

School-Based Mental Health Program ALN 84.184H

Technical Assistance for Prospective Applicants
FY 2025 New Competition

Application Instructions

- Before beginning your application, please read:
 - [Notice Inviting Application \(NIA\)](#)
 - [Application instructions](#)
 - [Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grants](#)
- You can also request a copy of the application package at OESE.School.Mental.Health@ed.gov.



Program Overview

- Application Deadline Date: October 29, 2025
- Application Submission: Applications must be submitted electronically via www.Grants.gov.
- Project Period: Up to 48 months
- Estimated Available Funds: \$180,000,000
- Estimated Number of Awards: 25 – 35 awards



Program Overview

- The purpose of the SBMH program is to provide competitive grants to State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), and consortia of LEAs to increase the number of credentialed school-based mental health services providers delivering mental health services to students in high-need LEAs.
- Eligible applicants:
 - SEAs, as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(49) or
 - LEAs, as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(30), including consortia of LEAs.



Definition of High-Need LEA

- High-need LEA means an LEA that has a significant need for additional school psychologists based on:
 - (a)(1) a ratio of students to school psychologists that exceeds a ratio of 500 students to 1 school psychologist and (2) high rates of school violence, poverty, substance use, suicide, trafficking, or other adverse childhood experiences;
 - (b) having received a Project School Emergency Response to Violence (SERV) grant from the U.S. Department of Education since October 1, 2020; or
 - (c) having experienced a traumatic event since January 1, 2025, and did not receive a Project School Emergency Response to Violence (SERV) grant from the U.S. Department of Education.



Absolute Priorities

Absolute Priority 1— SEAs proposing to increase the number of credentialed school psychologists employed in high-need LEAs.

- To meet this priority, an SEA must propose a plan to recruit and retain credentialed school psychologists for employment in high-need LEAs.



Absolute Priorities

Absolute Priority 2— LEAs proposing to increase the number of credentialed school psychologists employed in high-need LEAs.

- To meet this priority, a high-need LEA or a consortium of high-need LEAs must propose a plan to recruit and retain credentialed school psychologists for employment in high-need LEAs.



Absolute Priorities

Absolute Priority 3— SEAs or LEAs increasing the number of credentialed school psychologists delivering early intervention and intensive mental health services in high-need LEAs.

- To meet this priority, applicants must propose to increase the number of credentialed school psychologists who will engage in the following:
 - (a) Providing intensive mental health services and supports to individual students most in need of those services,
 - (b) Providing early intervention mental health services to address acute concerns and determine if intensive mental health services are needed, and
 - (c) Building necessary capacity and local support to ensure the provision of intensive mental health services beyond the life of the grant.



Competitive Preference Priorities

- This program has 2 competitive preference priorities
 - Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), we award up to an additional 3 points to an application from an SEA that meets Competitive Preference Priority 1. We award an additional 3 points to an application from an SEA, LEA, or consortium of LEAs, that meets Competitive Preference Priority 2.
 - The total number of competitive preference points an SEA applicant may compete for is 6. The total number of competitive preference points an LEA or consortium of LEAs applicant may compete for is 3.



Competitive Preference Priority 1-- Respecialization

- For FY 2025 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 3 points to an application from an SEA that meets Competitive Preference Priority 1.
 - To meet this priority, an SEA must propose to increase the number of credentialed school psychologists employed in high-need LEAs by implementing a respecialization plan.
 - The respecialization plan must support professionals who hold, at a minimum, a degree in a related field (e.g., special education, clinical psychology, community counseling) to obtain a license or certification from the SEA or relevant State regulatory body as a school psychologist.



Competitive Preference Priority 2– Rural Applicants

- For FY 2025 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 may award an additional 3 points to an application that meets the priority.

Rural Applicants (0 or 3 points)

- (a) The applicant proposes to serve a community that is served by one or more LEAs—
 - With a National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43; or
 - With a NCES locale code of 41, 42, or 43.



Application Requirements

- An applicant must include the following in its application:
 - (a) SEA applicants must identify in their applications the specific high-need LEAs that will benefit from the grant or how they will identify and select the high-need LEAs designated to benefit from the grant.
 - (b) LEA applicants must describe how they and each LEA in the consortium, if applicable, meets the definition of high-need LEA.
 - (c) Applicants must include in their applications the most recently available data on the number of credentialed school psychologists delivering services in the high-need LEA(s) and the projected number of credentialed school psychologists that will be hired and retained to deliver services in high-need LEA(s) for each year of the project using funds from this grant.



Program Requirements

- (a) Eligible Applicants for this program are one or both of SEAs, as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(49), or LEAs, as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(30), including consortia of LEAs.
- (b) Administrative costs for SEA applicants that receive an award under this program may not exceed 10 percent of the annual grant award. Administrative costs for LEA applicants that receive an award under this program may not exceed 5 percent of the annual grant award.
- (c) Applicants that receive an award under this program must use grant funds to supplement, and not supplant, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be available for activities funded under this program.



Program Requirements

- (d) Applicants that receive an award under this program are prohibited from using program funds for: (1) gender ideology, (2) political activism, (3) racial stereotyping, or (4) hostile environments for students of particular races.



Program Requirements

- (e) Applicants that receive an award under this program must ensure that school psychologists funded by this grant begin delivering services to students as soon as possible, but not later than 270 days from award.



Program Requirements

- (f) Applicants that receive an award under this program must ensure that any school psychologist hired under this grant, including any services provider that offers telehealth services (as defined in this notice), is credentialed to work in an elementary school (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(19)) or secondary school (as defined in 20 U.S.C. 7801(45)).



Program Requirements

- (g) Applicants that receive an award under the program must comply with section 4001(a) of part A of Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA). In carrying out the Informed Written Consent requirements described in paragraph (a)(1), the exception in (a)(2)(B)(i) only applies after the applicant has made multiple repeated attempts through various communication methods to obtain parent consent. Subsequently, where parent consent is not obtained under (a)(2), not including the provisions in (B)(ii), the parent of a child participating in such services will be provided notice of initial and subsequent service delivery.



Program Requirements

- (h) Applicants that receive an award under this program must ensure that any school psychologist offering services (including telehealth services) does so in a manner consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as all other applicable Federal, State, and local laws.



Definitions

- Definitions of “credentialed,” “early intervention mental health services,” “high-need LEA,” “intensive mental health services,” “recruit or recruitment,” “respecialization,” “retain or retention,” and “telehealth” are from the [Notice of Final Priorities](#). The definitions of “local educational agency” and “State educational agency” are from [20 U.S.C. 7801](#).



Performance Measures

- For the purpose of U.S. Department of Education (Department) reporting under 34 CFR 75.110, we have established the following performance measures for the School-Based Mental Health Services Grant Program:
 - (a) The unduplicated, cumulative number of new school psychologists hired for each high-need LEA as a result of the grant.
 - (b) The unduplicated, cumulative number of school psychologists retained in high-need LEAs as a result of the grant.
 - (c) The ratio of students to school psychologist for each high-need LEA served by the grant, and the numbers of school psychologists and students used to calculate the ratio.



Overview of Review Process

Applications received by the deadline are screened by Federal staff for eligibility and to ensure requirements are met.

Eligible applications are read and scored by a panel of 3 external peer reviewers.

All applicants (successful and unsuccessful) will be notified via letter in writing or email.

We anticipate making all awards by December 31, 2025.



Projects will be awarded and must be operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in Federal civil rights laws.

Department staff will screen applications submitted in accordance with the requirements in the NIA to determine whether applications have met eligibility and other requirements, including whether an application may fail to meet the “General Terms and Conditions” applicable to awarded funds referenced within the NIA .

If you are awarded a grant under this competition, language will be added to the Grant Award Notification (GAN) regarding compliance with these general terms and conditions.



As it relates to identifying, defining and/or describing your project's high-need population(s), please note the following:

"Prohibition on Protected Characteristics as Criteria: Using race, sex, or other protected characteristics for employment, program participation, resource allocation, or other similar activities, opportunities, or benefits, is unlawful, except in rare cases where such discrimination satisfies the relevant level of judicial scrutiny."

"Unlawful Proxy Discrimination: Facially neutral criteria (e.g., "cultural competence," "lived experience," geographic targeting) that function as proxies for protected characteristics violate federal law if designed or applied with the intention of advantaging or disadvantaging individuals based on protected characteristics."

(2025, July 29). Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful. U.S. Department of Justice.

https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1409486/dl?inline=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.



Preparing and Submitting Your Application: Common Instructions and Information for Applicants

Please refer to the [Common Instructions and Information for Applicants](#), which apply to all applicants for U.S. Department of Education discretionary grant programs and include instructions and information on:

- Content and formatting requirements.
- Obtaining and using a Unique Entity Identifier.
- Submission instructions.
- Application review information, including submission of proprietary information, intergovernmental review, past performance, assurances, risk assessments and specific conditions, integrity and performance review.
- Award administration information, including award notices, administrative and national policy requirements, open licensing requirements, reporting, and continuation awards



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Absolute Priority**

- Applicants must meet the Absolute Priorities to be eligible for funding.

- **Competitive Preference Priority Points (CPPs)**

- You may address the competitive preference but CPPs are not required to be eligible.



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Project start date**
 - Applicants should propose a start date of January 1, 2026 when developing their applications.
- **Budget amounts**
 - Estimated Range of Awards: \$1,250,000 – \$1,750,000.
 - Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$1,500,000



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Eligibility of Area Educational Districts, Educational Service Centers or similar entities**
 - If these entities are considered LEAs under state law, they are eligible to apply for funding under this program. Proof of LEA status should be uploaded as an attachment with the application. If possible, this should be a letter from the SEA verifying the status of the entity as an LEA.
- **LEA consortium**
 - A consortium of LEAs may apply. The LEAs that comprise the consortia must ALL be considered an LEA under state law.



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Hiring of grant personnel**

- If a vendor or individual not employed by the applicant assists in preparing an ED grant application and then wants to provide contract services after the applicant receives a grant award, the grantee should follow their procurement procedures consistent with fair and open competition (2 CFR 200.317-200.326).



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Lobbying form**

- All applicants must complete boxes 1-4 and enter N/A for the remaining boxes to submit your Disclosure of Lobbying Activities Form (SF-LLL), even if an applicant does not participate in any lobbying activities.

- **Application page limits**

- The Department recommends that you limit the application narrative to no more than 15 pages and follow the formatting standards described in the [Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs](#).



Applying for a Grant

- You must provide the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number that was used when your entity registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov.
- The UEI number is typically the same number used when your organization registered with the System for Award Management (SAM) (www.sam.gov).
- If you do not enter the same UEI number on your application as the UEI you registered in SAM with, Grants.gov will reject your application.



Applying for a Grant

- We recommended that you register immediately so that this process is completed in time to submit your application on Grants.gov.
- ***Please note:*** An active SAM account is needed to submit your application on Grants.gov. Once your SAM registration is active, it will take 24-48 hours for the information from SAM to upload to Grants.gov and you can submit your application.



Applying for a Grant

- When submitting an application, please allow enough time for the file to upload by the deadline. We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the last day to upload your application so you can address any problems that may arise.
- Information regarding submitting your application and checking the status can be found on pages 20-25 of the application instructions, available on the [SBMH website](#).



Applying for a Grant

- Your application must be fully uploaded and received by the deadline of 11:59:59 pm Eastern time on October 29, 2025.
- Please note, the rate of transmission, size of your application, internet connection, and firewalls within your organization may determine the speed of your application transmission. We recommended that you submit your application prior to the deadline date to begin transmission.



Applying for a Grant

- After you submit your application to Grants.gov, you will receive an automatic notification of receipt with a Grants.gov tracking number.
 - **This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only and is not a receipt by the Department.**



Applying for a Grant

- The Department will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send a second notification to you by email. This second notification indicates that your application was successfully submitted. The Department will assign a PR/Award number, which identifies your application.
 - **You can consider your application to be submitted when you receive the second notification from the Department.**



Applying for a Grant

- Files must be in a .PDF read-only, non-modifiable format for submission. **PDF files are the only Department approved file type accepted.**
- The Department does not accept attachments that contain files within a file, such as PDF Portfolio files, or a fillable .PDF file. As we cannot access attachments that contain password protected files, these files will not be read.



Applying for a Grant

- Applicants should adhere to the naming restrictions for files uploaded on Grants.gov.
- An application cannot be processed if there are two or more files with the same name, if your application name is 50 characters in length, or contains special characters.
- **Applications will be rejected if they do not meet the Grants.gov guidelines.**



Helpful Hints

The application deadline for this grant program is **October 29, 2025.**

Eligible applicants are SEAs and LEAs, including consortia of LEAs.

All applicants **MUST** address Absolute Priorities 1 and 3 or 2 and 3.



Helpful Hints

Read the NIA and application instructions in their entirety. Most questions can be answered using these documents.

Do not include cents when completing your budget information. Please use whole dollars.

Please make sure you have received the second email notification from Grants.gov, with a PR Award #, before considering your application uploaded.



For More Information

- Amy Banks, SBMH Competition Manager
 - OESE.School.Mental.Health@ed.gov
- [SBMH website](#)

