrant financial support by the Federal Government.

(g) Potential for the use of materials in other programs (up to 10 points).

The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows the extent to which the proposed materials may be used elsewhere in the United States.

(h) Account of related materials (up to 5 points).

The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows that—

(1) All existing related or similar materials have been accounted for and the critical commentary on their adequacy is appropriate and accurate; and

(2) The proposed materials will not duplicate any existing adequate materials.

(i) Likelihood of achieving results (up to 10 points).

The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows that the outlined methods and procedures for preparing the materials are practicable and can be expected to produce the anticipated results.

(j) Expected contribution to other programs (up to 10 points).

The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows the extent to which the proposed work may contribute significantly to strengthening, expanding, or improving programs of foreign language studies, area studies, or international studies in the United States.

(k) Description of final form of materials (up to 5 points).

The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows a high degree of specificity in the description of the contents and final form of the proposed materials.

(1) Provisions for pretesting and revision (up to 5 points).

The Secretary reviews each application for information that shows that adequate provision has been made for—

- (1) Pretesting the proposed materials; and
- (2) If necessary, revising the proposed materials

before publication.

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 Specific Conditions:

Consistent with 2 CFR 200.205, before awarding grants under this program the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 3474.10, the Secretary may impose specific 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 \$250,000), 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. Additionally, a grantee or subgrantee that is awarded competitive grant funds must have a plan to disseminate these public grant deliverables. This dissemination plan can be developed and submitted after your application has been reviewed and selected for funding. For additional information on the open licensing requirements please refer to 2 CFR 3474.20.

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

Performance reports for the IRS program must be submitted electronically using the International Resource Information System (IRIS), the International and Foreign Language Education office's web-based reporting system. For information about the system and to view the reporting instructions, please go to <http://iris.ed.gov/iris/pdfs/IRS.pdf>.

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

5. Performance Measures: The following performance measures have been established to assess the effectiveness of the IRS program:

1. Percentage of IRS projects that are focused on improving or strengthening K-16 instruction in less commonly taught languages, area studies, or other international fields.

2. Percentage of IRS projects that are focused on the evaluation of the outcomes and effectiveness of Title VI-Fulbright-Hays International Education programs in addressing national needs.

3. Percentage of IRS projects that result in information from IRS studies, surveys, or research on language, area, and international studies being made available and accessible to the public.

4. The cost per IRS project that is focused on improving or strengthening K-16 instruction in modern foreign languages, area studies, and other international fields.

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

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

VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) on request to 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 at www.govinfo.gov. 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.

Robert L. King,
Assistant Secretary for
Postsecondary Education.

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