



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

Scholarships for Opportunity and Results (SOAR) Act Educator Pipeline Grant Competition Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25)

Frequently Asked Questions

(Released June 4, 2024)

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Competition Timeline

Q: Our organization did not attend the pre-application webinars. Are we still eligible to apply?

A: Yes! Applicants are still eligible to apply if they did not attend the pre-application webinar and/or did not submit an Intent to Apply form. During the webinar, changes to the application, scoring rubric, and award process from prior year applications were covered. Applicants can find a recording of the pre-application webinar [here](#) under the “Fiscal Year 2025 Resources” heading.

Interested organizations are also highly encouraged to submit an Intent to Apply form as applicants who submit an Intent to Apply form will receive direct email updates throughout the application process.

Q: Will applicants receive confirmation of receipt after submitting the Intent to Apply form?

A: Yes. Applicants were strongly encouraged to submit an Intent to Apply form by Friday, May 31, 2024. Applicants will receive a confirmation email from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). If you do not receive a confirmation email, you can reach out to Jessica Mardo at jessica.mardo@dc.gov.

Q: When will awarded applicants be able to begin conducting program activities and expending grant funds?

A: OSSE anticipates making awards on Oct. 1, 2024, with pre-award costs allowed back to July 1, 2024 for all awarded applicants. The duration of the award period will be three years from Oct. 1, 2024. Awarded applicants are not required to begin program activities immediately.

Eligibility

Q: Our organization is a current SOAR Teacher Pipeline grantee. Are we eligible to apply?

A: Yes. Current and former grantees of the SOAR Teacher Pipeline grant or other SOAR Act grants are eligible to apply. Please note that current Teacher Pipeline grantees must demonstrate that they will serve a separate group of individual teachers with funding awarded under this competition. The funding under this competition may not be used to serve the same teachers served by a previous or existing SOAR Teacher Pipeline project.

Q: Our organization is also interested in applying for the FY25 SOAR Third Party grant. Are we eligible to apply for both grants?

A: Yes. Organizations may be awarded multiple SOAR funded grants in the same fiscal year.

Q: Our LEA plans to submit an application in partnership with a nonprofit organization but a different nonprofit partner has approached us to write a commitment letter for their application. Are we permitted to partner with this second nonprofit organization if the scope of their project is not the same as the scope of our own application project?

A: Yes, as long as the scopes of the two projects are not redundant and will serve different individual educators, then this is allowable.

Partnership Requirements

Q: How many nonprofit partners must a local education agency (LEA) or consortium of LEAs applying for this grant have?

A: LEA applicants must partner with at least one nonprofit charter support organization with a successful history of providing teacher pipeline services to DC public charter schools. A letter of commitment from the nonprofit partner must be submitted with the application.

Q: How many LEA partners must a nonprofit organization applying for this grant have?

A: Nonprofit organizations applying as the lead applicant for this grant must partner with at least two DC public charter LEAs. Letters of commitment from each partner LEA must be submitted with the application.

Q: Our LEA has existing partnerships with institutions of higher education (IHEs) to provide teacher pipeline services. Is this an eligible partnership under the grant?

A: Nonprofit IHEs are eligible as both a partner organization to an LEA that is applying or the lead applicant (i.e., the organization submitting the application in the Enterprise Grants Management System [EGMS]) under this program.

Grant Application and Priorities

Q: Do applications/projects need to meet all three funding priorities?

A: No. However, an additional 10 points will be awarded on the scoring rubric to a project that meets one or more priority areas. If a project meets more than one priority area, the maximum number of additional points the applicant can receive is still 10.

Applicants may also apply without meeting any priority area, but their application will not receive any additional priority points.

Enterprise Grants Management System (EGMS)

Q: Where should I go if I have questions about EGMS or have a technical issue?

Applicants should create an [EGMS Support Ticket](#) upon logging in to EGMS. [See here](#) for instructions. Please note, EGMS is no longer utilizing a call center or monitoring a support email address.

Q: Does the 2024 Central Data application need to be fully approved prior to submitting an application under this competition?

A: No. Applicants must complete all sections of the Certifications and Assurances tab within the Central Data application for 2024 in EGMS; however, the full Central Data application is not required to be submitted or approved prior to submission of an application for the SOAR Educator Pipeline grant. If an applicant is awarded, their Central Data application will need to be fully approved before they can start receiving reimbursement payments.

Budgeting and Allowable Costs

Q: The request for applications (RFA) states that funding requested through this competition may not be the sole source of funding for the program. Where should we describe other sources of funding within the application?

A: Applicants should describe other sources of funding for the program within the Budget Narrative section of the EGMS application (Tab: Budget, Subtab: Budget Narrative).

Q: Can the \$10,000 limit per teacher take into account both first-year and second-year teacher residents?

A: The \$10,000 limit per teacher applies to each individual being recruited and/or trained through the program. The total budget for all three years should not exceed \$10,000 times the number of educators being recruited and/or trained through the program.

Q: Are pre-award costs allowable under this grant?

A: A: Yes. Allowable pre-award costs in each program area include costs related to activities required to stand up or continue an educator pipeline program:

1. Salaries and benefits for individuals involved with program recruitment, training, and other activities related to standing up or continuing an educator pipeline program.
2. Professional services involved with recruitment or training of program participants.
3. Equipment or supplies and materials involved in training or onboarding of program participants.
4. Other objects related to training (venue rental, travel) of program participants and/or payment of stipends or tuition for program participants.

OSSE will make individual determinations for costs not on this list.

Q: What happens if I am not awarded or awarded at less than my requested amount?

A: Costs incurred by an applicant before receiving an award are done so at the recipient's risk. OSSE is not obligated to reimburse these costs if the applicant does not receive an award or receives an award that is lower than their requested amount.

Q: How do I indicate pre-award costs in the application?

A: Pre-award costs should be added in the cost basis section for each line item. Applicants should indicate what portion of the total line item is going toward pre-award costs as well as how much this is monetarily.

For example, “The program manager’s total salary and benefits are \$100,000. Fifty percent is charged to the grant for a total of \$50,000. Pre-award costs are charged for training program participants in July, August and September 2024. The total salary earned in these three months is \$25,000 with \$12,500 being charged to the grant.”

Q: Is this grant eligible for indirect costs?

A: Yes. LEAs that have a negotiated indirect cost rate with OSSE may budget up to the unrestricted rate under this grant.

Nonprofit and IHE applicants with a negotiated indirect costs rate with a federal agency may provide to OSSE a letter stating the approved rate in order to claim indirect costs at the unrestricted rate.

Nonprofit and IHE partners without a negotiated rate may use the de minimis unrestricted rate of 10 percent.

Please notify the OSSE grant specialist as soon as possible if your organization would like to claim indirect costs under this grant.

NEW! Questions from Pre-Application Webinar 1 May 21, 2024, 1 p.m.

Q: We are an LEA that has an internal teacher residency/certification program. Is that allowable?

A: Yes, LEAs with internal teacher residency/certification programs are eligible to apply.

If their program is only for educators at their LEA, they must partner with a nonprofit partner that is providing a service for the teacher residency/certification program (e.g. graduate school coursework, professional development).

If the LEA’s internal teacher residency/certification program provides educators to other LEAs besides their own, they may apply as a nonprofit applicant and must have at least two partner LEAs. In this scenario, the LEA application should include a list of partner LEAs in the Partner Information tab of the application.

Q: Is the maximum award \$500,000 that can be spent over three years, or \$500,000 per year for three years?

A: The maximum award for one year is \$500,000. Grantees are eligible to apply for continuation funding in year two and year three of the grant. Continuation funding levels will be up to the amount of the initial award. Continuation awards are dependent on

funding availability and grantee completion of activities listed in the performance agreement. *Applicants should complete their budget in the initial application for only the first year of funding.*

Please note that there is a \$10,000 maximum per teacher being recruited and/or trained over the course of the three-year grant period. For example, if a grantee serves 50 teachers in year one for a total of \$500,000, they would need to recruit and/or train additional teachers in order to be eligible for continuation funding in years two and three.

Note: In Slide 25, the cost basis example provided in the webinars stated “Total salary and benefits are \$100,000. Fifty percent will be charged to the grant, over three years, for a total of \$150,000.” This example has been updated in the PowerPoint uploaded to the website to reflect that the cost basis in the application should only include the first year of the grant: “Total salary and benefits are \$100,000. 50% will be charged to the grant, for a total of \$50,000.”

Q: For grantees who have been funded in the past, is there a preference for new initiatives within the work that has been funded?

A: There is no preference for new initiatives from previous grantees. To see the criteria that each application is reviewed for, please reference [Appendix B of the RFA](#).

Q: Is this a continuation grant or a competitive grant? Are we eligible to apply if we did not receive funding in FY24?

A: There was not a SOAR Educator Pipeline grant competition in FY24 (Oct. 1, 2023 to Sept. 30, 2024). The last competition was in April 2023 and awards were made in May 2023 (FY23). While this current competition is taking place in FY24, the awards will not be made until Oct. 1, 2024, meaning grantees will be able to use the funding in FY25, not FY24.

As this is a three year grant, applicants are awarded a grant in this competition have access to these funds through FY26 and FY27 (i.e. through September 30, 2027)

Q: What is the difference between the SOAR Formula and SOAR Competitive grants?

A: The SOAR Act Grant includes [SOAR Formula funding](#), which is a grant available to all DC Public Charter school LEAs. The SOAR Act also includes funding for three competitive grants: Facilities, Educator Pipeline, and Third Party. For these grants, applicants must submit a qualifying application and have this application scored by an external reviewer. In competitive grants, applicants are not guaranteed funds.

Q: We have sub-programs that align with different funding priorities; can we budget in those program costs? Would it impact scoring?

A: If these sub-programs are fully part of the project proposal, then they can be included in the budget as part of the overall application. Applicants cannot include costs for sub-programs that are not related to the overall project in the application. If these sub-programs are fully part of the project proposal, and they address a priority area, then the applicant may be eligible to receive +10 funding priority points.

Q: Can you explain what was meant by “OSSE anticipates making three to five awards”?

A: Based on the historical size and number of awards and the total amount of funding available for this competition, OSSE anticipates that it will award a FY25 SOAR Educator Pipeline grant to three to five applicants. The maximum amount per award in FY25 is \$500,000. The final number of awards made depends on the number of applications received, amount of funding requested, and rubric scores from qualified, external reviewers.

NEW! Questions from Pre-Application Webinar #2 May 22, 2024 10 a.m.

Q: When will this power point be available on OSSE website?

The PowerPoint from the webinar is now posted on the [SOAR Educator Pipeline webpage](#) on OSSE’s website.

Q: Do you expect a FY26 continuation opportunity for awardees?

A: The funding for the SOAR Act Grants is awarded to OSSE from the U.S. Department of Education (USED). Therefore, continuation funding is always contingent on available funds, as provided by USED. At this current time, OSSE has no indication that the agency will not continue to be awarded this grant, at the current level of funding, from USED.

OSSE expects that grantees will be able to apply for their second and third years of funding in FY26 and FY27.

Funds that are not spent the first two years of the grant into the following years. However, all funds not spent in the third years of the grant will be forfeited and returned to OSSE.

Q: If teacher candidates are prepared for dual licensure in both their content area and special education through our program, would this meet the competitive priority re: recruiting and training special education teachers and/or supporting gen ed teachers to complete a special education micro-credential?

A: Yes. If teachers are receiving dual licensure in their content area and special education, this would meet the funding priority for recruiting and training special education teachers. Applicants with a project that meets a funding priority area are encouraged to clearly illustrate how their project meets the priority area in the project description.

Q: The max funding per educator is \$10,000. What would max funding look like for a facilitator or Program Manager (i.e. the slide example of \$25,000 pre-award costs)?

A: The total funding requested by an applicant may not exceed \$10,000 times the number of educators being recruited and/or trained through the program. However, the budget may include program facilitation costs such as a Program Manager salary. These costs would be included in, and not in addition to, the maximum total budget. For example, if an applicant intended to serve 10 teachers through their program, the maximum total budget

in the application would be \$100,000. If the applicant is using the funding to pay for a Program Manager salary, this portion of the budget may exceed \$10,000, as long as the total budget is no more than \$100,000.