Funding Opportunity: ED Releases Remaining FY 2021 FIPSE Program Competitions

Lewis-Burke Associates LLC – November 5, 2021

On November 5, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) released a notice inviting applications (NIA) for the three remaining fiscal year (FY) 2021 Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) programs. The three remaining FIPSE programs are the Basic Needs for Postsecondary Students Program, Modeling and Simulation for Postsecondary Students Program, and the Rural Postsecondary Economic Development Program.

Basic Needs for Postsecondary Students Program

The Basic Needs for Postsecondary Students Program aims to support the basic needs of students at institutions of higher education (IHE) and report on methods to improve student outcomes. Proposals should demonstrate IHE commitment in developing and expanding support for the basic needs of students. There is growing evidence that several food and housing insecurities compromise the well-being of students and can create barriers to completing their degrees. ED believes that supporting students’ basic needs generates better academic performance, retention and completion, and reducing barriers that students face. The NIA for the Basic Needs for Postsecondary Students Program contains one absolute priority and one competitive preference. All applicants must address the Absolute Priority and have the option of addressing Competitive Preference Priority.

- **Absolute Priority**: Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change
  - Projects should be designed with a systemic approach for improving outcomes for underserved students that includes coordination efforts between Federal, State, Local agencies, or community-based organizations that support students. Two or more of the following basic needs must be addressed:
    - Food assistance.
    - Housing.
    - Transportation.
    - Health, including access to mental health support.
    - Childcare.
    - Dependent care.
    - Technology.

- **Competitive Preference Priority (5 points)**: Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs
  - Projects designed with a focus to support underserved students’ social, emotional, and academic needs. ED would award an additional five points to an application meeting this priority.

**Due Dates**: Full proposals are due by December 5, 2021.
**Total Funding and Award Size:** ED intends to award a total of up to $4.9 million, with award size ranging from $1.1 million to $1.237 million funding up to $990,000 for projects over a period of up to 36 months. Five program grants are expected to be awarded. Cost sharing is not required.

**Eligibility and Limitations:** Community Colleges that are Minority-Serving Institutions (MSI), Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU), and Tribal Colleges or Universities (TCU) defined in this notice are eligible to apply, along with any institutions that ED determines eligible.

**Sources and Additional Information:**

- The official NIA for the Basic Needs for Postsecondary Students Program can be found at https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/11/05/2021-24362/applications-for-new-awards-basic-needs-for-postsecondary-students-program.

**Modeling and Simulation for Postsecondary Students Program**

The Modeling and Simulation for Postsecondary Students Program is aimed to encourage modeling and simulation studies at institutions of higher education (IHE) and seeks to fund the development or enhancement of degree programs focused on modeling and simulation. These programs help develop tools and techniques in various industries where education and training for high-risk situations are not realistic. Additionally, each grantee will be a part of a task force, created by ED with other experts, to raise awareness and help define the study of modeling and simulation. The NIA for the Modeling and Simulation for Postsecondary Students Program contains two absolute priorities. Applicants may only apply under one of the two absolute priorities.

- **Absolute Priority 1:** Enhancing Modeling and Simulation at Institutions of Higher Education
  - Eligible institution applications must include:
    - A letter from their institution’s president or provost stating their commitment to enhancing of modeling and simulation programs at the institution;
    - Designated faculty identified as responsible for improving the institution’s modeling and simulation programs;
    - A comprehensive plan for how grant funds will be used to enhance modeling and simulation programs, ensuring adequate accessibility for students with disabilities;
    - A list of line-item costs linked to task force costs;
    - A 25 percent cost-match commitment for the grant program and;
    - Clearly defined and established modeling and simulation degree programs at the institution.

- **Absolute Priority 2:** Establishing Modeling and Simulation Programs
  - Eligible institution applications must include:
    - A letter from their institution’s president or provost stating their commitment to establishing a modeling and simulation programs at the institution;
▪ A comprehensive plan for how grant funds will be used to establish modeling and simulation programs, ensuring adequate accessibility for students with disabilities;
▪ A description of how the establishment of a modeling and simulation program will supplement existing programs at the institution.
▪ A list of line-item costs linked to task force costs and;
▪ A 25 percent cost-match commitment for the grant program

Due Dates: Full proposals are due by December 5, 2021.

Total Funding and Award Size: ED intends to award a total of up to $6.9 million, approximately fifty percent will fund absolute priority one and approximately fifty percent will fund absolute priority two. Awards will range from $750,000 to $1.155 million with an average award size of $866,250 for each project for up to 36 months. Eight grants are expected to be awarded.

Eligibility and Limitations: Public and private nonprofit IHEs. The grant requires cost sharing by recipients of at least 25 percent of the award amount.

Sources and Additional Information:

▪ The official NIA for the Modeling and Simulation for Postsecondary Students Program can be found at https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/11/05/2021-24360/applications-for-new-awards-modeling-and-simulation-program.

Rural Postsecondary and Economic Development Grant Program

The Rural Postsecondary and Economic Development Grant Program works to develop career pathways aligned with high demand industry sectors and jobs to improve postsecondary enrollment, retention, and completion among rural students. Rural students, particularly low-income rural students, may have a more difficult time obtaining opportunities due to their lack of accessibility to transportation, high-speed internet, healthcare, among other challenges. ED believes it is crucial to help better prepare these students with opportunities so that they have the tools and support to transition from secondary into post-secondary education and graduate. This notice inviting applications (NIA) contains one absolute priority that applicants must address and two competitive preference priorities that applicants have the choice of addressing one or both:

▪ Absolute Priority 1: Projects that Increase Postsecondary Access, Affordability, Success, and Completion for Rural Students
  o Increase the number of enrolled rural students, outreach and recruitment in rural communities, support throughout the application process and beforehand through college and career advising.
  o Support the development and implementation of student success programs to help with different areas such as student affairs, financial aid, etc.
Support the development and implementation of accessible learning opportunities meeting the unique needs of their geographic environment.

Support the development and implementation of strategies to promote the development of rural students in high-need fields of the workforce.

Implement a sustainability plan.

**Competitive Preference Priority 1 (5 points): Supporting Access to Technology**

- Promote educational equity for rural students through learning models that provide accessibility to technology.

**Competitive Preference Priority 2 (5 points): Strengthening Cross-Agency Coordination and Community Engagement to Advance Systemic Change**

- Take a systemic approach to improve the outcomes of rural students through the development of career pathways in in-demand industry sectors of the region in partnership with regional economic development agencies and other regional organizations.

**Due Dates:** Applications are due by **December 5, 2021.**

**Total Funding and Award Size:** ED intends to award up to $9.9 million, with award size ranging from $1.1 million to $1.237 million, with an average award size of $1.2 million. ED expects to make eight awards. Each project is expected to have a period of performance of 36 months. Cost sharing is not required.

**Eligibility and Limitations:** Public and private nonprofit institutions of higher education (IHEs) with an enrollment of at least 30 percent of students who attended high school in a rural area are eligible to apply.

**Sources and Additional Information:**