

SEC. 4611. GRANTS FOR EDUCATION INNOVATION AND RESEARCH.

(a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—From funds reserved under section 4601(b)(2)(A),¹ the Secretary shall make grants to eligible entities to enable the eligible entities to—

(A) 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

(B) rigorously evaluate such innovations, in accordance with subsection (e).

(2) DESCRIPTION OF GRANTS.—The grants described in paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) early-phase grants to fund 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 or attainment for high-need students;

(B) mid-phase grants to fund implementation and a rigorous evaluation of a program that has been successfully implemented under an early-phase grant described in subparagraph (A) or other effort meeting similar criteria, for the purpose of measuring the program's impact and cost effectiveness, if possible using existing administrative data; and

(C) expansion grants to fund implementation and a rigorous replication evaluation of a program that has been found to produce sizable, important impacts under a mid-phase grant described in subparagraph (B) or other effort meeting similar criteria, for the purposes of—

(i) determining whether such impacts can be successfully reproduced and sustained over time; and

(ii) identifying the conditions in which the program is most effective.

(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—In this subpart, the term eligible entity' means any of the following:

(1) A local educational agency.

(2) A State educational agency.

(3) The Bureau of Indian Education.

(4) A consortium of State educational agencies or local educational agencies.

(5) A nonprofit organization.

(6) A State educational agency, a local educational agency, a consortium described in paragraph (4), or the Bureau of Indian Education, in partnership with—

(A) a nonprofit organization;

(B) a business;

(C) an educational service agency; or

(D) an institution of higher education.

(c) RURAL AREAS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In awarding grants under subsection (a), the Secretary shall ensure that not less than 25 percent of the funds made available for any fiscal year are awarded for programs that meet both of the following requirements:

(A) The grantee is—

(i) a local educational agency with an urban-centric district locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43, as determined by the Secretary;

¹ This is \$70.5 million in FY 2017-18 and \$90.6 million in FY 2019-20.

(ii) a consortium of such local educational agencies;

(iii) an educational service agency or a nonprofit organization in partnership with such a local educational agency; or

(iv) a grantee described in clause (i) or (ii) in partnership with a State educational agency.

(B) A majority of the schools to be served by the program are designated with a locale code of 32, 33, 41, 42, or 43, or a combination of such codes, as determined by the Secretary.

(2) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the Secretary shall reduce the amount of funds made available under such paragraph if the Secretary does not receive a sufficient number of applications of sufficient quality.

(d) MATCHING FUNDS.—In order to receive a grant under subsection (a), an eligible entity shall demonstrate that the eligible entity will provide matching funds, in cash or through in-kind contributions, from Federal, State, local, or private sources in an amount equal to 10 percent of the funds provided under such grant, except that the Secretary may waive the matching funds requirement, on a case-by-case basis, upon a showing of exceptional circumstances, such as—

(1) the difficulty of raising matching funds for a program to serve a rural area;

(2) the difficulty of raising matching funds in areas with a concentration of local educational agencies or schools with a high percentage of students aged 5 through 17—

(A) who are in poverty, as counted in the most recent census data approved by the Secretary;

(B) who are eligible for a free or reduced price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.);

(C) whose families receive assistance under the State program funded under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.); or

(D) who are eligible to receive medical assistance under the Medicaid program; and

(3) the difficulty of raising funds on tribal land.

(e) EVALUATION.—Each recipient of a grant under this section shall conduct an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the program carried out under such grant.

(f) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may reserve not more than 5 percent of the funds appropriated under section 4601(b)(2)(A) for each fiscal year to—

(1) provide technical assistance for eligibility entities, which may include pre-application workshops, web-based seminars, and evaluation support; and

(2) to disseminate best practices.