



U.S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary & Secondary Education
Charter School Programs
FY22 Pre-Application Webinar – State Entity Competition (ALN
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Session Transcript
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- [Anna] Good afternoon, everyone. And welcome to the Pre-Award Technical Assistance Webinar for the FY 2022 State entity Grant Competition. My name is Anna Hinton, and I'm the director of the Charter Schools Program. The purpose of today's webinar is to provide a high-level overview of the FY 2022 State entity Notice Inviting Applications, the NIA, as well as the application process.

We will not discuss in any great detail any one particular aspect of the competition requirements, which is why I do want to draw your attention to the note on the cover slide, strongly encouraging all interested applicants for the State entity Grant Program to refer to the Notice Inviting Applicants, that was applications that was published in the federal register last Wednesday as well as consulting with the department's competition website that we created.

And, again, you can access those documents at the link provided on this particular slide, and we will make this slide deck available to interested applicants as well. We have a ton of content to discuss today.

So, we're going to go ahead and get started. I know folks are still trickling in but, again, we are going to post the slide decks as well as the recording and the transcripts on our website, so folks will have an opportunity to review the recording. Next slide. Our agenda for today. Again, a lot of content that we're trying to cover.

Following the welcome or as part of the welcome, I should say, I do want to take some time to highlight and note some reminders and key aspects of the competition that should be further looked into and noted.

I will provide and discuss a high-level overview, the purpose of the Charter Schools Program. I won't spend a lot of time there because we do want to spend a little bit more time talking about what's new in the competition this year and more importantly paying particular attention to the implications of the final rules that were recently published for the program, implications for those final rules...implications, I'm sorry, for the SE competition as it relates to those final rules.

We do want to, sort of, take some time to go over those actions. We will not spend a lot of time going over all of the individual actions proposed in that NFP, but, again, only focusing on those actions that are being implemented in this year's State entity Competition and the implications of those actions. We're then going to quickly go into an overview of the State entity Grant Program, spend a little time talking about the makeup of the application, the various components, spend a little more time talking about the nuts and bolts of the State entity Grant Competition itself,

priorities, selection criteria, application requirements, and then conclude by discussing the process for submitting your application and, again, just restating the overall application review process.

As you can see on our agenda, we have allotted time throughout the webinar for Q&A. And I'll talk a little bit more about the structure of these opportunities in a few. Next slide. So, before we get started, I would like to introduce to you my co-presenters for today and talk a little bit about the SE team.

As you can see, those of you that have followed the CSP program and, in particular, the State entity Grant Program, you'll likely see more names than you have seen in recent years. And so that's a good thing. We are growing. But co-presenting with me today, I have Stephanie Jones, who's currently acting supervisor over the State entity Grant Program, and our veteran program officer, Ashley Gardner.

Jill Gaitens and Sareeta Schmitt, although not presenting today, are the newest members of the SE team, and we are excited that they will be joining us in helping to serve and support the grants that we award. And, of course, Nora Kern is still with us. However, she is out on maternity leave. So, super excited about the growth of the SE team. On this slide, we've also listed our email contact.

I just want to point out that this is truly the best way to communicate with us during this application period. And so you will see this email box and this email account, sort of, restated or represented throughout the webinar. Meeting logistics. Just a couple things to note, that this webinar is in listen-only format, and so we ask that you mute your computers or phones.

Again, as I've already stated, the session will be recorded and posted on the CSP website. So, you will be able to download the slide deck, the transcripts as well as the audio recording. For the Q&A opportunities, we do ask that you use the Q&A chat function to submit your questions and/or comments.

And then finally, and I've already restated this, but if you have any questions at any point throughout the entire application process, again, the best way to reach us is through our email box. Just a couple of important reminders. In this first bullet, you'll hear us, sort of, restate this throughout the entire webinar, but we've included disclaimers on some of the slides just as a reminder.

Just want to note, again, that this slide deck does not contain the full context of any of the requirements, assurances, eligibility requirements, selection criteria, etc. And, again, applicants should refer to the federal register for a complete listing of the requirements as well as the department's webpage for more information and resources.

Second, as I mentioned already, we have a lot of time throughout for questions, but we ask that you only submit questions relevant to the topic or topics addressed in a particular session. We also know that, due to time constraints, we may not be able to answer all of the questions submitted today.

And so if we are unable to get to your question, we ask that you send a follow-up email with your question to the email box that we've shared the address for already, and we will respond directly to your question. And if we believe it's a question that would benefit all applicants, next Monday during the same time, we are hosting a follow-up webinar that we have deemed as our office hours webinar to be able to really focus on just answering questions.

Please note, however, that this office hours webinar, which is just going to be focused on answering questions that have been submitted, we do want to underscore that we are requesting that you submit your questions ahead of time. And that will allow us the opportunity to properly prepare and to be able to really provide a comprehensive response to your questions and also to consult as needed with our Office of General Counsel.

So, again, we strongly encourage you to submit all of your questions ahead of time prior to next Monday's webinar. And then finally there are some questions that regardless of when we receive them, we will not be able to answer.

And so, for example, we are not able to address questions about the competitiveness of a specific activity or project design nor are we able to provide a substantive explanation of the rationale behind the inclusion or exclusion of specific requirements. One of the things I would like to note and draw to your attention is that, in the NPP, the notice of proposed priorities, as well as the final notice for the rules, again, that was published last Wednesday.

We do provide a detailed discussion and rationale for the new actions proposed. Next slide. So, before we jump into a detailed discussion about the State entity Grant Competition, we would like to provide some background on the overall purpose and structure of the Charter Schools Programs.

The program statute identifies seven main purposes of the CSP. However, in the interest of time, I'm not going to go over and discuss each purpose in detail but will say that generally the CSP provides federal assistance for the planning, program design, initial implementation, replication and expansion of high-quality charter schools to include assistance with charter schools facilities financing, the sharing of information about promising practices, and investing in national initiatives that support the charter sector.

Next slide. So, on this next slide, I just want to quickly go over the six, sort of, key grant competitions, each of which supports activities important to the success of charter schools.

I do want to note that our ability to run grant competitions in each program annually depends on a number of factors, including the availability of funds. But the first program noted is our charter management organizations grant program. And in this program, we award funds to non-profit charter management organizations with a record of success to open new schools or expand existing schools to serve more students.

The next two programs are facilities-related programs. Our Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities Program where we provide support and funding for charter schools to acquire or renovate facilities. And then the third program, the second facilities program is our State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grant Program, which we provide matching funds to states that provide funding for charter school facilities on a per-pupil basis.

National Dissemination is the next grant program listed, and the purpose of this grant program is to increase quality throughout the sector by disseminating best practices related to charter school operations and management. The fifth program is our Grants to Developers.

And under this program, in states where there isn't an active State entity Grant, individual schools and CMOs may apply directly to the U.S. Department of Education to ask for funds to support opening a new charter school or to replicate or expand a high-quality charter school. We are hosting another webinar following this webinar for that particular grant program and for those applicants.

And then finally we have our Grants to State Entities. This grant program makes up the largest CSP grant component in terms of funding. These grants are awarded to state education agencies, governors, state charter school boards, or state charter school support organizations, which or who in turn award subgrants for the planning and initial operation of new charter schools.

So, the State entity Grant Program obviously is the focus of this webinar, and we will address eligibility as well as other requirements in greater detail later on in the webinar. Next slide. So, now that we've discussed the overall purposes of the CSP, we'd like to begin by discussing the FY '22 State entity Grant Competition.

And, again, in particular, I'm going to discuss implications of the new rules for this year's competition. Please note, too, that this discussion is not intended to be a review or even a discussion of the rationale of each of the newly established actions in the final rule but rather a discussion of only those actions that are being implemented in this year's State entity Competition.

Recognizing, too, that there is likely interest and better understanding and explaining all of the new actions in the final rule. We are committed to offering and explaining our webinar on the rules at a future date perhaps once we get over the upcoming competitions for State entity and Developer. So, last Wednesday, as I'm sure all of you know, on July 6th, the department published in the Federal Register the final notice of priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria for the State entity CMO and developer grant program.

So, all three of those programs were addressed under one notice. We've received nearly 27,000 comments in response to the proposed rules. And I do want to take this opportunity to thank all of you who took the time to submit comments. We believe the process worked as it is intended to. We made significant revisions to some of the rules based on the comments received as well as some of the proposed edits and revisions to some of the original actions as proposed.

In SE, we created new requirements, assurances, and selection criteria, and I'd like to start by discussing the new requirements that will be implemented in this year's SE Grant Competition. But, again, I do want to pause to remind you all that the slide deck, again, does not contain a complete listing of the components of each requirement and do strongly encourage you to refer to the NIN.

So, the first requirement on our slide really does build off existing statutory requirements for State entity where we've created a new requirement for applicants to discuss how they will award their subgrants. Again, addressing issues of eligibility, how the peer reviewers will be recruited and selected, how subgrant applications will be reviewed and evaluated, the cost analysis and budget reviews, how those things will be conducted, how an applicant will be assessed for risk both fiscal, programmatic as well as compliance and how funding decisions will be made.

So, I wanted to collect a little bit more information surrounding those issues. The second new requirement that we created is associated with for-profit management contracts. And so for any existing or proposed contract between a charter and a for-profit management organization, including a non-profit management organization, operated by or on behalf of a for-profit entity or its related entities, we are asking that the applicant provides some detailed information regarding those contracts.

We also allow for additional flexibility for the applicant to submit equivalent information that may have already been submitted to the authorized public chartering agency. And so just some of what

we're asking for is a copy of the existing contract with the for-profit management organization or description of the terms of that contract, a description of the business and financial relationship between a charter school developer and the management organization, the name and contact information for each member of the governing board, for example, of the charter school and a list of the management organization's officers, chief administrator, and other administrators.

We also ask for a description of how the applicant will ensure that members of the governing board are not selected, removed, controlled, or employed by the management organization and that the charter school's legal accounting and auditing services will be procured independently from the management organization. And then finally, we ask for an explanation of how the applicant will ensure that the management contract is severable.

And then we do ask for a description of the steps the applicant will take to ensure that it maintains control over all student records and has a process in place to provide those records to another public school or school district in a timely manner upon transfer of the student from the charter school to another public school. So, again, I did not go over in great detail every component of the requirement, but essentially the requirement is to collect additional information on any existing for-profit management contracts to ensure that the nonprofit grantee, CSP grantee, is not really relinquishing full or substantial administrative control over the charter school or the CSP project.

Next slide. So, this next requirement is about the needs analysis and all of its subparts. And so we do create a new requirement that asks in this context the SE grantee to ask of its subgrantee applicants a needs assess a needs analysis and description of the need for the proposed project, including how the proposed project would serve the interest and meet the needs of students and families in the communities in which the charter school is intended to serve.

We revised this priority a great deal based on feedback as well as based on the original intent from the department. We wanted to streamline the priority... I'm sorry, the requirement. We wanted to streamline the requirement to ensure that it was clear that the intent of the department is to solely focus on need and how the charter school or project will benefit the students and families in the community.

And so the various subparts I'll just touch on them quickly and spend more time in some places than others. But, the first we are asking... for the first subpart, we're asking for a description of the local community support. And in this subpart, we do clarify the types of evidence that could be provided or submitted on the part of the charter school in terms of evidence that helps to make the case for need or that would address demand.

And this includes information on any wait list for the proposed charter school or existing charter schools or traditional public schools, data on access to seats in high-quality public charter schools in the districts from which the charter school expects to draw students and then family interest and specialized instructional approaches proposed to be implemented in the charter school.

And, again, this isn't intended to be an exhaustive list, but just some examples. The other thing we did with this particular priority generally though was, again, to create flexibility, to allow applicants to submit any information that has already been submitted to the authorized public chartering agency. The second subpart here is about requesting information on the proposed charter school's projected student enrollment.

The third subpart, I do want to spend some time on this is requiring an analysis of the proposed charter school's projected student demographics and a description of the demographics of students attending public schools in the local community in which the charter school would be located and the charter school districts from which the students are or will be drawn to attend a charter school.

We are asking for a description of how the applicant plans to establish and maintain a racially and socioeconomically diverse student body, including proposed strategies that are consistent with applicable legal requirements. And so with this particular subpart, and I did not read it all, but with this particular subpart, we have received a lot of questions and feedback.

And one in particular, which is a common theme is if a charter school is not diverse, the rule asks the applicant to explain why. And these applicants must still describe... despite the fact that they are eligible and there is acknowledgment that the final rule is clear, that these particular applicants are eligible, but nevertheless, these applicants must still describe why they won't be diverse, again, just despite the fact that we are clear that they are eligible.

And so in response to this question, which we think is likely a commonly asked question or will be, we do want to provide some clarification in terms of the utility of the assurances and the requirements, because I have not gotten to the assurances yet. But as I'm sure many of you know, a lot of the assurances also aligned with some of the content that is presented in the requirements.

And so just want to be clear that with the requirements as well as the assurances, none of this information will be evaluated by peer reviewers. And so what is submitted will not be evaluated in terms of how well, you know, applicants, sort of, respond to or address what's being asked.

With the requirements, we, the department, we ask the applicant to describe how they will do certain things of interest to the department. And in this case, we are addressing this issue of racially and socioeconomically diverse student bodies and just wanting to get a sense and understand, you know, sort of, what the range of potential applicants may be.

Again, how an applicant responds is not going to be competitively evaluated at all. But we are asking for a description just so that we can better understand, and we will hold the applicant to whatever information they present in addressing this particular requirement, not to any standard that the department has because we've already said that these types of applicants, those applicants that are not seeking to address diversity issues, that they are eligible.

And so we are not holding them then to a standard of now, you know, trying to address any particular diversity goals but rather however they respond, that is exactly what we're going to hold them to. And then we recognize, of course, that there are changes and grantees modify their applications all the time.

And so that flexibility still remains. In terms of assurances, we tell the applicants what they're required to do, and what we are interested in knowing more about, and just want to make sure that they are clear, and that they can provide an assurance that they will address what we've presented, or if they aren't able to address it, provide an assurance that whatever they, again, state in their application, that they are able to meet that.

So, again, just want to clarify that we are asking for particular information to be submitted, but that information is not going to be evaluated, but rather it's for informational purposes and it allows us to help monitor and ensure application fidelity. Another question that we've received associated

with this particular issue is that the final rule still require applicants through a statement of assurances, that they will not hamper desegregation efforts.

It is unclear what may count as a valid desegregation effort, how applicants will know if valid desegregation efforts are happening, and thus if their proposal inappropriately impedes those efforts or not.

And in response to these concerns, just a couple things what we want to note, and the first is that, to address this particular assurance as well as application requirement, because, again, you'll see this common theme in the assurances, applicants should first determine if the surrounding school district or districts where the proposed charter school is likely to draw students from is under an existing court order.

Some school districts have desegregation obligations under plans or court orders that could affect or be affected by the establishment of a charter school even if your charter school is its own LEA. Typically, desegregation plans and court orders are resolutions of past segregated discrimination by school districts, determined by OCR, Office of Civil Rights, or by the courts in some instances with the participation of the U.S.

Department of Justice Civil Rights Division. If the jurisdiction in which your charter school is located is under a desegregation plan or order, there are steps that you can take to ensure compliance and avoid unnecessary delays. If you are uncertain whether your charter school is in a jurisdiction that is covered by an existing desegregation plan or court order, you may contact several entities for assistance, first, to determine if there is an applicable court order where the United States is a party to the case, you may contact the appropriate LEA, your SEA, or DOJ Civil Rights Division.

And to assist in this process, DOJ has provided each chief state school officer with a list of LEAs in the state that are subject to a court order. And then, second, to determine if there is an applicable OCR desegregation plan, you may contact, again, the appropriate LEA or the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights that serves your state.

And you should know that there are other desegregation plans and orders that do not involve the U.S. DOJ Civil Rights Division... I'm sorry, orders that do not involve the U.S. DOJ Civil Rights division or OCR. And these desegregation plans and orders only involve private parties in state or federal courts or state agencies that have ordered districts to desegregate.

And in some states and school districts, there may also be other obligations under state or local laws such as those to promote integration or diversity that could affect or be affected by your charter school. In those cases, you should consult your SEA or the appropriate LEA to determine whether the jurisdiction has a desegregation obligation.

And so what I've stated here, we will again provide additional, you know, information. We will restate this in a commonly asked question Q&A format in office hours that we hold next week. But the main takeaway that we want to ensure that applicants understand is that we recognize it's fair that you all are not experts in this space.

And so at the end of the day, your assessment based on the best available information that you can gather in the timeframe that we have offered is all we ask at a minimum. That is acceptable, your best assessment based on whatever information can be provided in the timeframe allotted.

Again, you know, even post-award, if we have questions, if your application does make it to the funding range in post-award, we can work with you. And I know the context is slightly different for SE, but just want to make sure in case we do have other applicants or developers or CMO on the call.

And so, again, just wanted to be clear that we are open to being flexible and recognizing the constraints that you all have in the charter school space and that you are not experts as it relates to this issue. The other subfactor is quickly just a robust family engagement plan. And then the fifth subfactor, how the plans for the operation of the charter school support and reflect the needs of students and families in the community, including consideration of district and community assets and how the school's location or anticipated location, if a facility is not secure, will facilitate access.

And then finally, a description of the steps the applicant has taken or will take to ensure that the proposed charter school, again, will not hamper, delay, or negatively affect desegregation. And I've already addressed some of this already. So, this is the newly created needs analysis requirement. Next slide. And just quickly here, the first bullet speaks to addressing issues associated with the State entity describing in its application how it will provide priority to eligible applicants in addressing educator-led and community-centered charter schools as well as charter school and traditional public school and school district collaborations.

I do want to point out that in this year's State entity Grant Competition, we are only asking state entities to address how they will give priority to eligible applicants that speak to the educator-led and community-centered priority or topic within the context of SE. The area of focus that's related to charter district collaborations is utilized as an invitational priority.

So, we are not addressing or including the charter district priority in the context of the CSP competition in any meaningful way this year. We also have created new priorities associated with requiring evidence to support the requested funds and projected enrollment as well as a description of the timeline for how the State entity will monitor and report on subgrant performance.

And that is also, sort of, consistent with some existing language in the statute. Next slide. So, on this slide, we list all of the new assurances. In the interest of time, I won't go through all of them because there's so much alignment with the previous requirements that I just talked about. I will touch on a couple of the assurances though.

I would like to draw your attention to the assurance that speaks to holding and participating in a public hearing in the local community in which the proposed charter school would be located. I do want to point out that in the NFP itself as well as... in the NFP, we do provide some flexibility and we talk about the fact that any existing efforts underway to conduct that hearing as a part of the charter authorizing process or some other process does count towards meeting this particular requirement.

And so there are, you know, sort of, ways that an applicant may be able to meet this requirement without conducting a separate hearing. The next assurance that I'd like to talk about is Assurance 13. And this speaks to some questions that we received regarding this assurance and the implications of the assurance.

And speaking to the differences between the use of planning funds versus implementation funds, we will talk in greater detail later on in the webinar to further clarify the use of planning versus

implementation funds. But I do want to note that this particular assurance is consistent with prior practices as well as how it was implemented under the previous administration and is consistent with the law.

We created this as a new assurance just to make sure that applicants are aware of, on the front end, what the law, sort of, intends. And so, again, the department also recognizes that the charter authorizing process may exceed 18 months. And if there are cases in which this occurs, applicants may request approval, but we do want to, sort of, be clear with this particular assurance that implementation funds may not be used until an applicant or charter school has secured a facility and has obtained charter authorizing.

It does not mean that implementation funds may not be awarded. So, I do want to just, sort of, be clear about that. And so these are the assurances for SE. Next slide. So, we also created one new selection criterion for SE. And this criterion is the extent to which the projected number of subgrant awards for each grant project year is supported by evidence of demand in need and the extent to which the proposed average subgrant award is supported by evidence of the need of applicants.

And this just aligns with, again, common themes as previously discussed in the requirements and assurances around need. Next, just in terms of competition basics, so, again, this is a discretionary grant program as many of you know.

We are estimating that we will have at least \$73 million, and this amount may increase as we make our way through our continuation award decisions. The estimated range of awards is anywhere between \$2 million and \$25 million per year. The size that we're estimating is \$10 million and, at the moment, we're currently estimating anywhere between at least eight grant awards, if not more.

And of course, the project period is up to five years. Before we pause for Q&A, I just want to remind you all that applications are due on August 5th, 2022 at 11:59 p.m. And with that, we will pause and ask that you please submit any questions that you might have via the chat function.

Thank you. Thanks, everyone, for submitting questions. Questions are still coming in. Just a couple of points we want to note, and we do want to keep things moving. So, we do think that some of these questions will get answered as we actually jump into the details of the NIA and what's being requested. There's a couple of questions on distinctions between planning and implementation. That will be addressed as we continue with the webinar.

There's some questions asking about the availability of funds. Again, the slide deck will be available, so you'll be able to refer back to that slide. But that amount will likely increase as we make our way through finalizing our NCC, non-competing continuation, award decisions. There are also some questions about unfunded applications from this competition and the absolute priority.

Again, these are all issues that we are going to circle back to once we go through the nuts and bolts of the NIA. So, with that being said, I do want to keep us moving, but, again, if we can address any of these questions moving forward on today's session, we will. If not, we will certainly try to address these questions next Monday. Thank you.

With that being said, I will now turn it over to Stephanie Jones.

- [Stephanie] Thanks, Anna. Hi, everyone. My name is Stephanie Jones, and I'm the acting supervisor for SE. Now, we're going to discuss and give you an overview of the SE Grant Program. Next slide,

please. So, first, the purpose of grants to state entities, one, it's a competitive grant program that enables state entities to award subgrants to eligible applicants in their state to open and prepare for the operation of new charter schools and to replicate and expand high-quality charter schools.

It provides financial assistance to state entities to support charter schools that serve elementary and secondary school students. We also want to point out that charter schools receiving funds under the SE program also may serve students in early childhood education programs or post-secondary students.

So, now, Ashley's going to take us through the eligibility requirements. Ashley.

- [Ashley] Hello. So, what constitutes an eligible State entity? State entities with state statutes specifically authorizing the establishment of charter schools may apply to the CSP SE Grant Program, noting that under Section 4303(e)(1) of ESEA, no State entity may receive a grant under this program for use in a State which a State entity is currently using a grant received under this program.

But who is a State entity? A State entity is either a state educational agency, a state charter school board, a governor of a state, or a state charter school support organization. That is a statewide support organization or a statewide authorizing board. It's not a county or a city authorizing board.

If you have any questions regarding your state's eligibility, please reach out to the competition email. Next slide. As said before, no State entity may receive a grant under this competition for use in a state where SE is currently using a grant.

On the screen, those states are listed and grayed out in the image. These slides will be available after the webinar. Per our notice, no State entity may receive a grant which is currently using the grant. Accordingly, the state in which a State entity has a current grant that is not in its final budget period nor operating under a no-cost extension or has indicated it will not request a no-cost extension is ineligible currently.

Next slide. So, now we cover who's an eligible applicant for the subgrant competitions. An eligible applicant when used with respect to the subgrants is a developer that has applied to an authorized public chartering agency to operate a charter school and has provided adequate and timely notice to that authority.

And a developer is an individual or group of individuals, including a public or private non-profit organization, which may include teachers, administrators, and other school staff or other members of the local community for which the charter school project will be carried out. I think we should just move on to the next section, being aware of time, and pause for questions after a few more slides.

So, I'll turn it back to Stephanie for now.

- Thanks, Ashley. So, now I'm going to go into how you pull together your application. Next slide, please. So, where to find the application? So, the application package, we provided the link to where you can access it and supporting materials as well. This is also available in the NIA and on our website, the competition website that we've set up.

Next slide. So, the application package components. So, there are the required forms, the application narrative, and other attachments. We're going to be going through each of these. Next slide.

So, let's talk about the required forms. Next slide, please. So, these are the required forms for SE grants. There are some standard forms and then assurances and certifications. And all of these forms are accessible with the application package in grants.gov. I'm not going to go through the list, but they are listed here and, again, they are listed in the application package and in grants.gov.

Next slide, please. So, this is the SF 424 form, one of the forms that you'll have to fill out. We wanted to show you what it looks like. If we go to the next slide, I'll actually point out a few things about it. Next slide, please.

So, something to keep in mind is make sure to use your organizational UEI number. This should be the same UEI number that you used when you registered in SAM. Make sure the congressional district... So, enter the district the applicant organization is located in and the district in which activities will occur.

For your proposed project start and end dates, the start date will be October 1st, 2022. This grant can be for up to five years. So, the end date should reflect how many years are requested. And, again, that's up to five years. For estimated funding, this should only reflect the first year of the project. And then for EO 12372, this program is subject to the executive order.

Next slide, please. So, this is the ED 524 form. Section A of the form is required, and you should complete it for all years for which funds are requested. And, again, that's up to five years.

Funds requested should match the detailed budget narrative that you are required to submit. And we'll be talking about that shortly. And I do want to point out, with this form, if there is any difference between this form and your budget narrative, we are going to use the figures in this form, but please ensure that the two align.

Next slide, please. So, a few other notes about the ED 524, if you have an approved indirect cost rate, provide the details in the budget narrative as well as in the bottom of this form. Make sure to include your agreement.

And the indirect cost will be calculated as part of the administrative 3% maximum. Another reminder, construction is not an allowable cost. Subgrants should be put in the "other" cost category. All costs that are not subgrants will either be part of the 7% technical assistance or 3% administrative cost. And finally, Section B of the ED 524 form should only be completed if you are making a matched commitment.

Next slide. GEPA is another required form. So, Section 427 of GEPA requires an applicant for federal funds to include a description of the steps they will take to ensure equitable access to and participation in the grant project.

To meet this requirement, applicants must include a statement that does two things. One, identifies at least one barrier that would prevent someone from participating in grant activities. And, two, explains what will be done to overcome the barrier. So just a tip.

It must be a barrier that you would encounter related to the SE grant proposal. So, please ensure that there's a clear barrier and solutions. This is not a request for a general non-discrimination statement but rather where you state clear barriers and solutions. Next slide, please.

So, now I'm going to transition to Ashley to go through the application narrative.

- Thank you. The application narrative consists of three separate narratives, the abstract narrative, the budget narrative, and the project narrative. And the project narrative is the main section that includes the competition preference priorities and other priorities as well as the selection criteria and application requirements.

Next slide. The abstract should include the name and number of the organization, the name and number and email address of the contact person for the project, and a project title if there is one as well as the main goals and objectives of the project.

Next slide. The ED 524 discussed earlier is supported by the budget narrative. The narrative is separate from private narrative, so it's not included in the recommended 60-page limit. Please do not limit the explanation of budget to save space. And on the slide are some resources you can look at when developing your budget.

As we said before, these slides will be shared out. So, any information that you are not copying down quickly now, you will be able to access tomorrow or a day later. Next slide. From the statute, awarded grantees must award some grants to eligible applicants engaged in activities such as opening and preparing for the operation of new schools, opening and preparing for the operation of replicated high-quality school charter schools, or expanding high-quality charter schools.

Expand replication and high-quality charter schools are all included in the definitions. Additionally, they must provide technical assistance to eligible applicants and authorized public chartering agencies and work with authorized public chartering agencies in the state to improve authorization quality, including developing capacity for and conducting fiscal oversight and auditing of charter schools.

Next. The main funding restrictions are 90% of all funds must be used to provide subgrants. We will review your budget based on this 90%. And if it's not 90%, we will cut the budget until the subgrants are 90% of the budget. And at least 7% of the funds must be used to provide TA to subgrantees and authorizers in support to authorizers.

And up to 3% of funds can be used for administrative costs. Next slide. So, I think it's important to talk about what are technical assistant costs. To be classified as technical assistance funding, it must provide technical assistance to eligible applicants and authorized public chartering agencies in the activities of opening and preparing new schools, replicating or expanding high-quality schools or work with authorized public agencies to improve authorizing quality.

All other activities fall under administrative costs. If you're providing general TA to charter schools and not specifically for eligible applicants around this competition, it would fall under administrative. Next slide. So, this slide shows what the subgrantees are eligible to use their funds for.

And this is important to consider when developing your estimate of how much each award will be. Next slide. So, just a few additional things to note is the subgrantee maximum is \$1.5 million, and a

subgrant could be for no more than 5 years of which they may not use more than 18 months for planning and program designs.

And planning funds can be used for hiring and compensating teachers, school officials, and other critical activities needed prior to opening. Other general hiring cannot happen after implementation with the CSP funds. In your narrative, you should clearly delineate not only the costs of each cost category but whether they are related to administrative costs, technical assistance, or if they are subgrants.

You should clearly delineate the number of subgrants you are budgeting for. And budget year-by-year with only the money needed for that subgrant award except for Year 5. Please double check your numbers and percentage maximums. You don't want to be reduced because of a calculation error. And as stated before, the ED 524 is where the funding amount will be reviewed and decided.

So, if the ED 524 is lower, you will get a lower amount than is in your budget narrative. Next slide. Another thing to consider with your subgrants is an eligible applicant may not receive more than one subgrant under this program in a five-year period unless they demonstrate that the individual charter school has at least three years of improved educational results for students enrolled in such charter schools, which such elements described in the definition of a high-quality charter school.

A charter school that previously received CSP funds for planning or implementation under ESEA as amended by No Child Left Behind or for the replication or expansion of high-quality charter schools under the department's appropriations act, the CMO grant is not eligible to receive funds from a state entity under this program for the same or a substantially similar purpose.

However, a charter school may be eligible to receive funds to expand if the charter school is a high-quality charter school. Likewise, a charter school that receives fund from a State entity is ineligible to receive funds for the same or substantially similar purpose under the Developer or CMO programs. And you are expected to review for this before making new subgrant awards.

Next slide. Applicants must ensure that all costs included in their proposed budget are reasonable and necessary in light of the goals and objectives of the proposed project. Any costs determined to be unreasonable or unnecessary will be removed from the final budget. The budget should include only costs that are allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the project.

In the budget narrative attachment, please provide an itemized budget narrative by project year for each budget category in addition to justification for all costs included. Additionally, you will need to ensure that subgrantee budgets meet all these criterias. Next slide.

We want to note that you're approved to use funding under the administrative cost to attend the annual two-day meeting for project directors during each year of the project. We are encouraging you to include it as an administrative cost, but please be clear on how the travel costs are calculated.

It should not just be \$2,000 per person. Show us why it is \$2,000 per person, depending on where you are located in the country. And finally just note that we do have a recorded webinar that is already available, dedicated to developing your budget that can be found through a link provided on the slide and also through the SE Competition website.

We will take a moment to pause again or review the questions we have received. Where is the project director's meeting? The project director's meeting is held annually in Washington, D.C.

That is where you should plan on being. It is not always held at the same time of year. We will try to send out a notice with enough time to not be a burden in the process of getting your travel approved. So, there was a question about that we noted.

For FY 2022 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications in this competition, this priority will be used as an absolute priority. We'll talk about that priority in a few moments.

Unfunded applications are applications that do not meet our funding criteria. It does not mean they did not score well, but they did not score high enough or other decisions made by the department meant that they were not in the funding range because we did not have enough funds, but we would consider them as funding options for the future.

So, someone wanted to clarify if a new charter organization is eligible while seeking charter status. Going back to the definition, they must have applied to an authorizer before they are considered an eligible applicant.

They do not have to have the charter, but they must have applied for the charter. And would Susan please go back to the slide that showed the funding amounts? These are just general amounts.

No, the one with the averages for the total award. This might be too far back, but they're just general amounts. The average award meant \$10 million each year. You can find the list of state entities that cannot apply for this grant this year in the NIA as well as the slide deck, additionally, in our application package instructions.

If you have any questions about those in a specific state, please send it back to our mailbox. It's noted that the requirement section is difficult to parse out what applies to SEA and what applies to the applicant.

If you go into the notice where the application requirements are, including the assurances, or if you go into the application package instructions, we hope it is clearer in there, which applies to which. If there's any requirements you're unsure on, please do reach out to us through the competition mailbox.

I will note that even if something is written as the school needs to ensure that it does something as an assurance, it is the SE's responsibility to ensure that the school does it as the role of the pass-through agency. And the only sections that are specifically rated as part of the competition are the selection criteria and the competition priorities.

However, a peer reviewer can look at the total application to inform them on responding to if you have replied to the criteria because often there's material in the appendices that speak to the criteria. So, we will go forward, and there will be another point where we speak to answer questions.

Otherwise, we will aim to answer them in the office hours as said before. Now, we want to talk about the various components of your application of the project narrative. As we said, this is the part that is thoroughly peer-reviewed.

Next slide. To facilitate the review of the application, please organize your project narrative in the following order after a Table of Contents: the priorities, then the selection criteria, and then the application requirements. You are recommended to limit the project narrative to 60 pages.

You are not required to limit the pages. The Table of Contents and any other attachments, as I said, like the budget narrative, do not count in the 60 pages. We recommend 60 pages because humans are reading these applications, and there's limited bandwidth for reading.

If they have to read a longer application, they will. I promise you that. They will read the application but just to limit the workload. Thank you. Next. So, applicants must be clear on which priority they're addressing. It should be the header of each section before addressing the priority.

And let's go talk about the priorities next. This year, we are... Next slide. The best practices for charter school authorizes is a statutory priority we're operationalizing as an absolute priority in this year's competition.

This means that all applicants must address this priority, and we are operationalizing it to align with the purpose of the State entity's program, which is partially around ensuring best practices exist for charter school authorizers. Next slide.

This is the first priority from statute that we're operationalizing as a competitive preference priority. For all of the competitive preference priorities, they do come from statute. So, to receive points for this, you must show evidence at least one authorized public chartering agency other than the local LEA exists in the state or that there's an appeals process.

Next slide. To be eligible to receive points under this priority, you must demonstrate the extent to which the State in which the SE is located ensures equitable financing, as compared to traditional public schools, for charter schools and students in a prompt manner.

Next, Competitive Preference Priority #3 is around demonstrating that the State entity is located in a state that uses best practices from charter schools to help improve struggling schools and LEAs. Competitive Preference Priority #4 is around supporting charter school facilities in one or more of the following manners.

You need to check each box to receive the full points. It is the extent to which the charter schools are supported by some of these activities. Next slide. And, Competitive Preference Priority #5 is that the applicant must demonstrate the extent that the applicant supports charter schools that serve at-risk students through such activities.

The answer to these priorities can be things that currently exist or planned activities for all of these competitive preference priorities except for Priority #1. Then, finally, we have an invitational priority that aligns to the CMO and developer priority around collaboration between charter schools and traditional public charter schools and traditional public schools or districts in which the NFP published on July 6th.

For invitational priority, there are no additional points awarded. The priority is proposed to learn more about the field topic that the secretary and department are interested in learning. The main use of invitational priorities is to shed light on the potential use in future competitions or more meaningful ways to address the interest.

The next two slides are just the rest of the invitational priority. And then we move on to the selection criteria. For each of the criteria, we use factors from the statute and from EDGAR, which is the Department of Education's general selection criteria as well as the one factor that Anna discussed earlier under project design from the NFP.

Next slide. Please refer to the application package instructions to review the scoring rubric that will be provided to peer reviewers. In it, there's described what a fully developed answer would look like as well as a well-developed, or an adequately developed, or poorly developed response look like.

It can be found on Page 49 of the application package instructions. Next. This program has many application requirements from statute and then we added additional requirements through the NFP.

Please refer to the application package instructions for the application requirements crosswalk. We have directed applicants to respond to some requirements and responses to the criteria for requirements not listed. To be included in the project narrative, please include a standalone attachment, responding to the requirements, noting which requirement is being responded to directly at the end of the project narrative.

Next. And this slide is the list of definitions that are included in the notice inviting application. I advise that these applications be reviewed. Some noteworthy ones are demonstrates a rationale, educationally disadvantaged student and underserved student as well as charter school and high-quality charter school.

The definition of a charter school is whatever charter school must meet in order to be an eligible applicant. Next. On the slide are the GPRA measures that you will be required to respond to annually in your annual performance report.

You do not need to include these measures in your applications. They are the number of charter schools in operation around the nation operationalized as how many charter schools were funded by each SE subgrant each year and the percentage of fourth and eighth-grade charter schools who are achieving at or above proficient level on the state assessments in mathematics and reading and language arts.

Additionally, there's a third measure, which we determine through the data collection around subgrantee awards and funding. Next slide. In your project narrative, you must propose project-specific performance measures and performance targets consistent with the objectives of the proposed project.

They must provide the following information of the measure, the baseline data, the targets, and how the measure will be collected. Next slide. There is an additional prerecorded webinar around logic models and smart performance measures that I advise reviewing.

Under each objective, there must be a measure that will be reported annually. Not all product measures need to be reported annually, but there needs to be at least one performance measure under each objective that needs to be reported annually. And I will turn this back to Stephanie.

Thank you.

- Thanks, Ashley. Now, I'm going to go through the other attachments. Next slide, please. So, applicants should attach all appendices to the Other Attachments form. For each appendix, please attach any attachment of your application file in either PDF, which is portable document format or Microsoft Word.

You can find in the application package instructions with additional guidance. Make sure to label each file with the appendix name—for example, Appendix A Resumes—and upload the file again to Other Attachments form. Now, the Other Attachments form can support up to 10 attachments, so please merge appendices into one document as necessary.

And, again, we encourage you to review the application package instructions for details on each of these. One other thing to note, special characters could impact your ability to submit because grants.gov does not properly process special characters. So, do not use colons or backslashes whenever you're naming your documents.

Next slide, please. So, these are the six Other Attachments. Applicants should not include substantive project-related information that you wish peer reviewers to consider anywhere in the application other than in the Project Narrative Form and the Budget Narrative Form.

So, these sections for the Other Attachments. Appendix A is the Charter School Program Assurances, Appendix B are Resumes, Appendix C are Letters of Support, Appendix D is the Proof of Nonprofit Status, Appendix E is Proprietary Information, excuse me, and Appendix F is for Additional Information. Next slide, please.

So, we also have some additional notes. Next slide, please. For open licensing, so all Department of Education grantees awarded competitive grant funds, unless an exception applies, must openly license to the public all copyrightable grant deliverables that are created with Department grant funds, including such deliverables as educational software, curriculum materials, professional development, training materials, and assessment systems.

So, this requirement does apply to CSP State entity grants and subgrants. And open licensing promotes efficient dissemination of grant-funded works, and it promotes innovation through creative reuse of grant-funded works. Next slide, please.

So, these are the applicable regulations and statute that provide the authority for the eligibility and application requirements, priorities, definitions, and selection criteria that is presented in the program's NIA. So, we encourage you to consult them. Next slide.

If your application is successful, we will notify your U.S. representative and U.S. senators and send you a grant award notification, also known as a GAN. We may also notify you informally as well. If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we will also notify you via mail. Next slide, please.

So, we're going to pause here for you to ask questions, and we will be back momentarily. And, again, please type your questions and we will be back to answer them. Thanks.

- Okay, I want to note that we do plan on posting the slides and the recording tomorrow. That does depend on technology working out for us. It's never something we can automatically promise will happen in the government. Additionally, there was a question from someone who said, if they are

an eligible support organization in an eligible state and apply, and their state Department of Ed also applies, could they both get funded?

No, this is discussed in the NIA that I failed to note around eligibility. We will fund the higher-ranking application. Only one application per state could be funded. I cannot counsel you on if you should reach out to the state agency or not, but just be aware that only one entity will be funded and we encourage partnerships.

So, we will turn it back to Stephanie. And other questions we've gotten, we are not ignoring. They are just not things we can answer on the fly.

- Okay. Thanks, Ashley. So, now we're going to start with submitting your application. Next slide, please. So, applications are submitted electronically. Applications for grants under this program,, unless you qualify for an exception to the requirement, should be submitted through grants.gov.

Next slide, please. So, we're going to take you through using grants.gov. Next slide, please. First, a reminder that applications are due on August 5th at 11:59 p.m. And please note that the grants.gov help desk is not available on weekends, so you are strongly encouraged to submit early.

You can always resubmit your application prior to this closing date if you need to update your application. Next slide, please. So, again, the applications are due on August 5th at 11:59 p.m. Here we provided, once again, the email address that you can send questions to.

There is a page limit included in the notice. It is a recommended page limit. Also, regarding file types, please keep in mind that, again, files should be in PDF or Microsoft Word format. And everything should be submitted through grants.gov.

Next slide, please.

- Stephanie, before you go to that, can I just clarify? It should be in a read-only PDF.

- Thank you, Ashley.

- Not encrypted.

- Good, thank you for pointing that out. So, grants.gov is our external application system that's used throughout the federal government. Next slide, please. And for registration, please ensure that you have registered with SAM to obtain your UEI or Unique Entity Identifier number.

Set up your Authorized Organization Representative or AOR profile. Get authorized as an AOR by your organization's e-Biz POC and track your AOR status. Next slide, please.

So, the complete grants.gov registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. So, you do not have to register with grants.gov if you only want to find grant opportunities or download application packages, but you must register to submit. So, please do so immediately. Next slide.

So, a few other tips. Review the grants.gov submission procedures and tips for applicants that are in the application package instructions. Applicants must download the correct version of Adobe in order to read any grants.gov application packages. In Adobe, applicants must move all mandatory forms from left to right in order to open each form.

And actually, in the interest of time, I'm not going to go through the rest of the instructions on how to handle the forms in grants.gov. But suffice it to say, you can consult this slide as well as the application package instructions and what's available in grants.gov.

Next slide, please. So, for application submission. For successful submission, applicants should receive a confirmation email with a time and date stamp and an assigned tracking number from grants.gov. Applicants should receive a validation email from grants.gov.

This means the application is ready for Department pickup, and applicants should receive an email with their assigned PR Award number. In the case of unsuccessful submission, applicant should receive a confirmation email with a time and date stamp and an assigned tracking number from grants.gov. If the application is received after 11:59 p.m.

on August 5th, it would be unsuccessful. Or if validation is not successful, it will be unsuccessful. And email may list the error or the applicant can use their tracking number to find the submission error. Next slide.

So, tracking your submission. Make sure to verify submission is on time and validated successfully. To check, you can log into grants.gov and click on the Track My Application link. The date and time received should be earlier than 11:59 p.m. on August 5th.

And application status should be validated. Do not rely solely on email to confirm whether your application has been received on time and validated successfully. You should go in following the steps to check the status. Next slide. So, just a few submission tips.

Save a copy of your application package so that you have it. We may request original signatures on forms at a later date. Applications cannot be unsubmitted after the closing date of August 5th, and users may resubmit their application at any point up to that closing date.

We will review the most recent submission before the due date and time. Next slide. And a reminder around grants.gov availability. If you are experiencing problems submitting your application through grants.gov, please contact the grants.gov support desk.

We provide the number. You must obtain a grants.gov support desk case number and must keep a record of it. If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date, which again is August 5th because of technical problems with the grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30 p.m.

the following day to enable you to transmit your application electronically by hand delivery or through the mail, following the instructions in the notice. Next slide.

All right. Now, we're going to go through the application review process. So, for the application review process, there are four steps. There's the eligibility review, the peer review, the rank order, and award notification. In the interest of time, I'm not going to go through each of these.

But, again, you will receive this slide deck. Next slide. Once again, important reminders for applicants. Remember to register on sam.gov. Remember that the deadline for transmittal of applications is August 5th, 2022. Also, remember that there are other pre-recorded webinars that are available on the website, one having to do with budgets, the other having to do with smart measures and performance measures.

And these slides and a recording of this session will also be available on that same webpage. And next slide, please. And so we are going to pause once again for questions. We'll be right back. Thanks.

- All right, we will resume. So, we did receive another question about interest in serving as a peer reviewer, and again, we'd refer you to the CSP Program website. We have up our call for peer reviewers, and you can also just submit your resume to any of the emails that you see on the screen with the exception of grants.gov.

I'm sorry. Not the grants.gov website, but the State Entity Competition website. And then we also have a general charter school program website at ed.gov. And so with that, I would like to thank you all for hanging in there with us. We're five minutes over time, but I warned you that we had a lot of content to try to get through.

We would also like to encourage you to please complete an evaluation survey just to give us some feedback on how we did. And I would also encourage you to please submit any questions that you may have as you continue to review all of the resources that we've made available. Please send those questions to us in advance of next Monday's meeting. I can't stress enough that the more time we have to prepare to be able to respond to those questions, it just increases the likelihood that we'll be able to provide a comprehensive answer that provides more clarity than anything we could do on the fly.

So, with that being said, again, thank you all for your time, and we look forward to continuing the conversation next Monday. Thank you. Have a good one.