Glossary of Terms

Understanding the terms and acronyms related to educational funding is essential when preparing your grant application. Here are a few we think may be helpful.

Absolute Priorities: Activities or conditions that must be met for a grant proposal to be considered; typically used in federal grant applications

Abstract (Executive Summary): Usually a one- to two-page summary of the project, including its goals and objectives

Administrative Costs: Grant funds used to manage the project

Allocation: Money designated according to a formula

Appropriation: A sum of money set aside for a specific purpose

ARP Act: The third COVID-19 relief bill signed by President Biden in March 2021 which sent $122 billion to K-12 schools

Assurances: A listing of requirements, that applicants agree in writing to observe as a condition of receiving funding

Asynchronous Learning: Learning that occurs in elapsed time between two or more people (ex: email, online discussion forums, message boards, blogs, podcasts, etc.)

Audit (Financial): The examination of records and reports of a company to ensure what is provided is relevant and accurate

Audit (Program): A review of the accomplishments of a program by the staff of the funding agency

Award: A funding agency's acceptance of an application or proposal, which results in a sum of money allocated to the awardee over a specified period of time to meet the goals and objectives outlined in the grant application

Awardee: Recipient of a grant award

Best Practices: Professional procedures that are accepted or prescribed as being correct or most effective

Blended Learning: Situations in which a student learns at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home and at least in part through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace; often used synonymously with hybrid learning

Block Grants: Formula-based funds not always tied to specific categories that have more flexibility in distribution

Budget Period: An interval of time into which a project period is divided for budgetary purposes

CARES Act: Legislation passed by Congress in March 2020 to help address the coronavirus pandemic. This stimulus package provided over $30 billion to help K-12 schools and universities.

Carryover: Grant funding transferred or resulting from a previous situation or context

Cohort: A group; often it refers to a group of grantees when multiple rounds of awards are made during the life of the grant cycle.

Competitive Grant: Grant that must go through a competitive, objective review process

Competitive Priority: Applicants have the option of answering these specific elements or certain conditions to give them additional scoring points in a grant application

Community-Based Organization (CBO): Agencies that are nonprofit and nongovernmental that focus their support on community-based needs

Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI): A type of school improvement identification under ESSA; CSI focuses on the lowest-performing schools

Conflict of Interest: Occurs when an employee compromises professional judgment in carrying out teaching, research, outreach, or public service activities because of an external relationship that directly or indirectly affects the financial or business interests of the employee, an immediate family member, or an associated entity

Consortium: A pooling of resources to make as big of an impact as possible and to leverage the talents of multiple organizations with similar goals

Continuation Grant: Grant available for the continuance of a program already underway

Contract: An agreement with specific terms between two or more persons or entities in which there is a promise to do something in return for a valuable benefit

Contracted Services: Services provided to the grant recipient by an outside consultant or provider

CRRSA Act: The second COVID-19 stimulus package passed by Congress in December 2020. This stimulus package gave $80 billion to help K-12 schools and universities.

Cyber Learning: A form of distance learning where instruction and content are delivered primarily over the internet; may also mean the same as online learning, virtual learning, and e-learning

Declining Grant: A multi-year grant that grows smaller each year

Demonstrates a Rationale: The fourth level of evidence-based research under ESSA; demonstrates rationale based on high-quality research or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes; includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention

Direct Costs: Costs allowed by the funding organization, directly tied to the operation of the project

Disclosure: The action of making new or secret information known

Discretionary Grant: Grant funding which is subject to the preference of the grantor

Distance Learning: Learning that takes place when teachers and students are separated by distance

Donor: A foundation or individual that provides the funds for a grant

DUNS Number: The Data Universal Numbering System number required for every federal grant application submission

ED: The U.S. Department of Education

EDGAR: The Education Department General Administration Regulations governing the Education Department's grant programs

E-Learning: A form of learning where instruction and content are delivered primarily over the internet; may also mean the same as online learning, cyber learning, and virtual learning

Eligible Applicant: An entity who may apply for a grant as specified in the grant guidelines

Eligibility Criteria: Factors used to determine whether a person or entity is qualified to participate in a particular initiative

Encumbered Expense: Grant funds set aside for project implementation

Encumbrance: The legal obligation to pay a vendor or reimburse an employee when goods or services have been requested, but have not yet been provided

Entitlement Funds: Money received on the basis of a formula

ESSA: The Every Student Succeeds Act, signed into law in 2015, governs the U.S. K-12 public education policy (starting with the 2017-2018 schoolyear)

Evaluation: Assessment of whether a project achieved the intended outcomes

Evaluation Data: Two types of evaluation data are typically required: (1) quantitative— student test scores, numbers of teachers trained, or other objectively measured outcomes and (2) qualitative— information gathered through open-ended questionnaires, observation notes, artifacts such as student projects and sample lesson plans

Evidence-based: As defined by ESSA, there are four levels of evidence: strong, moderate, promising and demonstrates a rationale. The top three levels require findings of statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on— (i) Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study; (ii) Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well implemented quasi-experimental study; or (iii) Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias. The fourth level is designed for ideas that do not yet have an evidence base qualifying for the top three levels. Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy or intervention.

Executive Summary (Abstract): A one- to two-page summary of the project, including its goals and objectives

Expenditure: Payment for goods or services, or a charge against available funds in settlement of an obligation as evidenced by an invoice, receipt, voucher, or other such document

Federal Funds: Money appropriated by the US Congress

Federal Register: Source of official government announcements for application information

Fiscal Year (FY): Any twelve-month period for which accounting books are kept

Formula Grant/Funds: A grant distributed by federal departments in which the amount of the grant is determined by a formula based on established criteria that is written into the legislation and program regulations

Foundation: A private organization established as a nonprofit corporation or charitable trust, with a principal purpose of making grants to unrelated nonprofit organizations for scientific, educational, cultural, religious, or other charitable purposes

Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL): A school's percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunch; usually a determining factor for eligibility for additional funding

Funding Agency: The organization that funds a grant

Funding Cycle: Starting with the announcement of available funds, the funding cycle includes all phases of the grant, i.e., deadline for application submission, proposal reviews, award, issuance of grant documents, release of funds and fiscal reporting

Funding Priorities: Specific elements that applicants are asked to address or certain conditions that must exist for applicants to be eligible for a certain grant

Goals: Broad and long-term targets (e.g., increasing high school graduation rates)

Grant: An award of money given to finance certain activities with a set of established requirements and criteria

Grant Agreement: A legally binding contract between a grantee and a grantor specifying the terms and conditions of the grant

Grantee: The person or organization that receives the grant

Grantor: Party issuing the grant

Hybrid Learning: Combines face-to-face and online teaching into one cohesive experience

Incremental Funding: Grants that are funded with specific spending limits below the total costs

Indirect Costs: Costs incurred for an organization's operating expenses (e.g., utility bills, janitorial services, etc.) which cannot be readily and specifically identified for a particular project

In-Kind Gift/Donation: Rather than cash, it is a donation of goods or services such as labor, equipment, supplies or the use of facilities

LEA: Local Education Agency (e.g., school or district)

Lead Applicant: A lead agency which manages and takes responsibility for coordinating and fiscally managing a project

Learning Management System (LMS): Technology platform through which students access online courses or digital materials

Letter of Inquiry, Letter of Intent (LOI) or Intent to Apply: A brief letter outlining an organization's activities and its request for funding sent to a funding source to determine whether it would be appropriate to submit a full grant proposal

Matching Funds: Contributions required by a party other than the grantor

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): A formal document required from grant consortium members outlining roles and responsibilities

Mission Statement: Declares "why" an organization exists, and is the foundation upon which a long-range strategic plan (the blueprint for carrying out the organization's "business") can be developed

Moderate Evidence: The second level of evidence-based research under ESSA; must have at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study (i.e., matched)

Monitoring: Overseeing the accomplishments of a funded project

Needs Assessment: Documentation of why the grant is needed

Non-Compliance: Failure or refusal to comply, as with a law, regulation, or term of a contract, grant or agreement

Notice of Grant Award (NOGA): A legally binding document serving as notification to the recipient and others that a grant or cooperative agreement has been made

Objectives: Short-term targets (e.g., increasing reading scores by a specific percent within a specified time frame)

Online Learning: A form of distance learning where instruction and content are delivered primarily over the internet; may also mean the same as virtual learning, cyber learning, and e-learning

Performance Measure: A characteristic or metric that can be used to assess the performance aspects of a program or project (i.e., dollars expended, students enrolled, grade point average)

Performance Report: A report of the specific activities the grant recipient has performed during the budget or project period

Planning Grant: A special type of grant that enables an organization to gather the resources to develop a strong, full proposal

Private Foundation: A tax-exempt, non-profit organization with a principal fund or endowment of its own which are set up to help social, educational, charitable, or religious actions that serve the common good of society

Pro Forma: An anticipated, proposed or hypothetical set of numbers for a project (generally the budget)

Procurement: The action of obtaining or acquiring equipment, materials, or supplies

Progress Report: A scheduled report (usually annually) required by the funder that summarizes the project to date

Project: The planned program; the goals and objectives for which the grant funds are being requested

Project Director or Principal Investigator (PI): The person responsible for fulfilling the terms and conditions of the grant or contract

Project Period: The total amount of time for which a grantor promises to fund a grant and authorizes a grantee to conduct the project

Promising Evidence: The third level of evidence-based research under ESSA; must have at least one well-designed and well-implemented

correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias

Proposal: Document detailing the program or project developed in response to the grant requirements

Recipient: The receiver of the grant funds

Replicability: The likelihood that the proposed project can be replicated in other schools or districts or on a broader regional or national scope

Request for Proposals (RFP) or Request for Application (RFA): Solicitation document sent by the funder seeking applications from potential grantees

Research-Based or Scientifically Research-Base: Projects based on technology, instructional strategies, or curriculum that are proven through carefully monitored experimental or quasi-experimental studies and demonstrated to improve student achievement and/or teacher performance

Restricted Funds: Funds that must be spent for a specific purpose, as determined by the funder

SEA: State Education Agency or other agency or office primarily responsible for the supervision of public elementary and secondary schools

Seed Money: A grant used to start a new project or organization which may cover salaries and other start-up expenses

Statute of Limitations: A type of federal or state law that restricts the time in which legal proceedings may be brought, serviced or completed

Stipends: A fixed, regular sum paid as a salary or allowance

Strong Evidence: The top level of evidence-based research under ESSA; must have at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study (i.e., randomized)

Sub-grant: Awards made under the authority of another grant

Sub-grantee: The receiver of pass through grant funds from a grantee rather than from the grantor; sub-grantees are required to follow all policies and rules of the original grant plus any additional conditions added by the grantee

Supplant: To replace; to use federal funds for more than one source to pay for the same personnel position or activity

Supplement: Something that completes or enhances something else when added to it

Sustainability: A plan for continuation beyond the grant period and/or the availability of other resources necessary to implement the grant

Synchronous Learning: Learning in which participants interact at the same time and in the same space

Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI): A type of school improvement classification under ESSA; TSI is focuses on schools with persistent achievement gaps

Target Population: Individuals, students, schools, or other recipients who will be the focus and beneficiaries of services provided through a grant project

Tax-exempt: Organizations not subject to taxation such as federal, state or corporate taxes

Technical Assistance: Management or operational assistance given to non-profit organizations including budgeting, financial planning, grant assistance, programmatic or financial review, as well as program planning

Trustee: A foundation board member occupying a position of trust who assists in making decisions about the way grant monies are spent

Turnkey: A complete and ready-to-use project constructed by a developer then sold or given to a buyer

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): A framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn

Unrestricted Funds: Funding that has no requirements or restrictions for use

Unsolicited Proposal: A proposal that is not in response to an RFP, RFA or announcement

Video Conferencing: Interactive communication technologies which allow two or more locations to interact via two-way video and audio transmissions simultaneously

Virtual Learning: A form of distance learning where instruction and content are delivered primarily over the internet; may also mean the same as online learning, cyber learning, and e-learning

Vision: A statement containing the direction the applicant wants to take and the desired end-result

Waiver: An intentional relinquishment of some right or interest

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