



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary & Secondary Education
Charter School Programs
Session Transcript
FY 2023 Pre-Application Webinar – State Entities Grant
Competition

Pre-recorded on April 6, 2023

- [Adrienne] Good afternoon and welcome to the FY 2023 Pre-Application Webinar for the Charter Schools Program's State Entities Grant Competition. My name is Adrienne Hawkins. I am the Supervisory Education Program Specialist for the State Entities program. During today's webinar, we will discuss the purpose of the State Entities program.

We will also provide an overview of the program, highlight eligibility and program requirements, and discuss the FY 2023 application package and Notice Inviting Applications. The State Entities program team has a lot of content to discuss over the next 90 minutes, so let's get started. Please advance to the next slide.

Again, welcome. Next slide. Thank you. This slide includes the agenda for today's webinar. As previously stated, you will receive a detailed overview of the State Entities grant program. We will also take a deep dive into the components of the application package and application submission process, as well as the Notice Inviting Applications.

Throughout the course of the day, you will be reminded to fully read the Notice Inviting Applications prior to your submission. Next slide, please. Joining me today are members of the State Entities program. Jill Gaitens, Nora Kern, and Sareeta Schmitt will co-present today's webinar.

We are also joined by Anna Hinton. Anna Hinton is the Charter Schools program director. And the newest member of the state entities team is Samantha Lyon. Next slide. Before we get started, we do want to talk about the logistics of this webinar.

All entities attending this webinar, or all attendees should be in listen-only mode. We ask that you mute your computers, phones, and any other electronic devices that you may be viewing this webinar from.

Transcription by www.speechpad.com

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This session will be recorded and posted to the State Entities website. You will be able to view the slide deck, and listen to the audio recording. For the question and answers portion, there are several opportunities that you will have throughout today's presentation to ask your questions.

Again, you know, we budgeted for time for Q&A, and so we ask that you use the Q&A portion, or the Q&A function in the Zoom webinar to submit your questions. Please only submit questions that are relevant to the topic or topics that are being discussed at that time. Due to time constraints, we may not be able to answer all questions received.

If your question is not addressed, feel free to send your question to the SE email address, which is FY2023_SE_Compensation@ed.gov. Please note we will not be able to respond to specific questions pertaining to your organization's proposal.

Finally, if you have any questions at any point during the application submission period, we ask that you email us at the State Entity team's competition mailbox. This is the best way to communicate with the State Entity team. Next slide.

Thank you. Just a few more reminders and notes. You will see disclaimers throughout this slide deck reminding interested applicants to be sure to read the entire Notice Inviting Applications in the Federal Register, and all the competition-related resources on the Department of Education State Entities competition website.

This is where you will find a link to the Federal Register, as well as the application package for the competition, which contains detailed instructions and guidance for submitting an application. So just to reiterate, there's a bevy of information on our website.

Please, please, please refer to the website, review all of the information there so that way you will be fully informed prior to submitting your applications. As I've mentioned on previous slides, we've allotted time to go through the webinar for questions.

Participants can submit questions via the webinar Q&A function. We ask that you only submit questions relevant to the topic or topics addressed in a

particular section. As a reminder, we will not be able to respond to specific questions pertaining to your organization or organization's proposal.

We also know that due to time constraints, we may not be able to answer all of your questions that are submitted today. If we are unable to respond to your questions, please, please, please follow up in an email to the State Entities competition inbox, and I shared that email address on a previous slide. As a follow-up to today's webinar, we will host an Office Hours webinar where we will answer pre-submitted questions.

In order for us to provide you with comprehensive responses to your questions, we ask that you please send them to us before the Office Hours webinar. It will give us an opportunity to ensure that we have fully responded to each question in a comprehensive way.

The Office Hours webinar will be held on April 20th, and you will be able to find more information on the Office Hours webinar on our website after today's webinar. Next slide, please. Thank you.

Before we jump into a detailed discussion about the State Entities grant competition, we would like to provide you with some background on the overall purpose and structure of the Charter School's program. So, the Charter Schools Program statute identifies seven main purposes of the Charter Schools programs. In the interest of time, I'm not going to discuss each purpose in detail, but I will say that generally, the program provides federal financial assistance for the planning, program design, initial implementation, replication or expansion of high-quality charter Schools to include assistance with charter schools' facilities financing, sharing information about promising practices, and investing in national initiatives that support the charter sector.

Next slide, please. The Charter School programs consist of seven key grant competitions, each of which supports activities important to the success of charter schools.

Our ability to run competitions in each program annually depends on a number of factors, including available funds for our program, for the Charter School's programs. So one, grants for replication and expansion of high-quality schools, CMO grants, are awarded to nonprofit CMOs, or charter management organizations, that have shown evidence of success to help them open new schools or expand existing schools to serve more students.

Two, facilities financing assistance includes the credit enhancement for charter schools' facilities, which serves, or which provides support for charter schools, or to acquire or renovate facilities. Three, the State Charter Schools facilities incentive grants, which provide matching funds for states that provide funding for charter school facilities on a per-pupil basis.

National Dissemination grants, the key purpose of these grants is to increase quality throughout the sector by disseminating best practices related to charter school operations and management. Number five, grants to developers.

Under this program, in states where there isn't an active State Entity grant, individual schools and CMOs may apply directly to the U.S. Department of Education for funds to support opening a new school, or to replicate or expand high-quality schools.

And finally, grants to state entities, or SE grants, the program we are discussing here today make up the largest charter schools programs grant component. These grants can be awarded to state education agencies, governors, state charter school boards, or state charter school support organizations, which in turn award subgrants for the planning and initial operation of new charter schools.

Next slide, please. The State Entities grant program estimates that it has approximately \$173 million for this year's competition. We expect to award anywhere from \$2 million to \$20 million to eligible entities within funding range. The average award is estimated to be about \$8 million.

Total amounts, of course, are pending applicant requests, as well as needs. We expect to make about eight to ten grants in this funding cycle. Grant proposals will inform the number of grant awards that the department can make. It is important to note that applicants should not propose to implement a project period that exceeds five years.

If you propose a budget that does exceed five years, the department will remove all costs in excess years. So for example, if you propose a seven-year grant, the department will reduce funds for any costs that are associated beyond the final two years of the budget.

And of course, this could have some sort of impact on how you implement your grant, how and when you make your subawards, and so we want to make sure

that there is not a negative impact on your proposed performance measures for your subgrantees, or for your organization, and so we're asking you to be sure that you submit a budget for a project period that is for five years.

Again, please do not submit an application for a budget period that exceeds five years. And you know, based on lessons learned from previous grant cycles, that's why our office is sharing this information with you.

There are...we've noticed in the past that there have been some applicants and even some grantees that exceeded the five-year period, and based on those lessons learned, we want to make sure that we share this information with you so that way we can all be on the same page, and ensure that all budgets that are submitted are for the five-year period. And lastly, the maximum amount of subgrant funds a state entity may award to a subgrantee has increased.

State entities may award a subgrantee up to \$2 million over a five-year subgrantee period. So, this is increased from \$1.5 to \$2 million.

Next slide. Thank you. The State Entities grant application is due in Grants.gov on June 5, 2023, at 11:59 Eastern time. Please, please, please do not wait until June 5th to submit your application.

Late applications will not be accepted. And there have been glitches in the system because so many people or entities have tried to submit at the same time, and sometimes the applications will be bumped, and unfortunately, if your application is received on June 6th, say at 12:01am, we will not be able to accept your application.

So here, the important piece to remember is to submit prior to June 5th, even though June 5th is the deadline. We want to make sure that your applications that you and your team have worked so hard on are able to be accepted. If you experience challenges, or need technical support with Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov support desk.

That information will be shared with you later in this webinar. The program office cannot provide assistance with Grants.gov. So again, if you experience glitches with the system, if you don't know how to do something, and you need help or support, you will contact the Grants.gov help desk.

Next slide. And so with that, I want to pause to see if we have any Q&A. So far, we received a question pertaining to the recording, "Will this recording be shared with attendees?"

Yes, the recording will be shared. It will be shared on our website, post the webinar. All right, next slide, please. Thank you. Before we jump into the overview of the State Entities Grant program, and the details of the Notice Inviting Applications, I do want to introduce you to a concept that we think is critical to the success of the State Entities Grant, and that is operational readiness.

So as we go through today's webinar, we ask that you pay close attention to the capacity, knowledge, skills, and experience needed to implement the State Entities Grant. We ask that you consider your organization's capacity to manage this grant, and take into consideration the bullets that are here under operational readiness.

We want you to consider your organization's capacity to manage the grant, and to meet all application requirements, creation of an organizational and financial infrastructure and systems, policies and processes appropriate for grants management, establishment of measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound grant goals, I'm sure many of you are familiar with SMART goals, and the ability to form relationships and garner buy-in from stakeholders throughout the state.

And why is this important, right? So, it helps with the transition from pre-award with a grant proposal, to live operations, and post-award implementation. We want you to be ready to hit the ground running on day one. This also helps to identify and mitigate risk. It increases operational efficiency, and builds confidence in the organization to successfully implement the grant.

And so with that, I am going to turn over the presentation to Jill Gaiten. Jill...

- [Jill] Thank you, Adrienne. Welcome, everyone. I will be providing an overview of the SE grant program, starting with the purpose of the grants to state entities. Next slide. Thank you. The CSP SE program is a competitive grant program that enables state entities to award subgrants to eligible applicants in their state to open and prepare for the operation of new charter schools, and to replicate and expand high-quality charter schools.

The program provides financial assistance to state entities to support charter schools that serve elementary and secondary school students. Charter schools receiving funds under the CSP SE program also may serve students in early childhood education programs, and post-secondary students. State entities with a state statute specifically authorizing the establishment of charter schools are eligible to apply for the CSP SE grant program.

Under Section 4303(e)(1) of ESEA, no State entity may receive a grant under this program for use in a State in which a State entity is currently using a State grant receiving funding under this program. Entities that can receive grant funds include a state education agency, a state charter school board, a governor of a state, or a state charter school support organization.

Note that no applicant may receive a new grant to conduct the same activities that are approved under an existing active grant. Under Section 4303(e)(1) of ESEA, no State may receive a grant under this competition for use in a State in which a State entity is currently using a CSP State entity grant.

State education entities are state entities located in states in which a state entity has a current CSP grant that is not in its final budget period, or is in its final budget period but the grantee plans to request a one-time no-cost extension in accordance with 34 CFR 75.261 and 2 CFR 200.300(e)(2), i.e. Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington are ineligible to apply for a CSP grant under this competition.

State entities located in states where an entity has a current CSP grant that is operating under a no-cost extension, i.e., Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin, or that is not operating under a no-cost extension, but is in its final budget period and has notified the department that it does not intend to request a no-cost extension, Idaho, however, are eligible to apply for a CSP grant under this competition.

The department will accept applications from current state entity grantees located in these states, as well as from state entities located in these states that do not have a current CSP entity grant. As stated earlier, state entities with a state statute specifically authorizing the establishment of charter schools that do

not have current CSP grants in their final budget year, or operating under an NCE are eligible to apply for a CSP grant program.

If multiple state entities in a state submit applications that receive high enough scores to be recommended for funding under this competition, only the highest scoring applicants among such state entities would be funded. Once you determine that your state entity is eligible, you will need to discuss your pipeline.

It is important to think about who is eligible for a subgrant. An eligible applicant is a developer that has applied to an authorizing public chartering agency to operate a charter school, and has provided adequate and timely notice to that authority. A developer is an individual or group of individuals, including a public or private nonprofit organization, which may include teachers, administrators, and other staff members, parents, or other members of the local community in which the charter school project will be carried out.

We'll now pause for questions, and take questions regarding SE State Entity grant eligibility or subgrant eligibility. I'll give you a moment to type them into the Q&A.

As a reminder, questions may be submitted via the Q&A, but we may not be able to address all questions during this webinar. I'll give you a few minutes, and we'll watch for those questions. We have a few questions that have come through, and I'll go ahead and I'll address those questions. We have a question, "Is this grant available for people with a 501(c)(3), that would like to start a charter school?"

This grant is available for eligible entities listed on slide 15 of this deck, and only for state entities. Another question that's come through... And I'm sorry, I'm getting a little bit of feedback, so I'm going to make sure that I'm in a muted room. My apologies.

We have a question, "Can schools and states that don't have an open CSP grant apply independently for this opportunity?" No, developers and states that do not have an active SE grant may be eligible to apply for other grant funds under another grant program. You may possibly select those, or may possibly research the developer program. Okay, so someone has a question regarding eligibility.

We're going to have to follow up on some of these again. Regarding New York, they do have a current state eligibility, they do have a current ESEA grant, so New York is ineligible. Okay, and in the interest of time, we're going to go ahead and move on, and we will follow up on these questions and make sure we address them in the next webinar, or get them out in Q&As.

All right, we're going to move on. We will now discuss the various components of your application, to help you prepare for your submission. The application, and all support materials for the CSP SE grant can be found on the first link in Grants.gov on this slide.

Your grant must be submitted through Grants.gov. The application package and support materials can also be found on the CSP website. Please check the website often for updates, as following this webinar the recording will be posted, and all subsequent webinars will be available on the CSP competition website. Please ensure you're aware of all of the package components for your SE application, including the required forms, the narrative, and all six of the appendices.

It is highly important that you submit a complete application. Next slide. Your application will not be considered complete without both the standard forms listed on this slide, and the assurances and certifications required. These forms can be located at the link on this slide.

In the following slides, we will discuss guidance regarding most of these forms. Pictured on this slide is the SF 424. Under question one, you will select Application. Under two, you will select New.

You are also required to include the legal name of your organization, your tax identification information, or tax identification number, and your unique entity identifying number, or UEI, and your address. In 8C, as a reminder, the UEI is now the primary means of identifying entities registered for the federal awards government-wide in the System for Awards Management, or SAM.

If your entity is already registered in SAM, it has an identified UEI. While the UEI is assigned and viewable within SAM, Grants.gov users can also find it listed under their organizational profile in Grants.gov. For 16A through B, provide your congressional district. Enter the district the applicant organization is located in, and the district in which the activities will occur.

In 17A through B, list the project's start date and end dates. The start date will be October 1, 2023. This grant can be for up to five years, so the end date should reflect how many years are requested. Under 19, the program is subject to executive order. Next slide.

Section A of the 524 is required. Complete all the years for which funds are requested. The CSP SE grant is limited to five years. The funds requested in your ED 524 should match the detailed narrative budget required. Further details will be provided in another segment of this webinar. Please note that the amount awarded will be based on the 524, not the budget narrative, if they are not in alignment.

If you have an approved indirect cost rate, provide the details in the budget narrative, as well as in the bottom of the form. Make sure to include your agreement as an attachment. The indirect costs will be calculated as part of the administrative 3% maximum. Construction is not an allowable cost.

Subgrants should be put in the Other category. All costs that are not subgrants will be either part of the 7% technical assistance, or the 3% administrative costs. Section B of the ED 524 should only be completed if you are making a matching commitment. If you do not request to make a matching funding commitment, these funds will be reported on the same level of accountability as federal funding.

An additional webinar will be providing technical assistance on the budget for your application. In Section 424...or 427 of the General Education Provision Act, GEPA, requires that an applicant for federal funds to include a description of the steps they will take to ensure equitable access to and participation in the grant project.

To meet this requirement, applicants must include a statement that does two things, identifies at least one barrier that prevents someone from participating in grant activities, and two, explains what can be done to overcome that barrier. Please ensure there are clear barriers and solutions. This is not a request for a general non-discrimination statement.

I will now transition to Sareeta, who will cover the application narrative.

- [Sareeta] Thank you, Jill. I will continue by discussing the application narrative, as Jill mentioned. There are three distinct components to the

application narrative, the abstract narrative, the budget narrative, and the project narrative. The project narrative is where applicants discuss the competitive preference priorities, which are optional, the selection criteria, and the application requirements.

On the next few slides, I will go into detail on what should be addressed in each component. The abstract narrative should provide an overview of the proposed grant project. It should include basic information, like the name and address of the organization, the name, phone number, and email address of the contact person for the project, and the project title, if applicable.

Additionally, the abstract narrative should provide information on the goals, expected outcomes, and contributions for research, policy, practice, etc., of the proposed grant project. This abstract should not exceed one page, and should use language that can be easily understood by a range of audiences.

The budget narrative is where applicants lay out and provide a justification for the funds they are requesting. The budget narrative is aligned to the ED 524 budget worksheet that my colleague just spoke about. It should provide an itemized breakdown of all budget items by project year for each budget category in Section A of the ED 524 form.

We have included in this slide some budget resources to support applicants in developing their budget. There is a link to 2 CFR Part 200, the Uniform Guidance and Cost Principles, key sections of the NIA that relate to funding restrictions, and the uses of funds under this grant program are noted.

And a separate pre-recorded pre-application webinar will be posted to our website that's dedicated to developing budgets. Note that this is not a construction grant, as has been previously noted. I also want to reiterate that CSP SE grants are for projects up to five years. The ED 524 form, and this accompanying budget narrative should not include proposals that exceed five years.

Next slide, please. There are some important funding restrictions to be aware of as you prepare an application. First, this is a pass-through grant program. CSP SE grantees must award subgrants to eligible applicants to enable eligible applicants to open and prepare for the operation of new charter schools, open and prepare for the operation of replicated high-quality charter schools, or expand high-quality charter schools.

Second, grant projects must provide technical assistance to eligible applicants and authorized public chartering agencies in carrying out the activities I just described, and work with authorized public chartering agencies in the state to improve authorizing quality. This includes developing capacity for and conducting fiscal oversight, and auditing of charter schools.

As Adrienne mentioned in the beginning, it's really important as you think through this to really think about your organization's capacity, and we'll come back to that later in this webinar. Next slide, please. In addition, state entities receiving a grant under this grant program must use no less than 90% of grant funds to award subgrants to eligible applicants for activities related to opening and preparing for the operation of new charter schools, to replicate or expand high-quality charter schools.

Reserve not less than 7% of funds to provide technical assistance to eligible applicants and authorized public chartering agencies. And lastly, reserve not more than 3% of funds for administrative costs. A state entity may use a grant received under this program to carry out technical assistance activities authorized under this program directly or through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements.

Any grant for technical assistance would be part of the technical assistance fund. Next slide, please. As noted previously, technical assistance is a key component of this grant program. That 7% set aside of grant funds should be used to provide technical assistance to eligible applicants and authorized public chartering agencies in opening and preparing for the operation of new charter schools, to replicate or expand high-quality charter schools, and improving authorizing quality, including developing capacity for and conducting fiscal oversight and auditing of charter schools.

As applicants plan the budgets for their grant projects, a couple of common questions arise around budgeting for technical assistance. The first, what if the 7% set aside is not enough to cover our technical assistance plan for subgrants of grantee applicants and authorizers throughout the state?

One flexibility that grantees have is to use administrative funds to support technical assistance activities. The department interprets section 4303(c)(1) of the ESEA to mean that grantees must use at least 7% of technical assistance,

and the 3% of funds reserved for administrative costs may also be included for technical assistance, if additional technical assistance funds are desired.

Another common question is, what if we initially calculate the 7% set-aside based on the total amount of our initial grant award, but years later it's clear that we will not be able to expend all the funds initially obligated? CSP understands that the context in which a grantee is operating may change, state laws change, charter moratoriums happen, etc.

Gathering data, and having a strong understanding of the charter school landscape in your state is foundational to being able to appropriately plan the budget. It's very helpful to begin with an understanding of the number of subgrants you plan to award, and build out the technical assistance budget activities from there. With this in mind, grantees may calculate the technical assistance costs based on the total grant award amount obligated by the department at the beginning of the grant period, as long as the grantee can demonstrate that the technical assistance costs claimed are necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the grant in accordance with the cost principles of the Uniform Guidance.

If things change, and they sometimes do, grantees can provide a justification to the department on why the set-aside percentages were off, and it will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Grantees have often asked about spending more in technical assistance in earlier years than in later years.

With this guidance in mind, and the flexibility on how a grantee budgets for technical assistance activities, a grantee may spend more or less than the 7% in any given project year, but at the end of the grant's performance period, grantees must be able to clearly demonstrate that the technical assistance costs claimed are necessary, reasonable, and allocable to the grant project.

Next slide, please. As applicants prepare budgets, keep in mind that subgrants should support activities related to the opening and preparing for the operation of new charter schools, or replicating or expanding high-quality charter schools. This can include the costs and activities noted here.

For time's sake, I'm not going to go through each one of these activities, but this is a great reference point on examples of activities. Next slide, please. There are a few additional items of note as applicants plan their budget. One, the subgrantee maximum award is now \$2 million, as Adrienne mentioned in the

beginning. An eligible subgrant applicant may use not more than 18 months for planning and program design.

Planning funds can be used, for example, for hiring and compensating teachers and school leaders, and specialized instructional support personnel, providing training and professional development to staff, other critical activities that need to occur in the opening. In your narrative, you should clearly delineate not only the costs under each cost category, but whether they are related to administrative costs, technical assistance, or subgrants.

And finally, clearly delineate the number of subgrants you are budgeting for. Please also double check your numbers and percentage maximum. We would hate to reduce a budget based on a calculation error. Next slide, please.

An eligible applicant may not receive more than one subgrant under this program for each individual charter school for a five-year period. Unless the eligible applicant demonstrates to the state entity that such individual charter school has at least three years of improved educational results for students enrolled in such charter school, with respect to elements described in the definition of a high-quality charter school.

So, this is something you will want to keep in mind as you are planning the number of subgrant awards. A charter school that previously received CSP funding for planning or initial implementation under 5202(c)(2) of ESEA as amended by NCLB, or for the replication or expansion of high-quality charter schools under one of the department's appropriation acts is not eligible to receive funds from a state entity under this program for the same or substantially similar purpose.

However, a charter school may be eligible to receive funds to expand if the school is a high-quality charter school. Similarly, a charter school that receives funds from a state entity is ineligible to receive funds for the same or substantially similar purpose under the developer or CMO grant program.

Next slide, please. Applicants must ensure that all costs included in the proposed budget are reasonable and necessary. In light of the goals and objectives of the proposed project, any cost determined to be unreasonable or unnecessary will be removed from the final budget.

The budget should include only costs that are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and necessary. In the budget narrative attachment, provide an itemized budget narrative by project year for each budget category, in addition to a justification for the costs included. Applicants approved for funding under this competition will be required to participate in all technical assistance offerings, to include the project director's meeting, and other onsite gatherings sponsored by the department and its contracted technical assistance providers and partners throughout the life of the grant.

Applicants are encouraged to include the cost of attending these meetings in their proposed budget. If included, it is an administrative expense. Additionally, please be clear about how the cost of attending meetings are calculated in your budget narrative. Next slide, please. If you would like additional support in developing your budget and budget narrative, we will make the pre-recorded webinar, *Developing a Budget That Aligns With and Supports Your Proposed Project*, available on our competition webpage.

We're going to pause a moment for you to put some questions into the Zoom Q&A, and we'll return in just a moment to discuss. Thank you. All right, so we'll pause to get some questions in. I do want to start by acknowledging that a lot of questions have come in, and we've been trying to gather them, and are working on compiling them.

It's become very apparent we will not be able to answer all of them today, but as we've mentioned, we will have that follow-up Office Hours webinar I believe on May 4th, that is devoted entirely to getting questions answered. So, as we've mentioned previously, you can send email questions into our competition email, and we

We are receiving today to be addressed. So we can put them together to address in that follow-up as well, and there will be a question-and-answer period there. So with that, I do want to kind of highlight some things that have come in that we want to make sure we clarify right away. So, there was a question around the funding calculations. So, we do have about \$173 million total available, we do want to spend all of that.

So, those are estimates that we have based on if you look at those numbers, but for within funding range up to that amount available, because we don't want any funds to revert in a manner that would not support the program.

The second kind of broad question or thing I want to address, there were some questions around eligibility coming in. So, some key things to understand about eligibility, so this is the State Entities program, and so I believe it was slide 15 talked about the different entities.

And you will, by the way, have access. These slides will be posted to our competition webpage, so you will be able to access them after the webinar. But there it talks about the different kinds of entities that are eligible under this competition, so they are state entities, so they are not...this competition is not for individual schools.

Our CMO and developer competition, or program, excuse me, are those that do provide funding for individual schools. Also, you saw that map that talked about the different states that are ineligible. So under ESEA, the law prohibits a state from having more than one active SE grant at a time, and so what that means is that there are states that do have existing grants, existing active grants, that we anticipate requesting a first no-cost extension, which they're entitled to, and so that's why there are those states that are not eligible.

So, those are states that already have grants, active grants under the SE program. And so, those other states that have charter laws, but do not have active SE grants are those who are eligible in this competition. Finally, I want to quickly just address a question about the subgrants, and the length of time for subgrants.

So, there was a question that mentioned that the project time is five years, and that does include subgrants, you also have up to five years. So someone mentioned if they were to award a subgrant in year four, what does that mean? And so, essentially what that means is that that subgrant does have...it can have up to five years. And so the way this program works, under the SE program, a state entity has their five years, but once that time, once their time is up, and they can have a first no-cost extension, after that timeframe though, another entity or that same entity may apply in the competition.

And they can incorporate, and we'll mention waivers a little bit later in the webinar, in this next section, but they could incorporate a waiver into their application, for example, to continue supporting existing subgrants. And, so those existing subgrants can continue getting support from CSP funds. It could

be either under that same entity in a new, if they were awarded a new grant, or it could be under a new entity in that state, if they were awarded the SE grant.

But those subgrants can, there is an opportunity for them to continue. So with that, again, please continue to submit questions. We will do our best to get to them, but we do want to hold to the time frame of this webinar, but there will be additional opportunities. So we'll keep moving at this stage, but thank you so much for your patience, and thank you for the great questions.

All right, we'll continue. So next, I will get into the nuts and bolts of the SE State Entity Grant NIA, and talk about the various components of your application. next slide, please. The project narrative is where the applicants address the competitive preference priorities, selection criteria, and application requirements.

To facilitate the review of the application, please organize your project narrative in the following order, and include a table of contents. The project narrative, in the order we all noted here, the competitive priorities, the selection criteria, and application requirements. The project narrative should be limited to 60 pages. This page limit does not include any attachments or supporting documents, so those are not counted against the 60 pages.

Next slide, please. Applicants must be clear on which priority they are addressing. The FY 23 State Entity Grant Competition includes one absolute priority, five competitive preference priorities, and one invitational priority. Next slide.

The absolute priority, which is best practices for charter school authorizers, is a statutory priority that we're operationalizing in this year's competition as an absolute priority. This means that all applicants must address this priority. Next slide, please. I'm going to go through the competitive preference priorities, although I'm not going to read all the details at this time.

You'll see them in the NIA, and they'll be in the slide deck as well. Preference priorities come from statutes, and CSP has decided to operationalize them as competitive preference priorities. So, competitive preference priority number one, or CPP1, is at least one authorized public chartering agency other than the local educational agency, or an appeals process.

Next slide. CPP2 is equitable financing. Next slide. CPP3 is best practices to improve struggling schools and LEAs. CPP4 is charter school facilities.

CPP5 is serving at-risk students. The invitational priority is collaborations between charter schools and traditional public schools or districts that benefit students and families across schools. I'm not going to read the full priority at this time, but you can find it again here in the next few slides, and of course in the NIA.

The invitational priority is aligned with the CMO and developer priority around collaboration between charter schools and traditional public schools or districts, in the Notice of Final Priorities published July 6, 2022. For an invitational priority, no additional points are awarded. The priority is proposed to learn more from the field about a topic that the Secretary and the department are interested in learning.

It sheds light on the potential for youth and future competition. In last year's FY 22 CSP State Entity Competition, at least half of applicants addressed this invitational priority, and most discussed replicating and/or building on collaborations between charter schools and traditional public schools that were already occurring in the state.

We in CSP look forward to seeing how this work materializes. So, next slide, we'll see this is the language here of the invitational priority, in the next two slides. Another slide, please, and we'll move forward to selection criteria. So, the selection criteria are what peer reviewers will score. This is how your application will be evaluated.

We do want to be clear that this is what is scored. Additional things, such as a needs analysis or things like that are not scored elements, and do not impact funding on this grant competition. For each criteria, we use factors from statute and EDGAR, and one factor under the project design from the NFP.

Please refer to... Sorry, next slide, please. Please refer to the application package instructions to review the scoring rubric that will be provided to peer reviewers.

It describes what a fully developed answer would look like, as well as a well-developed, adequately developed, and poorly developed response would look like. It can be found beginning on page 51 of the application package. Next

slide. Please refer to the application package instructions for the application requirements crosswalk. We have directed applicants to respond to some requirements in the responses to the criteria.

For requirements not listed to be included in the project narrative, please include a standalone attachment responding to requirements, noting which requirement is being responded to directly at the end of the project narrative. The application requirements include a description of the program, the assurances, and request information about any waivers that are proposed.

An example of past waivers that applicants have included is a waiver to allow subgrantees to apply for a second subaward under a new SE grantee, to continue activities begun under a previous SE grantee in the state. And this, you can see, relates to what that question I just addressed earlier was about.

So, that's an example of a type of waiver that could be included in your application. Please do note that requesting a waiver in your application does not mean that that waiver will be approved, however. Next slide, please. There are some specific terms used throughout the NIA and the application package. Some key terms are noted here, please see the NIA for a full list of terms and definitions.

Next slide. Throughout the grant project, CSP State Entity grantees will report on their performance measures. All grantees also report on the Government Performance and Results Act, or GPRA performance measures established by the Secretary. They are the number of charter schools in operation around the nation, and the percentage of 4th and 8th grade charter school students who are achieving at or above the proficient level on state assessments in mathematics and reading language arts.

The Secretary's also established a third measure for CSP, the federal cost per student in implementing a successful school, defined as a school in operation for three or more consecutive years. Next slide. In addition to the GPRA measures, applicants must...specific performance measures and performance targets consistent with the objective of the proposed project.

And under 34 CFR 75.110(b) and (c), the applicants must provide performance measures, baseline data for. Next slide. As noted earlier, throughout the grant project, CSP State Entity grantees must report on their performance measures in their annual performance report.

If you will be unable to report on a measure annually, it should not be identified as a project-specific performance measure. For additional support in developing effective performance measures, applicants are encouraged to review information provided by the Department's Regional Educational Laboratories, and the pre-application webinar on logic models and SMART performance measures that will be posted to our website.

With that, I'll transition to my colleague, Nora, to get started with other attachments.

- [Nora] Thank you so much, Sareeta. In this section, I'll dive into the other attachments that are part of the application package. Next slide, please. The Other Attachments section is for all appendices materials. Any attachments must be in PDF or Microsoft Word format.

Each file should be labeled with the appendix name, and then uploaded to the Other Attachments form. The Other Attachments form can support up to 10 attachments. Therefore, you can merge appendices into one document as needed. As a tip, you should avoid special characters in file names because they are not properly processed by Grants.gov when an application is uploaded.

Do not use colons or backslashes when naming documents. For more information on each of these requirements, see the application package instructions for additional guidance. Next slide, please. There are six other attachments that are included as part of the application. Substantive project-related details should be included in the Project Narrative and Budget Narrative Form sections.

The Other Attachment sections are listed on this slide. The Assurances, Appendix A, can be found as a sheet to be signed in the Application Package Instructions. They include assurances from statute and the NIA that were discussed earlier. Not all appendices may be relevant for each applicant. Next, I'll discuss some additional notes to consider for your application package.

Under an open license, the public is given permission to access, reproduce, publicly perform, publicly display and distribute the copyrightable work. To prepare derivative works, as defined in the Copyright Act 17 U.S.C. 101, and to reproduce, publicly perform and publicly display and distribute those derivative works, and to otherwise use the copyrightable work created in whole or in part

with competitive grant funds provided by the department, provided that in all such instances, attribution is given to the copyright holder.

Please note, grantees may use any open licenses that comply with the rule, see additional conditions in the actual rule, including a license that limits use to non-commercial purposes. Copyrightable grant deliverables, or deliverables, are final versions of work developed to carry out the purpose of the grant, as specified in the grant announcement, namely the Notice Inviting Applications, or the application package.

The open licensing requirement will apply to both the deliverables themselves, and to any final version of program support materials necessary to use the deliverables. The rule does not apply to pre-existing works. When pre-existing works are modified under grant funding, the rule only applies to the modifications. A grantee or subgrantee that is awarded competitive grant funds must have a plan to disseminate the openly licensed copyrightable works.

In some limited cases, exceptions to the rule may be granted by the department. However, such exceptions will not be considered until after grant awards are made, and applicants must not assume that an exception would be granted. This slide lists the applicable regulations and statute that provide authority for the actions.

You will see these citations throughout the NIA, and they are compiled here for ease of reference. If your application is successful, we will notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators, and send you a Grant Award Notification, or GAN. We may also notify you informally as well.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we will notify you via USPS mail. I'll now pause briefly to take questions and answers, if you'd like to type those in, and we'll be back in just a moment to answer some of those questions. All right, thank you for your patience.

We have had a couple questions come in that we'll answer here now, and then in the interest of time, we will move on. And there will, again, be the recorded webinar with Office Hour questions that you can attend as well, and submit questions to, if your question isn't answered here today. So, one question we received is about the maximum award, and the amount of time per schools.

Namely, "Is the \$2 million the maximum award per school over the full five-year term, or is it \$2 million per year, for a total of \$10 million?" The answer is it is \$2 million maximum per school for the five-year term. So, \$2 million max over the life of the subgrant to a school.

Another question we received was asking if all of the required TA will be held in D.C. And the answer is that the required TA may be provided across a variety of platforms and formats. This could be webinars, conference calls, communities of practice, and that is in addition to a Project Director's meeting, which will be held in D.C.

So, it will be a mix of formats, including an in-person Project Director's meeting in D.C. Thank you for your questions, and in the interest of time, we will move on to the next section here.

Next slide, please. And we'll now talk about how to submit your application. All applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov, unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement.

Because of the requirement of using Grants.gov, I will walk you through some instructions about using this platform for your electronic submission. As a reminder, again, the deadline to submit an application is June 5, 2023, at 11:59:59pm Eastern.

This deadline is enforced via the electronic Grants.gov system, which is why we are giving the time here down to the second. Because the time has a system cutoff if you are late, we again strongly encourage you to submit an application early, before you get anywhere close to that deadline. You can resubmit your application package prior to the deadline, if you need to update your application.

So for example, if you are ready to submit and you do so on June 1st, and then realize you need to make an update, you can resubmit again on June 2nd if you need to. As long as you are before that June 5th, 11:59:59pm Eastern deadline, you can resubmit if needed.

As another tip, as you are working on your submission, the Grants.gov help desk is not available on weekends. So, yet another reason why we encourage you to apply early is the help desk will not be available to help if you are working on your application submission on weekends. Next slide, please.

Please ensure that only U.S. Department of Education-approved files are attached to your application package. You can see the notice and application package instructions for detailed descriptions of these files, which should be read-only, non-modifiable PDF files. Also, do not upload any password-protected files to your application.

Lengthy file names could result in difficulties in opening and processing your application. We recommend your file names be less than 50 characters, and free of any special characters. Next slide, please. So, this slide shows you what it looks like when you navigate to Grants.gov. This is an external application system that's used throughout the federal government.

In order to submit an application on Grants.gov, you have to undergo a registration process. First, you need to register with SAM to obtain a unique entity identifier, or UEI. Next, you will set up an authorized organization representative, or AOR profile.

Then, you will need to be authorized as an AOR by your organization's eBiz point of contact. Then, you will be able to track your AOR status. As an important reminder, the registration process for Grants.gov that's outlined on the previous slide can take up to four weeks to complete, so start that process now.

You must be registered on Grants.gov to submit an application. However, you can search grant opportunities, or download the application package instructions without a registration. Here are a few additional tips to consider to help you use Grants.gov.

For detailed instructions, please review the Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants section in the application package. An applicant must download the correct version of Adobe in order to read any Grants.gov application packages. In Adobe, applicants must move all mandatory forms from left to right in order to open each form.

Once the form is on the right side, the applicant can complete and save each form. While in process, the application package is saved offline. Once you download the application, multiple people can work on it, and you can work offline. Make sure to save often.

Include both forms and attachments in your application, and submit all documents as PDF files. Once an application is complete, the Save and Submit button becomes active. Press the final Save and Submit button before final submission of the application. Here are ways to tell if your application submission in Grants.gov was successful or unsuccessful.

With a successful submission, the applicant should receive a confirmation email, with a time and date stamp and a signed tracking number from Grants.gov, a validation email from Grants.gov, this means the application is ready for department pickup, and the email with your assigned PR award number, which will be in the format of S28223-, and then four additional digits.

Here are signs that the submission was not successful, and these include not receiving a confirmation email with a date and time stamp from Grants.gov, if the application is received after the deadline of 11:59:59pm Eastern on June 5th, or validation is not successful, and you receive an error email.

The email may list the error, or the applicant can use their tracking number to find the submission error. Next slide, please. This will go into some steps about how to track your submission to check its status of being successful or unsuccessful. The screenshot on the right shows the navigation on Grants.gov, on where to track your application, and you'll use the Track My Application link.

Once you've navigated there to verify your submission was on time and validated successfully, the date time received should be earlier than 11:59:59pm Eastern on June 5, 2023. The application status should be validated. Do not rely solely on an email to confirm whether your application has been received on time and validated successfully.

You should additionally take the steps outlined here to track your application package, and confirm its status on Grants.gov. For a few additional tips for your application submission, you should save a copy of your application for your records.

Original signatures on forms may be requested by the department at a later day and time. Applications cannot be in unsubmitted status. Applicants may resubmit an application at any point before the closing deadline. The department will review the most recent submission that was submitted before the closing date and time. So again, if you resubmit, or have multiple

applications in, the one that is the most recent submission, or closest to the deadline, is the one that will be reviewed.

If you experience problems submitting your application via Grants.gov, reach out to the support desk at the number provided on this slide. Make sure to keep a record of the case support number. If you have technical issues, and these documented technical issues cause you to submit an application after the deadline, contact the person listed in the notice, and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov support case number.

We will accept your explanation and grant a one-day extension if we can confirm that a technical problem did occur with your Grants.gov submission in the system, and that the problem affected your ability to submit by the application deadline. The department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

Any extensions may be granted only due to the unavailability of or technical problems with the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you fail to fully register to submit your applications in Grants.gov before the application deadline, or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

Next, we'll talk briefly about what happens after the application has been submitted, and what the review process looks like. The application review process follows four broad stages. First is eligibility review.

Before making awards, the department will screen applications submitted in accordance with the requirements in the notice to determine whether applicants have met eligibility and other requirements. The screening process may additionally occur at various stages in the review process. Applicants that are determined to be ineligible will not receive a grant, regardless of peer reviewer scores or comments.

Next is the peer review stage. During this stage, applications are evaluated by a three-person, non-federal panel. Each reviewer individually reads, evaluates, and scores their assigned applications based on the selection criteria listed in the notice. The panel is given time to discuss the applications, as well as their respective scores and comments.

The three reviewer scores are then averaged to create an overall application score. After the peer review, the rank order is created. The rank order list is prepared based on the overall application scores. The department uses this list to estimate how many applications will be funded based on rank order scores.

Finally, prior to making final awards, the department's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, in consultation with the Office of General Counsel, and other departmental offices as appropriate, will work together to develop funding recommendations, and identify any special terms and conditions on the grant that may be needed.

Following the vetting of the highest rated applications, the competition manager will prepare and submit a funding slate to the Secretary for review and approval. As some final important reminders for applicants, again, here are some key dates as you plan your process.

First, the federal government has transitioned away from the DUNS number, and you will need to register for a unique entity identifier via SAM, as was discussed earlier. There is no cost associated with applying for or maintaining a UEI. The process for receiving a UEI is intended to be completed by the entity itself, and does not require an outside vendor for this process.

Here again is listed the June 5th application deadline, and as mentioned earlier in the webinar, in addition to this one, there will be two other pre-recorded pre-award webinars that can support you in writing a high-quality application. One focuses on developing a budget that aligns with your application, and the other focuses on creating logic models and SMART performance measures.

These webinars will be available on the department's competition website linked on this slide. And with that, I will transition to my colleague, Sareeta.

- Thank you, Nora. So, this is the final section of our pre-application webinar today, and it's assessing your readiness for an SE grant. Next slide, please. You have heard about the various elements of the application itself, as well as the requirements of the SE grant program throughout today's webinar.

This is a good moment to reflect on some key questions to ensure that you and your organization are ready to successfully implement that CSP State Entity Grant project. Let's step through each one. First, is your grant organization prepared? Do you have the capacity to create the organizational and financial

infrastructures, systems, and processes required to manage a large federal grant like the SE grant?

Staff with an understanding of what kinds of accounts need to be set up for the grant, etc. Additionally, because this is a pass-through grant program, it's particularly critical that applicants have the infrastructure to not only be a federal grantee, but also a sub-grantor. Next question, do you know how to create specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound grant goals?

As we discussed previously, applicants will propose performance measures, and these goals should be SMART in order to effectively execute the grant project, and meaningfully report on them annually. Is your organization prepared to be fully responsible for managing the grant, and not rely on subcontractors for its management and execution? While seeking the support of contractors for a particular aspect of the grant, for example providing technical assistance to the charter authorizer is appropriate, it's vital that the CSP grantee takes the lead on managing the grant, including managing the subgrant.

Do your organization's stakeholders buy in to your grant application, and are you prepared to work together to achieve grant goals and activities? I do not think that we can overstate the importance of looking at data, and being well-versed in the charter landscape in your state.

A successful CSP SE grant project is not done in isolation. It involves collaboration among the state entity grantees, the charter school authorizers, charter school leaders, and the community. Working with your charter school community as you prepare the application, and ensuring that your project addresses the needs of the community is critical.

It's also always exciting and thoughtful...it's always exciting for us to see thoughtful collaborations in the grant application proposals, that bring different stakeholders together to complete the grant project. Is your organization prepared to begin implementing grant activities on day one of the grant? This very much relates to the first question on the slide.

It's important to make sure that you are ready to begin implementing your grant project right away, rather than planning to build capacity over the course of the grant. Does your organization have the capacity to meet the technical assistance needs of authorizers across the state? There are different types of state entities eligible for this grant. Depending on your.

How you will work with authorizers and provide technical assistance to promote improved offerings across your state. With that, so if you have things you'd like to throw into the chat, please do. I'll pause a moment here, and come back in just a minute. All right, so we will wrap up.

There are a couple questions that we wanted to quickly address. One was around the question about where to submit additional attachments, I believe, does it fall under Appendix F, and the Other Narrative attachments? And yes, that's where it would fall. Another was whether or not applicants would have an opportunity to resubmit a PDF or a document that couldn't be opened.

So no, if a peer reviewer cannot access any portion of the application, it will not be reviewed as part of the application, and there is no resubmission process. So with that, we'll move to the last slide, I think, here, and just kind of wrap up this webinar. So, a quick note. So when you are exiting the webinar, there will be a pop-up survey, so we do ask, please take a moment to share some feedback on today's webinar.

Also, we will be posting this webinar to our webpage. It'll take us probably about a day to get our website updated with it. I know that there were some broken links that were brought to our attention, so we'll get all that corrected, so just give us about a day to get that updated, and we will have that available for you on our website. Additionally, there will be the link to register for the Office Hours website, which will be coming up, I believe it's May 4th for that date.

And so, please do register for that website. There will also be a link there for you to submit additional questions ahead of time for that, so that we can gather up those questions, and make sure that it's a fruitful opportunity to get those questions answered. So with that, we want to say thank you so much. Again, please take a moment to take that survey that will pop up as you exit, and we look forward to amazing applications that you all are working on.

Please do reach out to our competition website, or email inbox if you have questions. Thank you.