



## TRIVIUM CONSULTING: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY BRIEF



**Department of Education  
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Program - Expansion Grants**  
[Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) Summary 2023

Notice of Intent to Apply Deadline (Strongly Encouraged but Not Required): June 22, 2023

**Application Deadline: July 12, 2023**

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: September 11, 2023

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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.

Expansion grants...

- are supported by strong evidence for at least one population and setting, and grantees are encouraged to implement at the national level.
- implement and rigorously evaluate a program that has been found to produce sizable, significant impacts under a Mid-phase grant or other effort meeting similar criteria.
- (a) determine whether such impacts can be successfully reproduced and sustained over time; and
- (b) identify the conditions in which the program is most effective.

## 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:* \$15,000,000.
- *Estimated Available Funds for the program:* \$273,000,000.

Entities may submit applications for different projects for more than one competition (Early-phase, Mid-phase, and Expansion). The maximum new award amount a grantee may receive under these three competitions, taken together, is \$15,000,000.

## 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: Strong Evidence

- The program has two Absolute Priorities, which must both be addressed in order to

be funded.

The Absolute Priorities are

1. *Strong Evidence:*

- a. Expansion grants applicants must submit prior evidence of effectiveness that meets the strong evidence standard as defined by the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC).
- b. This means including 4 citations to be compared with WWC Handbooks as well as the following information:
  - (1) The positive student outcomes the applicant intends to replicate under its Expansion grant and how these outcomes correspond to the positive student outcomes in the cited studies;
  - (2) the characteristics of the population to be served under its Expansion grant and how these characteristics correspond to the characteristics of the students in the cited studies;
  - (3) the characteristics of the setting to be served under its Expansion grant and how these characteristics correspond to the settings in the cited studies; and
  - (4) the practice(s) the applicant plans to implement under its Expansion grant and how the practice(s) correspond with the practice(s) in the cited studies.
    - i. A practice guide prepared by the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) reporting a “strong evidence base” or “moderate evidence base” for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;
    - ii. An intervention report prepared by the WWC reporting a “positive effect” or “potentially positive effect” on a relevant outcome based on a “medium to large” extent of evidence, with no reporting of a “negative effect” or “potentially negative effect” on a relevant outcome; or;
    - iii. A single experimental study or quasi- experimental design study reviewed and reported by the WWC, or otherwise assessed by the Department using version 4.1 of the WWC Handbook, as appropriate, and that

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.

## 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 (15 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. Strategy to Scale (40 points).*

1. The extent to which the applicant identifies a specific strategy or strategies that address a particular barrier or barriers that prevented the applicant, in the past, from reaching the level of scale that is proposed in the application. (10 points)
2. The 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. (5 points)
3. The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, or management capacity) to bring the proposed project to scale on a national or regional level working directly, or through partners, during the grant period. (10 points)
4. The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project so as to support further development or replication. (10 points)
5. The likely utility of the products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings. (5 points)

*C. Quality of the Project Design (15 points).*

1. The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. (5 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. (5 points)

*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. (15 points)
2. The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings. (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)

4. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (5 points)

#### Competitive Preference Priority:

- Addressing the Competitive Preference Priority is not required.
  - If an applicant chooses to address the competitive preference priority, the applicant must explicitly identify, in the project narrative section of the application, the response to the competitive preference priority.
  - Up to 5 additional points may be awarded depending on how well the following priority is addressed.
1. *Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners.* Under this priority, an applicant must demonstrate how the project will be implemented by or in partnership with one or more of the following entities:
    - a. Community colleges (CCs).
    - b. Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).
    - c. Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs).
    - d. Minority-serving institutions (MSIs).

#### 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 meets the strong evidence standard.
3. Register applicant organization in SAM.
4. Begin to sketch project design, emphasizing:
  - a. Strong evidence for key project components.
  - b. Equitable programming with benefits for underserved students.
  - c. Funding needs, and availability of external funding.