



**Educational Design,
Research, Evaluation**

Native American and Alaska Native Children in School Program Title III – CFDA № 84.365C

This brief document provides an overview of the grant program currently offered by the US Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students (OELA). It is divided into two sections: (1) basic grant-writing information and (2) specific information pertaining to this application.

BASIC GRANT-WRITING INFORMATION

- Create a team for writing the application. The team should include people who are experts in researching, writing, organizing, managing, budgeting, documenting, editing, and marketing. This may mean involving several people, or it may be very few, each of whom has several areas of expertise.
- Choose a concise, meaningful title.
- Be sure to address each and every item mentioned in the request for applications (RFA).
- Use the headings and subheadings of the RFA as the headings and subheadings of your written application. This will ensure that you include everything, and ensure that the readers see where you've included each item (points are given by item).
- If possible, create a brief "story" for the information – grab the reader's attention quickly and make them WANT to give you the monies.
- Provide appropriate data in a clear, useful, and understandable manner. Refer to each table and chart; don't describe all the numbers, but point out the most salient and important features.
- For many, the most problematic portion of the application is the goals and objectives.
 - A **GOAL** is a statement of the program's intent, purpose, or expected outcomes, not what a goal does.
 - Goals (1) are stated in broad and general terms, (2) identify the target group involved in this portion of the program, and (3) describe an intended outcome rather than a process.
 - An **OBJECTIVE** also is a description of outcomes, not what the program will do.
 - Objectives (1) specify an outcome rather than a process, (2) are stated as an overt behavior, (3) use strong action verbs, and (4) describe a single outcome.
 - Objectives can be modified during the project's life, but the focus of the project must always remain the same.
 - For more on goals and objectives, see the attached "Goals and Objectives" description.
- Use simple, straightforward language. Do not use jargon, acronyms, or long complex sentences. Define all terms, especially those that may be specific to your locale.
- There are eight basic parts to most grant applications.
 - Cover page with basic identifying information about the application, the funding agency, and the applicant.
 - Forms that are required by the funding agency including budget, assurances, and so on.
 - An abstract or synopsis of the overall project. This should be very brief and to the point.
 - Needs of the population to be served – unmet needs and the reason for those needs. A clear, well-documented picture of the applicant's situation and possible ways to meet the population's needs should be presented. If a needs assessment has been completed, it should be presented here.

- Program design is the “heart and soul” of the application. It lays out exactly what the applicant plans to do. Research that supports the proposed plan should be included. Major component of this section include
 - Goals,
 - Objectives, and
 - Activities, methods, and/or procedures.
- Personnel, including key staff positions. Most applications ask for “key personnel” only, not all possible people who will be working with the project.
- Budget includes both a table with numbers (usually for each year of the project plus a total) as well as a narrative that justifies, or explains, the costs. Some funding agencies require that each line item be explained. Be careful too about what costs the funding agency will cover.
- Evaluation describes how the program’s effectiveness will be determined. The evaluation should refer both to required features (such as the government’s GPRA objectives or priorities) and the project’s features (such as the objectives that the project decided to do).
- Developing a quality program design requires a thorough planning process. The process is a never-ending cycle that modifies and improves whatever currently is in-place. The knowledge gained by implementing one step is used to inform decisions related to other steps. The steps involved are:
 - Needs assessment
 - What are the educational and cultural background(s) of the learners?
 - With what language group(s) will you work? How many students in each?
 - What is the English and home language proficiency of the learners?
 - What is the academic achievement of the learners (ideally in home language & English)?
 - What type of program will provide the best assistance to these learners?
 - Goals
 - What is the overall (broad, general) purpose of the program? Where is it headed?
 - At the end, what changes in the learners do you anticipate?
 - Objectives
 - What should/can the project do to improve students’ language proficiency?
 - What should/can the project do to improve students’ academic achievement?
 - In what language(s) should students be taught? And for what courses?
 - Do staff need professional development in order to assist students’ better? Do parents?
 - Activities
 - What activities need to take place to support the activities?
 - Assessment
 - How will you know if the objectives have been met? What do you need to see to convince you?
 - Are standardized norm-referenced, performance-based, criterion-referenced, or other measures needed?
 - Are the assessments readily available, or do you need to develop them?
 - Evaluation
 - Have the objectives been met? How do you know? Can you convince others?
 - Have the evaluation requirements of the funding agency been met (e.g., GPRA)?
 - What can be done to improve the program for students, parents, staff, and/or others?
- Is a new needs assessment warranted? Does the evaluation show that objectives need modification? Are these activities “working,” or should others be tried?

A QUICK WALK-THROUGH OF THE NA/AK APPLICATION

- Timeline
 - Applications available now! Go to www.ed.gov to download the application.
 - Notice of intent to apply: December 30. This is not a requirement, but suggested so that OELA knows how many readers they will need.
 - Application transmittal: January 18.
 - If you send by courier (e.g., FedEx, UPS, etc, *NOT* USPS), the receipt must show that the package left on this day. The package does not need to arrive on January 18.

- If you use USPS, the post mark must indicate January 18. However, due to postal restrictions in Washington, DC, this method is not suggested – most mail to federal offices is examined before it reaches the office, which can take a great deal of time. Express Mail is a possibility.
 - If you use the federal electronic grant application, www.grants.gov, it must be submitted by 4:30pm EST on this date. Use of the electronic submission package is not required, but is suggested. Note that you cannot send an e-mail version of your application.
 - ***Do not use the postal meter at your local school or any other type of post mark that is not directly from a shipping agency (UPS, FedEx, DHL, etc.) or the USPS (at an official postal station). So-called “private” post marks are not considered “proof of mailing.”***
 - Eligible applicants
 - Indian tribes, tribally sanctioned educational authorities, schools or consortia of schools funded with BIA grants, consortia of public or private schools that include at least one funded with a grant or contract from the BIA, an IHE with a BIA-funded school.
 - In addition, OELA has indicated that any public school that has a relationship with a tribal entity or the BIA is eligible. You will need to provide evidence of this relationship, then OELA will verify it.
 - Suggestion: Create an informal Memo of Understanding (MOU – this is stronger than a letter of support, but doesn’t have full legal standing) that the public school and the tribal or BIA school officials sign.
 - Suggestion: Include the tribal or BIA school during the planning phase – show that the two (or more) have been working together, already have a relationship, and will continue to work for the benefit of the children and parents.
 - Funding
 - It is anticipated that about 33 awards will be made.
 - The average award will be about \$150,000/year for up to 5 years.
 - The range of awards is expected to be from \$100,000 to \$175,000 per year for up to 5 years.
 - Priorities
 - The purpose of the program is threefold. Suggestion: include goals and objectives for each of these.
 - English language acquisition
 - Content achievement (math and reading/language arts)
 - Parental and community participation in the project
 - Invitation priorities (i.e., they want to see these, but you won’t get points for them)
 - Teacher preparation to more effectively involve parents and community groups with school activities
 - Secondary school projects to reduce dropout rate among ELL students
 - Format
 - The narrative (i.e., the body of the text, not including the cover sheet, the abstract, the required forms, the budget, or the budget narrative) will be no more than 35 single-spaced pages
 - Each page must be double space (everything on every page – no more than 3 lines/inch) with 1” margins on all sides
 - Use 12-point font
 - Application information – This is the body of the application, the “heart and soul.” Be sure to address each point listed in the application. This may seem redundant, but do it, even if it’s only a couple of sentences. Do not refer the reader to other sections, but actually repeat information (rewording slightly) for each request. This rest of this section is the application information, with some suggestions for what to include. *Suggestions are in italics* to distinguish them from what is required.
 - The entire application has a maximum score of 100 points. The points allotted for each section are included.
 - This is not a full restatement of the federal application – see the federal website for this (www.grants.gov)
- V) Write the application in the order indicated below – this is the order stated in the application.
- a) Project activities (15 points). Describe the activities to
 - 1) Increase English language proficiency and academic achievement in core academic subjects – *list the curricula to be used, how they were chosen, why they meet the needs of these students,*

- and list the research that shows it works – and works with Native American students (this last will be the hardest).*
- 2) Provide high-quality professional development to classroom teachers, including teachers in ELL classrooms, principals, administrators, and other school or community based organizational personnel. *Be sure to show that the activities will be long-term, with time to practice and get feedback, and show that research indicates that the curricula is effective. Be sure to involve community-based organizations, including organizations that are likely to bring parents into the classroom and help them be more involved in their children’s education.* Specifically, the professional development should
 - (i) Improve the quality of instruction to and assessment of ELL students,
 - (ii) Enhance the ability of teachers to understand and use curricula, assessment measures, and instructional strategies for ELL children, and
 - (iii) Be based on scientifically based research demonstrating effectiveness. *Again, include the research, at least listing references. Don’t just say something like “the publisher says this works.” If you can’t find research on the specific curricula being used, then look for research that says this general type of program is what helps teachers. Check the resources of the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition: www.ncele.gwu.edu*
- b) Need for project (10 points). The needs section should be divided into three sections:
- 1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed. *This is a tricky one – you have to show a real need, that the children have some real educational problems that are due to culture, lack of trained teachers, problems with the education of parents, etc. However, you can’t make the problem sound so severe that readers feel it is “unfixable.” Include data wherever possible.*
 - 2) The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided, or the activities to be carried out. *How are these services, or activities going to “fix” the problems that have been described? What’s so great about this particular curriculum, this particular professional development program?*
 - 3) The extent to which the proposed project will provide services or otherwise address the needs of students at risk of educational failure. *Show the match between the needs and the curricula and professional development activities (including activities for parents). Sometimes a chart is the best way to demonstrate the match.*
- c) Significance (5 points). *Significance includes how likely you are to be successful. This means that you need to be reasonable in stating the expected outcomes, but at the same time the expected outcomes must be good enough to warrant giving you the monies you’re requesting. Of especial importance here are the improvement in students’ English language proficiency and content area achievement, teachers’ skills, and parental involvement. The NCELA website does include information about all of these areas.*
- d) Quality of the project design (15 points). *Quality is the key word here. The description of the design (Activities, above) plus this defense of the quality is worth 30 points – nearly 1/3 of the points for this application. Be very careful when writing about the following.*
- 1) Goals, objectives, and outcomes are clearly specified and measurable. *This is a major problem with many projects – clear and measurable goals and objectives. See the attached sheet on goals and objectives (from a PowerPoint presentation) and the sheet on “Planning the Program” that provides a sample format (with sample goals and objectives appropriate for this application) that can be used in this section.*
 - 2) Project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs that have been identified. *Again, a chart may be helpful here. Why is this curriculum/professional development, appropriate to ND, to these teachers, families, and students? How can you be sure that those who are most at risk will get the help they need from this project? This has to do both with the appropriateness of the curricula and how participants will be selected for the project.*
 - 3) Project will build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance. *In the past, many projects existed only when receiving federal funding. This is no longer acceptable. While you may not keep the entire project, you should show that the project will build your capacity to continue professional development (PD) activity, that teachers will stay in the district to help maintain what has been achieved, and so on.*

- 4) Design of the project reflects up-to-date knowledge from reach and effective practice. *Don't pick curricula from the 1980s, even if there was some research showing it to be effective. Show that the curricula (for students and PD) are new, that they match the definitions and mandates of NCLB, that they are research-based, and that the research is relatively new. Include references wherever possible.*
- 5) Project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and to support rigorous academic standards for students. *This comes from Comprehensive School Reform efforts. This project should not be an add-on to the school(s), one more thing teachers have to do, but should be an effort to incorporate all aspects of the school into one overall, united plan.*
- 6) Project has capability to document project activities and results. *In the past, it has been difficult to collect and maintain data (students' scores, teacher skills and knowledge, parental involvement) across years, on a participant-by-participant basis (e.g., the ability to follow a 3rd grade student, with test scores and other data, as she moves up to higher grades and into middle school – across at least the 5-year life of this project). How do you plan to collect and maintain appropriate data?*
- 7) Encourages parental involvement. *This is a key to NCLB as well as to this project. Describe what you plan to do to help parents become more involved with their students' education – this might involve ESL classes for parents, GED classes, classes that help parents understand what their students are doing in specific classes, or might be plans to have parents volunteer in classrooms (though not necessarily their own child's classroom).*
- 8) Quality of methodology employed. *Overall, how will you keep track of everything? How will you know what's working? What evidence do you have that all this will "work" in your locale?*
- e) Quality of project personnel (10 points). *This is really in 2 parts: first, the applications, then the qualifications. For the first, be sure to include a formal statement, dated, from the School Board (or other appropriate entity) that your school 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. Next, the qualifications of key personnel, as defined within the application. One thing you might not think of is including someone to help maintain all the data that you will need; this is an acceptable expense. In describing these positions, don't be too detailed, but be sure to include brief information about:*
 - 1) Qualifications, training, and experience of the project director.
 - 2) Qualifications, training, and experience of key project personnel.
 - 3) Qualifications, training, and experience of consultants or subcontractors.
- f) Adequacy of resources (10 points). *This section ensures that you have the support, personnel, buildings, and so on, that will allow the project to be successful. This can be a brief section, but must include the three areas listed below (brief charts can be helpful, such as overall cost divided by # persons to be served, which will give a per person cost) –*
 - 1) Budget is adequate.
 - 2) Costs are reasonable in relation to plans for, and significance of, the project.
 - 3) Costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated outcomes.
- g) Quality of the management plan (15 points). *This section describes the overall operational plan for the project – who is responsible for what, when will things be done, and how can you ensure that everything will be done on time and within the allotted costs. More specifically –*
 - 1) Provide defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for completed major project tasks.
 - 2) Describe the time commitment of the project director and other key personnel. *Of special concern is whether these individuals are allocating enough time to the project. This needs to be justified. Remember, too, that you can put people on the grant who are not being paid by the grant – this always looks good.*
 - 3) Describe procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the project. *You may want to include a diagram that shows how the needs assessment feeds into the goals/objectives/activities of the project, which feed into the assessment of students and other participants to determine growth and achievement, which feed into the evaluation, which loops back to modification of goals/objectives/activities (particularly the latter) for improvement*

purposes – you could also indicate who is responsible for these key parts of the project and how these individuals will interact to ensure improvement of the project.

- h) Evaluation (20 points). *Gone are the days of a 5-point evaluation that was mostly ignored. It would be a good idea to contact an evaluator NOW to ask him/her to be part of the proposal writing team, and then to be the project evaluator. This will help ensure that the goals and objectives are clearly written and measurable, as well as that this evaluation section is well written. Be sure that both project goals/objectives and GPRA goals/objectives are mentioned. Be sure to include –*
- 1) *Methods are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives and outcomes of the project. For instance, don't have an objective saying that 75% of students will improve their English language proficiency, then have an evaluation that says you'll collect NCEs (normal curve equivalents, a type of score for standardized tests) and expect a significant gain in NCEs, or that you'll expect a 5-NCE gain each year. There is no requirement for statistics as part of the evaluation, and nothing fancy needs to be done to show that the project is doing well.*
 - 2) *Include objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data means numbers, qualitative data means opinions and thoughts with less reliance on numbers. "Objective performance measures" usually are tests of some type. These can be nationally available or developed by the project. If nationally available, explain how chosen and that they are valid and reliable for your students (and don't just say it's mandated by the state). If you plan to develop, or have developed, your own assessments, describe the procedure used to develop items, field- or pilot-test the instrument, revise the instrument, and ensure reliability and validity.*
 - 3) *Evaluation must examine the effectiveness of project implementation. Be sure to evaluate the project management. How well did the director and key staff members do? Did they cooperate with staff and participants, were they encouraging, was everything completed on-time and in a usable manner? What could be improved?*
 - 4) *Evaluation should provide timely guidance for quality assurance. This really is asking how the evaluation will be used – will the report be a door stop or help to improve the project? Will the evaluator work with staff so they understand the evaluation, will s/he provide draft(s) of the evaluation for staff comments, and will the report be usable to staff as well as for the purposes of the federal Department of Education?*
 - 5) *Evaluation should provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. The evaluation should be ongoing, including both formative and summative reports (formative reports are primarily internal and need not be too formal). The information from the evaluator should help identify potential problems before they become impediments to the success of the project.*

Good luck with your grant-writing efforts!