

Funding Opportunity: ED Announces Education Innovation and Research Program (EIR) Competition

Lewis-Burke Associates LLC – June 7, 2021

The U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of Elementary and Secondary Education released, on June 7, a notice inviting applications (NIA) for the fiscal year (FY) 2021 Education Innovation and Research (EIR) for Mid-Phase and Expansion program grants. The EIR program supports efforts to create, implement, and evaluate innovative, evidence-based solutions to academic challenges facing high-need students. The EIR program has three tracks: Early-Phase, Mid-Phase, and Expansion. Each track requires a different level of prior evidence of effectiveness and level of scale. Higher education institutions may apply as part of a consortium led by a state education agency (SEA), local education agency (LEA), the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), or as a non-profit organization recognized under 34 CFR 75.71. ED intends to issue a total of \$180 million in awards with \$8 million as the estimated average size of an award. The NIA for Early-Phase program grants will be released at a later date.

Proposals must demonstrate a strong evidence base that justifies exploration into the topic and focus on field-initiated innovations. The FY 2021 Mid-phase competition includes a special focus on K-12 STEM and computer science education and expanding opportunities in computer science for underserved populations such as minorities, girls, and youth from rural communities and low-income families. ED intends to award an estimated \$32 million in funds for STEM projects and \$32 million in funds for social and emotional learning (SEL) projects.

The NIA for the Mid-Phase program grant includes four absolute priorities, one competitive preference priority and two invitational priorities.

- **Absolute Priority 1: Moderate Evidence**
 - Projects supported by evidence that meets the conditions in the definition of “moderate evidence” by identifying two study citations reviewed against the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC).
- **Absolute Priority 2: Field-Initiated Innovations – General**
 - “Projects that are designed to create, develop, implement, replicate, or take to scale entrepreneurial, evidence-based, field-initiated innovations to improve student achievement and attainment for high-need students.”
- **Absolute Priority 3: Field-Initiated Innovations-- Promoting STEM Education, With a Particular Focus on Computer Science**
 - Projects that create, develop, implement, replicate, or take to scale entrepreneurial, innovations to improve to student achievement for high need students in one or more of the following categories: science, technology, engineering, math, or computer science (as defined in the notice).
 - **Competitive Preference (up to 5 points):** Within Absolute Priority 3, projects designed to improve student achievement, expand access to, and participation in computer science coursework for underrepresented students such as racial or ethnic minorities, women, and low-income individuals.

- **Absolute Priority 4:** Field-Initiated Innovations — Fostering Knowledge and Promoting the Development of Skills That Prepare Students To Be Informed, Thoughtful, and Productive Individuals and Citizens
 - 1) Same requirement as Absolute Priority 2
 - 2) Projects that promote SEL skills that improve student performance and prepare them for employment and responsible citizenship.
- **Invitational Priority 1:** Innovative Approaches to Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Underserved Students and Educators
 - “Projects that are designed to address the needs of underserved students most impacted by COVID-19.”
- **Invitational Priority 2:** Promoting Equity and Adequacy in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities
 - “Projects that are designed to promote equity and adequacy in access to critical resources in Pre-K-12 for underserved students.”

The NIA for the Expansion program grant includes two absolute priorities and the same two invitational priorities as stated in the Mid-Phase program grants NIA.

- **Absolute Priority 1:** Strong Evidence
 - Projects supported by evidence that meets the conditions in the definition of “strong evidence” by identifying four study citations reviewed against the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC).
- **Absolute Priority 2:** Field-Initiated Innovations – General
 - Same requirement as Absolute Priority 2 in the Mid-Phase program grant NIA.

Due Dates: Full proposals for both competitions are due **July 7, 2021**. Applicants are encouraged to submit a notice of intent to apply by **June 28, 2021**.

Total Funding and Award Size: ED intends to award a total of up to \$180 million in EIR grants under the solicitation, funding up to \$8 million for Mid-Phase projects and \$15 million for Expansion projects over a period of up to 60 months. Between 10 and 15 program grants are expected to be awarded in the Mid-Phase track and between one and four program grants are expected to be awarded in the Expansion track.

Eligibility and Limitations: SEAs, LEAs, non-profit organizations, and BIE are eligible to apply. However, an SEA, LEA, or the BIE may apply in partnership with other entities, including higher education institutions. The grant requires cost sharing by recipients of at least 10 percent of the award amount.

Sources and Additional Background:

- The official NIA for the Mid-Phase grants is available [here](#).
- The official NIA for the Expansion grants is available [here](#).
- More information regarding the FY 2021 competition, including the full solicitation for each funding track and informational materials, is available [here](#).
- The EIR program website can be found [here](#).