



TRIVIUM CONSULTING: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY BRIEF



Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Program - Early-Phase Grants
[Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) Summary

Notice of Intent to Apply Deadline (Encouraged but Not Required): May 26, 2022.

Application Deadline: July 21, 2022

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: September 21, 2022.

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Program Basics

The goal of the Department of Education's (Department's) EIR program is 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 and to rigorously evaluate such innovations. EIR is designed to generate and validate solutions to persistent education challenges and to support the expansion of those solutions to serve substantially higher numbers of students.

Early-phase grants provide funding for the development, implementation, and feasibility testing of a program, which prior research suggests has promise, for the purpose of determining whether the program can successfully improve student achievement and attainment for high-need students.

Eligible Recipients

- a. A Local Education Agency (LEA);
- b. A State Education Agency (SEA);
- c. The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)
- d. A consortium of SEAs or LEAs;

- e. A nonprofit organization; and
- f. An LEA, an SEA, the BIE, or a consortium described in clause (d), in partnership with—
 - i. A nonprofit organization;
 - ii. A business;
 - iii. An educational service agency; or
 - iv. An Institution of Higher Education (IHE).

Award Duration

- Up to 60 months (5 project years)

Award Amount

- *Estimated Award Ceiling:* \$4,000,000.
- *Estimated Available Funds for the program:* \$159,400,000.

Matching Requirement

- Recipients must provide, from Federal, State, local, or private sources an amount equal to 10 percent of funds provided under the grant to carry out activities supported by the grant.
- These funds may be provided in cash or through in-kind contributions.
- Grantees must include a budget showing their matching contributions to the budget amount of EIR grant funds and must provide evidence of their matching contributions for the first year of the grant in their grant applications.
- The matching requirement may be waived on a case-by-case basis, upon a showing of exceptional circumstances, such as:
 - (i) The difficulty of raising matching funds for a program to serve a rural area;
 - (ii) The difficulty of raising matching funds in areas with a concentration of LEAs or schools with a high percentage of students aged 5 through 17 who are:
 - (A) In poverty, as counted in the most recent census data, or;
 - (B) Eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch.

Absolute Priorities: Rationale Requirement and 3 Funding Categories

- The program has four Absolute Priorities.
- Early-phase Grants *must* address the first of these priorities (Demonstrates a Rationale), *as well as one of the other three* each of which constitute their own funding categories (“General,” “Promoting Equity...”, and “Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs”).

The Absolute Priorities are

1. *Demonstrates a Rationale:*
 - a. Early-phase applicants must submit prior evidence of effectiveness that “demonstrates a rationale.”
 - b. This means that a key project component included in the project’s logic model is informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is

- likely to improve relevant outcomes.
2. *Field-Initiated Innovations –General*. This is the first of three funding categories. Activities include:
 - a. Projects that align with the general purpose of the EIR program: To create and take to scale entrepreneurial, evidence-based, field-initiated innovations to improve student achievement and attainment.
 3. *Field-Initiated Innovations—Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities*. This is the second of three funding categories. Activities include:
 - a. Innovations to improve student achievement and attainment in the science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) education field, by improving and expanding STEM learning and engagement.
 - b. Expanding opportunities in computer science for underrepresented students, such as students of color, girls, English learners, students with disabilities, youth from rural communities, and youth from families living at or below the poverty line,
 4. *Field-Initiated Innovations—Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs*. This is the third of three funding categories. Activities include:
 - a. Promoting high-quality social and emotional learning projects.
 - b. Providing support for students’ social and emotional needs,
 - i. to benefit student wellbeing, and
 - ii. to support their academic success.

Selection Criteria

An application may earn up to a total of 100 points based on the following factors. Descriptions of the activities constituting these factors are provided.

A. Significance (20 points).

1. The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies

B. Quality of the Project Design (30 points).

1. The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. (10 points)
2. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (5 points)
3. The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs. (15 points)

C. Quality of Project Personnel (10 points).

1. The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.
2. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

D. Quality of the Management Plan (10 points).

1. Adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

E. Quality of the Project Evaluation (30 points).

1. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will, if well implemented, produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards with or without reservations as described in the What Works Clearinghouse Handbook. (20 points)
2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (5 points)
3. The extent to which the evaluation plan clearly articulates the key project components, mediators, and outcomes, as well as a measurable threshold for acceptable implementation. (5 points)

Competitive Preference Priorities:

- These are not required but are strongly encouraged.
- If an applicant chooses to address one or both competitive preference priorities, the applicant must explicitly identify, in the project narrative section of the application, the response to the competitive preference priorities it chooses to address.
- Up to 6 additional points may be awarded depending on how well the following priorities are addressed.

1. Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities (3 points). Projects responding to this competitive preference priority must

- Be designed to promote educational equity and adequacy in resources and opportunity for underserved students in middle school or high school.
- Examine the sources of inequity and inadequacy and implement responses
- Include rigorous, engaging, and well-rounded (e.g., that include music and the arts) approaches to learning that are inclusive with regard to race, ethnicity, culture, language, and disability status and prepare students for college, career, and civic life.
- Include one or more of the following:
 - a. Student-centered learning models that may leverage technology to address learner variability and provide high-quality learning content, applications, or tools.
 - b. Middle school courses or projects that prepare students to participate in advanced coursework in high school.
 - c. Advanced courses and programs, including dual enrollment and early college programs.
 - d. Project-based and experiential learning, including service and work-based learning.
 - e. High-quality career and technical education courses, pathways, and industry-recognized credentials that are integrated into the curriculum.

2. Addressing the Impact of COVID–19 on Students, Educators, and Faculty (3 points).

Projects responding to this competitive preference priority must be designed to address the impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic, including impacts that extend beyond the duration of the pandemic itself, on the students most impacted by the pandemic, with a focus on underserved students and the educators who serve them.

This must be done through the following activities:

- a. Conducting community asset mapping and needs assessments.
 - i. This may include an assessment of the extent to which students, including subgroups of students, have become disengaged from learning, including students not participating in in-person or remote instruction, and specific strategies for reengaging and supporting students and their families.
- b. Using evidence-based instructional approaches and supports to accelerate learning for students in ways that ensure all students have the opportunity to successfully meet challenging academic content standards without contributing to tracking or remedial courses.
 - i. These may include professional development, coaching, ongoing support for educators, high quality tutoring, expanded access to rigorous coursework and content across K–12, and expanded learning time.

Steps applicants can initiate now that NOFO is released:

1. Engage in a meeting with Trivium to discuss project scope.
2. Decide on a key project component which demonstrates a rationale
 - a. Gather evidence that suggests the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes.
3. Register applicant organization in SAM.
4. Begin to sketch project design, emphasizing:
 - a. Demonstrable rationale for key project components.
 - b. Potential for focus on computer science education for underrepresented groups OR meeting student social, emotional, and academic needs.
 - c. Equitable programming with benefits for underserved students.
 - d. Funding needs, and availability of external funding.