

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Mental Health Service Professional Grant Program

(as of 4/2/2024)

#### GENERAL QUESTIONS

##### **PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM**

The purpose of the Mental Health Service Professionals grant program is to expand the pipeline of high-quality, trained providers to address the shortages of mental health service professionals in schools served by high-need LEAs. This will be done by supporting innovative partnerships to train school-based mental health service providers for employment in schools and LEAs.

##### **AWARD DATE/START DATE**

We anticipate making awards by September 30, 2024. Applicants should propose a start date of October 1, 2024 when developing their applications.

##### **AMOUNT OF AWARDS**

Awards will be made ranging from approximately \$400,000 to \$1,000,000 per-year depending on the scope of work. We have approximately \$19,000,000, THIS FISCAL YEAR, available for grants under MHSP and plan to make approximately 23 - 33 awards. The average size of the grant will be \$700,000 per-year.

The maximum an applicant can request PER YEAR is \$1,000,000.

##### **MATCHING REQUIREMENT**

The MHSP program does not have a matching requirement.

##### **HOW MUCH SHOULD/CAN I REQUEST**

The maximum an applicant can request is \$1,000,000 PER YEAR. Applicants will need to assess their program goals, objectives, and activities they are proposing to determine their costs.

##### **INDIRECT COSTS**

This program uses an unrestricted indirect cost rate. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please visit [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html).

##### **DOLLARS/CENTS**

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

##### **PLANNING YEAR**

This grant does not allow for a planning year.

##### **ARE THERE ANY STIPULATIONS REGARDING HOW THE BUDGET CAN BE ALLOCATED (E.G., PERCENTAGE TOWARDS ADMINISTRATION VS. SALARIES)?**

The Department does not have particular percentages that we would recommend/not recommend to support school-based mental health students. We encourage applicants to propose activities and a

budget that are most likely to achieve the project's goals and objectives. Peer reviewers will determine how well applicants address the Competitive Preference Priorities and selection criteria.

Determination of costs allowable under a Federal award is made in accordance with the government-wide cost principles in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards set forth in [2 CFR part 200](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/part-200) (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/part-200>).

## **ABSOLUTE PRIORITIES**

There are three absolute priorities for the 2024 MHSP program.

All applicants should address Absolute Priority 1 (increase the amount of mental health professionals).

New applicants to the MHSP program should also address Absolute Priority 2 (grantees new to the MHSP program).

Current MHSP grants should also address Absolute Priority 3 (grantees who have an active MHSP grant). Please note that current MHSP grantees that are IHEs must partner with a high-need LEA that is not currently being served.

## **MOU/MOA**

### **MOU/MOA**

The MOU/MOA MUST be signed by all parties at the time of application submission.

### **IS IT ACCEPTABLE TO SUBMIT A DRAFT OF THE MOU AND A DATE BY WHICH THE DOCUMENT WILL BE SIGNED?**

No. Application requirement (d) requires the MOU, MOA, or LOA to be signed. However, the MOU, MOA, or LOA may be subsequently updated to provide additional details as the entities involved continue to finalize the terms of the agreement.

### **SERVICE OBLIGATION**

If the applicant intends to establish a program that directly benefits an individual graduate student, such as through a stipend or tuition credit, the applicant must describe its approach to implementing a service obligation for the graduate student as a school-based mental health services provider in a high-need LEA commensurate with the level of support the graduate student receives.

## **SUBGRANTS**

### **NO SUBGRANTS**

Subgrants are not permitted, but contracts are permitted consistent with applicable procurement standards. Such procurement must follow the requirements in the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200.317 through 200.327). Grantees may make procurement purchases from or provide assistance to an entity.

### **PAYING COSTS TO PARTNERS**

The grantee will need to contract with the partner organization or pay for costs directly. Procurements must follow the requirements in the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200.317 through 200.327).

## ELIGIBILITY

### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants for this grant opportunity are high-need LEAs, SEAs on behalf of one or more high-need LEAs, and IHEs.

### CURRENT GRANTEES

Current grantees would need to propose to serve high needs LEAs that are not currently being served to be considered for funding.

### HIGH NEED LEA CAN ONLY BE SERVED ONCE

The high-need LEA may not be served by multiple awards.

From the NIA:

*Limitation on Awards:* The Department will make only one award that serves any individual LEA.

### DEFINITION OF HIGH-NEED LEA

A high-needs LEA must meet **ONE of the criteria from (a) AND criterion (b).**

*High-need local educational agency (LEA)* means an LEA—

#### **(a)**

- (1) For which at least 20 percent of the children served by the agency are children from low-income backgrounds;
- (2) That serves at least 10,000 children from low-income backgrounds;
- (3) That meets the eligibility requirements for funding under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program under section 5211(b) of the ESEA; or
- (4) That meets the eligibility requirements for funding under the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) program under section 5221(b) of the ESEA; AND—

#### **(b)**

For which there is a high student to qualified mental health services provider ratio as compared to other LEAs statewide or nationally.

### DEFINITION OF HIGH-NEED SCHOOL

*High-need school* means a school that, based on the most recent data available, **meets at least one of the following:**

- (a) The school is in the highest quartile of all schools served by an LEA ranked in descending order by percentage of students from low-income backgrounds enrolled in such schools, as determined by the LEA based on one of the following measures of poverty:
  - (1) The percentage of students aged 5 through 17 in poverty counted in the most recent census data approved by the Secretary.
  - (2) The percentage of students eligible for a free or reduced-price school lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act based on the most recently available data.
  - (3) The percentage of students in families receiving assistance under the State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act.
  - (4) The percentage of students eligible to receive medical assistance under the Medicaid program.
  - (5) A composite of two or more of the measures described in paragraphs (a)(1) through (4).

**(b) In the case of—**

(1) An elementary school, the school serves students not less than 60 percent of whom are eligible for a free or reduced-price school lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act based on the most recently available data; or

(2) Any other school that is not an elementary school, the other school serves students not less than 45 percent of whom are eligible for a free or reduced-price school lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act based on the most recently available data.

**NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Nonpublic k-12 schools are not eligible to apply for this funding opportunity. Eligible applicants for MHSP are high-need LEAs, SEAs on behalf of one or more high-need LEAs, and IHEs. High-need LEA applicants and SEA applicants on behalf of one or more high-need LEAs must propose to work in partnership with an eligible institution of higher education (eligible IHE). Eligible IHE applicants must propose to work in partnership with one or more high-need LEAs or an SEA.

**CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Are charter schools eligible under this grant?

The charter schools must be recognized as an LEA by their State Educational Agency in order to be eligible under this grant. Please keep in mind that the entity would also need to meet the definition of High-need local educational agency which means an LEA—

(a)(1) For which at least 20 percent of the children served by the agency are children from low-income backgrounds;

(2) That serves at least 10,000 children from low-income backgrounds;

(3) That meets the eligibility requirements for funding under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program under section 5211(b) of the ESEA; or

(4) That meets the eligibility requirements for funding under the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) program under section 5221(b) of the ESEA; **AND—**

(b) For which there is a high student to qualified mental health services provider ratio as compared to other LEAs statewide or nationally.

**SPECIAL ED CO-OP**

Can an IHE work with a special ed co-op as part of the grant program?

If the special ed co-op meets the definition of LEA (20 U.S.C. 7801(30)), in other words it is recognized in the State Educational Agency as an LEA then it can partner with an IHE to apply for this program. Please keep in mind that the entity would also need to meet the definition of High-need local educational agency which means an LEA—

(a)(1) For which at least 20 percent of the children served by the agency are children from low-income backgrounds;

(2) That serves at least 10,000 children from low-income backgrounds;

(3) That meets the eligibility requirements for funding under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program under section 5211(b) of the ESEA; or

(4) That meets the eligibility requirements for funding under the Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) program under section 5221(b) of the ESEA; and—

(b) For which there is a high student to qualified mental health services provider ratio as compared to other LEAs statewide or nationally.

## **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS**

The eligible applicant is the high-need LEA, SEA on behalf of one or more high-need LEAs, or IHE. The eligible applicant is NOT the Principal Investigator.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Definitions of IHE, eligible IHE, LEA, high-need LEA, and SEA are available in the Notice Inviting Applications ( <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/03/01/2024-04356/applications-for-new-awards-mental-health-service-professional-demonstration-grant-program>), which also provides information about the priorities for this program.

## **ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS**

### **TELEHEALTH SERVICES**

Telehealth mental health services are permissible, ensuring that these services are being provided to students in high-needs LEAs.

### **CAN THESE FUNDS BE USED FOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PERSONNEL THAT WE ALREADY HAVE ON STAFF OR IT IS ONLY TO HIRE MORE STAFF?**

This type of expense is allowable. However, applicants should keep in mind that the purpose of the program is to increase the number of school-based mental health services providers in high-need LEAs. While some training could be provided to current school-based mental health staff working in high-need LEAs under Competitive Preference Priority 2, the applicant must meet Absolute Priority 1 (and either Absolute Priority 2 or 3) of the program and its application will be scored based on how well its proposed project meets the application requirements and selection criteria that are aligned with the absolute priorities. Therefore, any such training for current mental health staff should not be the primary focus of the project.

### **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS OR OTHER PROFESSIONS**

To the extent a field of study is preparing a student for a State credential as a "school-based mental health services provider" as defined in the NIA, occupational therapist can be included in this grant program:

*The term "school-based mental health services provider" includes a State-licensed or State-certified school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, or other State licensed or certified mental health professional qualified under State law to provide mental health services to children and adolescents.*

### **CAN A UNIVERSITY SUBMIT MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION FROM DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS WITH DIFFERENT DISTRICTS?**

Yes, a university can submit more than one application. State Educational Agencies and Institutions of Higher Education can apply for and administer more than one MHSP grant, as long as each application does not propose to serve the same LEAs or provide duplicative services.

### **IF AN LEA IS HIGH-NEED, BUT NOT ALL INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS ARE HIGH-NEED. WHEN WE APPLY AS A LEA, MAY WE ONLY SERVE HIGH-NEED SCHOOLS OR CAN WE INCLUDE ALL SCHOOLS IN OUR DISTRICT?**

Applicants may only propose to serve "high-need schools" as defined in the Notice Inviting Applications.

**CAN WE INCLUDE A LEA PARTNER THAT DOES NOT QUALIFY AS HIGH-NEED IF THEY HAVE A HIGH-NEED SCHOOL WHERE WE WOULD PLACE INTERNS?**

No. The Absolute Priority and Application Requirements indicate that each LEA in the partnership must meet the definition of “high-need LEA” from the Notice Inviting Applications.

**APPLICATION STRUCTURE/REQUIREMENTS**

**IS THERE A PAGE LIMIT FOR THE APPLICATION NARRATIVE?**

No. The application package suggests a narrative of up to 30 pages. However, this is not a requirement, and applicants will not be penalized for going over the suggested limit.

**SCORING**

An application should address the criteria used by peer reviewers to score submitted applications and referenced in the application package. The extent to which an application addresses that criterion is determined by the peer reviewers.

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