

# **Fact Sheet: Federal Grant RFP**

## **Teacher and School Leader Incentive Grant (TSL)**

### **Purpose of the Grant**

To assist States, local educational agencies (LEAs—i.e., districts and schools), and nonprofit organizations to develop, implement, improve, or expand comprehensive performance-based compensation systems (PBCS) or human capital management systems (HCMS) for teachers, principals, and other school leaders (especially for teachers, principals, and other school leaders in high-need schools) who raise student academic achievement and close the achievement gap between high- and low-performing students.

The RFP defines a “Human Capital Management System (HCMS)” as a system—by which a District makes and implements human capital decisions, such as decisions on preparation, recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, dismissal, compensation, professional development, tenure, and promotion; and that includes a Performance-Based Compensation System.

The RFP defines a “Performance-Based Compensation System (PBCS)” as a system of compensation for teachers, principals, or other School Leaders— (A) That differentiates levels of compensation based in part on measurable increases in student academic achievement; and (B) Which may include - -

(i) Differentiated levels of compensation, which may include bonus pay, on the basis of the employment responsibilities and success of effective teachers, principals, or other School Leaders in hard-to-staff schools or high-need subject areas; and

(ii) Recognition of the skills and knowledge of teachers, principals, or other School Leaders as demonstrated through - - Successful fulfillment of additional responsibilities or job functions, such as teacher leadership roles; and Evidence of professional achievement and mastery of content knowledge and superior teaching and leadership skills.

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## Additional Information

In addition, a portion of TSL funds are dedicated to study the effectiveness, fairness, quality, consistency, and reliability of performance-based compensation systems or human capital management systems for teachers, principals, and other school leaders.

Critically, the grant is largely focused on districts with "High-Need Schools." In fact, applicants must provide a list of the schools whose educators will participate in the grant, identify which of the schools are High-Need Schools, and demonstrate that at least the majority of the participating schools are High-Need Schools.

A High-Need School is defined as a school with 50% or more of its enrollment from low-income families, based on eligibility for free- or reduced-price lunch subsidies under the Richard Russell National School Lunch Act, or other poverty measures consistent with ESEA. For middle and high schools, eligibility may be calculated on the basis of comparable data from feeder schools. Eligibility as a High-Need School under this definition is determined on the basis of the most currently available data.

## The Specifics of the TSL Grant

Below are some of the most-important details about the TSL grant [[CLICK HERE](#) for the actual RFP].

### Important Dates:

Deadline for Notice of Intent to Apply: February 4, 2017. This is a non-required deadline that helps the USDoE to determine the number of potential reviewers that will be needed. This deadline is also non-binding.

Date of Pre-Application Workshops: Not yet announced.

Application Deadline: March 24, 2017.

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### Available Funds and Funding:

For FY 2017, the Administration has requested \$250,000,000 under TSL. It intends to use an estimated \$159,000,000 of this funding for new awards under this competition. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. The USDoE is inviting applications now to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

Estimated Range of Awards:

\$500,000–\$12,000,000 for the first year of the project period.

Estimated Average Size of Awards:

\$10,000,000 for the first year of the project period. Funding for the second through fifth years of the project period is subject to the availability of funds and the approval of continuation awards.

Estimated Number of Awards: 15–20.

Project Period: Up to 36 months, with renewal of up two additional years if the grantee demonstrates to the Secretary that the grantee is effectively using funds. Such renewal may include allowing the grantee to scale up or replicate the successful program.

NOTE WELL: 50% Cash or In-Kind Match. Per ESEA, each applicant must provide a signed assurance attesting to its intent and ability to provide, from non-Federal sources, an amount equal to 50% of the amount of the grant, which may be provided in cash or in kind, to carry out the activities supported by the grant. Applicants and grantees must budget their matching contributions on an annual basis relative to each annual award of TSL grant funds.

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The Focus of the Grant

All applicants must meet Absolute Priority #1: the development of a Human Capital Management System (HCMS). To meet this Priority:

The applicant must include, in its application, a description of its existing District-wide HCMS, including a description of its performance-based compensation systems (PBCS).

In addition, the application must describe—

How the HCMS currently includes an Evaluation and Support System for teachers, School Leaders, or both, that reflects clear and fair measures of performance, based in part on demonstrated improvement in student academic achievement;

Any proposed modifications of the HCMS under the proposed project, including modifications that expand or improve the Evaluation and Support System as defined in this notice;

How the Evaluation and Support System will provide ongoing, differentiated, targeted, and personalized support and feedback for improvement, including professional development opportunities designed to increase effectiveness during the entire project period;

A data system that links Educators with student academic achievement data; and

How the HCMS uses performance information from the Evaluation and Support System to inform key school- and district-level human capital decisions such as decisions on preparation, recruitment, hiring, placement, retention, dismissal, compensation (including performance-based compensation), professional development, tenure, and promotion, particularly as they affect Educators working in High-Need Schools in the district(s) the project will serve.

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In addition to Absolute Priority #1, applicants must include, in their application, a description of how their projects will enhance their Evaluation and Support Systems for one of the following:

- Absolute Priority 2: Evaluation and Support Systems for Teachers;
- Absolute Priority 3: Evaluation and Support Systems for School Leaders; or
- Absolute Priority 4: Evaluation and Support Systems for Teachers and School Leaders.

The grant RFP defines an Evaluation and Support System as:

A system that is fair, rigorous, valid, reliable, and objective and reflects clear and fair measures of teacher, principal, or other School Leader performance, based in part on demonstrated improvement in student academic achievement; and provides teachers, principals, or other School Leaders with ongoing, differentiated, targeted, and personalized support and feedback for improvement, including professional development opportunities designed to increase effectiveness.

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Finally, “bonus points” will be available to applicants who submit projects designed:

- \* To address the most significant gaps in student access to effective teachers and/or school leaders - - in High-Need Schools, including gaps or inequities in how effective teachers and/or school leaders are distributed across the district; and/or

\* To attract, support, and retain a diverse and effective workforce, including effective teachers and/or school leaders, from historically under-represented populations. At a minimum, applicants must provide a description detailing their commitment to creating and maintaining a diverse workforce, and their plan for attracting, supporting, and retaining diverse educators.

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### Additional Requirements

In addition to the Priorities above, applicants must demonstrate how they will use grant funds to develop, implement, improve, or expand - - in collaboration with their educators and member of the public - - one or more of the following:

A. Developing or improving an Evaluation and Support System, including as part of an HCMS, that - - (i) Reflects clear and fair measures of teacher or School Leader performance, or both, based in part on demonstrated improvement in student academic achievement; and (ii) Provides teachers, or School Leaders, or both, with ongoing, differentiated, targeted, and personalized support and feedback for improvement, including professional development opportunities designed to increase effectiveness.

B. Conducting outreach within an LEA or a State to gain input on how to construct an Evaluation and Support System and to develop support for the Evaluation and Support System, including by training appropriate personnel in how to observe and evaluate teachers, or School Leaders, or both.

C. Providing School Leaders with - - (i) Balanced autonomy to make budgeting, scheduling, and other school-level decisions in a manner that meets the needs of the school without compromising the intent or essential components of the policies of the LEA or State; and (ii) Authority to make staffing decisions that meet the needs of the school, such as building an instructional leadership team that includes teacher leaders or offering opportunities for teams or pairs of effective teachers or candidates to teach or start teaching in High-Need Schools together.

D. Implementing, as part of a comprehensive PBCS, a differentiated salary structure, which may include bonuses and stipends, to one or both of the following: (i) Teachers who - - Teach in High-Need Schools or high-need subjects; Raise student academic achievement; or Take on additional leadership responsibilities; or (ii) School Leaders who serve in High- Need Schools and raise student academic achievement in the schools.

E. Improving the LEA's system and process for the recruitment, selection, placement, and retention of effective teachers, or School Leaders, or both, in High-Need Schools, such as by improving LEA policies and procedures to

ensure that High-Need schools are competitive and timely in - - (i) Attracting, hiring, and retaining effective Educators; (ii) Offering bonuses or higher salaries to effective Educators; or (iii) Establishing or strengthening School Leader Residency Programs and Teacher Residency Programs.

F. Instituting career advancement opportunities characterized by increased responsibility and pay that reward and recognize effective teachers, principals, or other School Leaders in High-Need Schools and enable them to expand their leadership and results, such as through teacher-led professional development, mentoring, coaching, hybrid roles, administrative duties, and career ladders.

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## Additional Grant Information

### 1. Additional Requirements

#### Requirement #1

In addition to the Priorities above, applicants must demonstrate how they will use grant funds to develop, implement, improve, or expand - - in collaboration with their educators and member of the public - - one or more of the following:

A. Developing or improving an Evaluation and Support System, including as part of an HCMS, that - - (i) Reflects clear and fair measures of teacher or School Leader performance, or both, based in part on demonstrated improvement in student academic achievement; and (ii) Provides teachers, or School Leaders, or both, with ongoing, differentiated, targeted, and personalized support and feedback for improvement, including professional development opportunities designed to increase effectiveness.

B. Conducting outreach within an LEA or a State to gain input on how to construct an Evaluation and Support System and to develop support for the Evaluation and Support System, including by training appropriate personnel in how to observe and evaluate teachers, or School Leaders, or both.

C. Providing School Leaders with - - (i) Balanced autonomy to make budgeting, scheduling, and other school-level decisions in a manner that meets the needs of the school without compromising the intent or essential components of the policies of the LEA or State; and (ii) Authority to make staffing decisions that meet the needs of the school, such as building an instructional leadership team that includes teacher leaders or offering opportunities for teams or pairs of effective teachers or candidates to teach or start teaching in High-Need Schools together.

D. Implementing, as part of a comprehensive PBCS, a differentiated salary structure, which may include bonuses and stipends, to one or both of the following: (i) Teachers who - - Teach in High-Need Schools or high-need subjects; Raise student academic achievement; or Take on additional leadership responsibilities; or (ii) School Leaders who serve in High- Need Schools and raise student academic achievement in the schools.

E. Improving the LEA's system and process for the recruitment, selection, placement, and retention of effective teachers, or School Leaders, or both, in High-Need Schools, such as by improving LEA policies and procedures to ensure that High-Need schools are competitive and timely in - - (i) Attracting, hiring, and retaining effective Educators; (ii) Offering bonuses or higher salaries to effective Educators; or (iii) Establishing or strengthening School Leader Residency Programs and Teacher Residency Programs.

F. Instituting career advancement opportunities characterized by increased responsibility and pay that reward and recognize effective teachers, principals, or other School Leaders in High-Need Schools and enable them to expand their leadership and results, such as through teacher-led professional development, mentoring, coaching, hybrid roles, administrative duties, and career ladders.

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### Requirement #2: Matching Funds (see above)

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### Requirement #3: Involvement of High-Need Schools

Critically, the grant is largely focused on districts with "High-Need Schools." In fact, applicants must provide a list of the schools whose educators will participate in the grant, identify which of the schools are High-Need Schools, and demonstrate that at least the majority of the participating schools are High-Need Schools.

A High-Need School is defined as a school with 50% or more of its enrollment from low-income families, based on eligibility for free- or reduced-price lunch subsidies under the Richard Russell National School Lunch Act, or other poverty measures consistent with ESEA. For middle and high schools, eligibility may be calculated on the basis of comparable data from feeder schools. Eligibility as a High-Need School under this definition is determined on the basis of the most currently available data.

The application must describe the rationale for extending the TSL-funded PBCS to educators who are NOT working in High-Need Schools.

The data demonstrating that a school is a High-Need School must be school-level data (not district or state data).

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### Other Application Requirements

#### *1. Other: Application Requirements:*

All applicants must meet the following application requirements in order to be considered for funding. The application requirements are from ESEA section 2212(c).

Each eligible applicant desiring a grant under this program must submit an application that contains—

- (a) A description of the PBCS or HCMS that the eligible applicant proposes to develop, implement, improve, or expand through the grant;
- (b) A description of the most significant gaps or insufficiencies in student access to effective teachers, principals, or other School Leaders in High-Need Schools, as applicable to the proposed project, including gaps or inequities in how effective teachers, principals, or other School Leaders are distributed across the LEA, as identified using factors such as data on school resources, staffing patterns, school environment, educator support systems, and other school-level factors;
- (c) A description and evidence of the support and commitment from teachers, principals, or other School Leaders, as applicable to the proposed project, which may include charter school leaders, in the school (including organizations representing teachers, principals, or other school leaders), the community, and the LEA to the activities proposed under the grant;
- (d) A description of how the eligible applicant will develop and implement a fair, rigorous, valid, reliable, and objective process to evaluate teacher, principal, or other school leader performance, as applicable to the proposed project, under the system that is based in part on measures of student academic achievement, including the baseline performance against which evaluations of improved performance will be made;

- (e) A description of the LEAs or schools to be served under the grant, including student academic achievement, demographic, and socioeconomic information as identified in the application package for this program;
- (f) A description of the effectiveness of teachers, principals, or other School Leaders, as applicable to the proposed project, in the LEA or LEAs and the schools to be served under the grant, and the extent to which the system will increase the effectiveness of teachers, principals, or other School Leaders in such schools;
- (g) A description of how the eligible applicant will use grant funds in each year of the grant, including a timeline for implementation of key grant activities;
- (h) A description of how the eligible applicant will continue the activities assisted under the grant after the grant period ends;
- (i) A description of the State, local, or other public or private funds that will be used to supplement the grant, including funds under Title II, part A of the ESEA, and sustain the activities assisted under the grant after the end of the grant period;
- (j) A description of the rationale for the project; how the proposed activities are evidence-based; and if applicable the prior experience of the eligible entity in developing and implementing such activities.
- (k) A description of how grant activities will be evaluated, monitored, and reported to the public.

**Note:** Relative to (j) above: In order to demonstrate that the activities are evidence-based, an applicant may, among other things, provide supporting documentation for the study or studies that serve as the evidence base for one or more of the activities that will be implemented as part of the proposed project.

Additionally, we encourage applicants to demonstrate in their application that at least one of the activities to be implemented as part of their proposed project is based on Promising Evidence (as defined in this notice).

In recent years, the TIF program has released various reports that document the value of, and explore the implementation of, an HCMS that includes a PBCS.

In addition, other recent research also explores TSL-type activities. We encourage applicants to include evidence-based activities when considering the full set of TSL activities, such as:

- Educator preparation
- Recruitment
- Educator Induction
- Retention
- Mentoring

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For More Information:

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