



# New Meridian

Topic: Competitive Grants for States Assessment (CGSA) Programs

Date: March 4, 2022

## Key CGSA Dates

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) opened the [2022 CGSA application](#) on February 16, 2022. The following are key dates outlining the process:

- Deadline for Notice of Intent to Apply is March 18, 2022 (not mandatory but preferred). Send to [esea.assessment@ed.gov](mailto:esea.assessment@ed.gov).
- Deadline for Transmittal of Applications is April 18, 2022. Please do not wait until the final day. The system is slow of the final day due to traffic.
- Awards will be announced mid to late September 2022.
  1. Funds will be awarded by September 30, 2022.
  2. Post award webinar/conference call will be held mid-October.

## Purpose of CGSA Program

The purpose of the CGSA program is to enhance the quality of assessment instruments and assessment systems used by State Education Agencies (SEAs) for measuring the academic achievement of elementary and secondary school students. SEAs may leverage this funding in:

- Developing or improving models to measure individual student growth and improving assessments for English learners and children and students with disabilities. For example, an SEA could develop statewide academic assessments in another language or form, if that would likely yield more accurate and reliable information on what such a student knows and can do or use the principles of universal design for learning to improve the accessibility of their statewide assessments.
- Technology advancement to allow more frequent administration and less interruptions in instruction. These technology-enhanced assessments may be able to provide timely and tailored supports for teachers to inform instruction.

## Key CGSA Takeaways

The USED recognizes the importance of high-quality assessment systems, including diagnostic, formative, interim, and summative assessments that are valid and reliable for the purposes for which they are used. And that these systems provide relevant and timely information to help educators, parents/caregivers, and policymakers support students at the student, classroom, school, and system levels.

- Grants awarded are available for up to 48 months.
- Maximum budget request is \$3 million per application.
- Estimated range of awards is between \$1 and \$2 million.
  - USED will not make an award under for less than the amount specified in *the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) [section 1203\(b\)\(1\)\(C\)](#)*.

- Expected to award three to six awards.
- This grant is only eligible to SEAs as the grant recipient—all 50 states, District of Columbia, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or a consortia of such SEAs.
  - This competition does not require cost sharing or matching.
  - A grantee under this competition may not award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in this application.
- Apply at [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov).
- For additional information reach out to [esea.assessment@ed.gov](mailto:esea.assessment@ed.gov).

### Available Usage of CGSA Funds

Applicants must address at least one of the absolute priorities (#5 or #6) and may also propose any of the other four. The USED notes that these allowable uses of funds are not mutually exclusive. ESEA identifies six allowable uses of funds under CGSA:

1. Developing or improving assessments for English learners.
2. Developing or improving models to measure and assess student progress or student growth on assessments.
3. Developing or improving assessments for children with disabilities.
4. Collaborating with institutions of higher education or other organizations to improve the quality, validity, and reliability of State academic assessments
5. Measuring student academic achievement using multiple measures of student academic achievement from multiple sources. **(Absolute Priority 1)**
6. Evaluating student academic achievement using comprehensive academic assessment instruments (such as performance and technology-based academic assessments, computer adaptive assessments, projects, or extended performance task assessments) that emphasize the mastery of standards and aligned competencies in a competency-based education model. **(Absolute Priority 2)**

### CGSA Absolute Priorities

Applicants must clearly identify the specific absolute priority that the proposed project addresses. Absolute Priorities 1 and 2 each constitute their own funding categories.

- **Absolute Priority 1** is intended to encourage the use of multiple measures of academic achievement (*ESEA section 1201(a)(2)(K)*).
  - Projects under Priority 1 might promote deeper understanding of academic achievement of all student subgroups by supporting SEAs in designing a statewide assessment system that meets Federal requirements and, for example, integrates information obtained from curriculum-embedded performance tasks with information obtained from an end-of-year assessment to produce a valid, reliable, and fair measure of student achievement of State academic standards.
- **Absolute Priority 2** is focused on the development of comprehensive academic assessments that emphasize the mastery of standards and aligned competencies in a competency-based education model (*ESEA section 1201(a)(2)(L)*).
  - Projects under Priority 2 could, for example, strengthen statewide assessment systems by incorporating innovative, dynamic, and real-time

tools for assessing student learning and progression and providing information to educators.

### Competitive and Invitational Priorities

In addition to the two absolute priorities, there is one competitive priority and one invitational priority.

- **Competitive priority** focuses on improving the utility of information about student performance included in reports of assessment results and providing better and more timely information to educators and parents. USED will reward up to three additional points for this priority. SEAs must:
  - Propose projects, in consultation with organizations representing parents, students, teachers, counselors, and school administrators to address needs related to score reporting and improve the utility of information about student performance included in reports of assessment results and provide better and more timely information to educators and parents including one or more of the following:
    - Develop enhanced score reporting templates or digital mechanisms for communicating assessment results and their meaning.
    - Improve the assessment literacy of educators and parents to help them interpret test results and to support teaching and learning in the classroom.
    - Develop mechanisms for secure transmission and individual use of assessment results by teachers, students, and parents.
  - Provide a dissemination plan for sharing lessons learned and best practices such that their projects can serve as models and resources that can be shared with other SEAs.
- **Invitational priority** focuses on supporting effective instruction and building educator capacity through the development of high-quality assessments of student learning and strategies that allow educators to use data from assessments to inform instruction. USED does not award additional points for this preference.

### Selection Criteria

Scoring will be calculated out of 100 points including:

1. Significance (10 points)
2. Quality of the project design (25 points)
3. Quality of project services (30 points)
4. Adequacy of resources (10 points)
5. Quality of the management plan (20 points)
6. Quality of the project evaluation (5 points)

### Application Documents

Proposals must include a project narrative that addresses the selection criteria (no more than 65 pages, double spaced). Hyperlinks should not be used in an application—reviewers will be instructed not to follow hyperlinks if included. Application must include:

- Project Abstract

- Project Narrative
- Other Attachment forms (not included in 65–page limit):
  1. Individual resumes for project directors and key personnel
  2. Executive order 12372
  3. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
  4. Memoranda of Understanding
  5. References/Bibliography
- Assurances and certifications

### Budget Narrative

In addition to peer review, USED staff will perform a cost analysis of each recommended project. Itemized budget must be included. Costs must be allowable, reasonable, and necessary for carrying out the objectives of the CGSA project. Budget information must include:

1. Personnel
2. Fringe benefits
3. Travel
4. Equipment
5. Supplies
6. Indirect cost (be sure to include evidence of a Federally negotiated indirect cost rate)

### Criteria and Scoring

1. Significance (up to 10 points)
2. Quality of Project Design (up to 25 points)
3. Quality of Project Services (up to 30 points)
4. Adequacy of Resources (up to 10 points)
5. Quality of Management Plan (up to 20 points)
6. Quality of Project Evaluation (up to 5 points)

### Open Licensing Requirements

Additional information on the open licensing requirements can be found under [2 CFR 3474.20](#).

- Unless an exception applies, grant awardees are required to openly license to the public grant deliverables created in whole, or in part, with CGSA funds.
- Licensing extends only to modifications to preexisting work that can be separately identified and only to the extent that open licensing is permitted under the terms of any licenses or other legal restrictions of the use of preexisting works.
- Grantees must have a plan to disseminate these public grant deliverables. This dissemination plan may be developed and submitted after your application has been reviewed and selected for funding.

## Reporting

Grantees must have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in [2 CFR part 170](#).

- Grantees must submit a final performance report, including financial information. If awarded a multiyear award, grantees must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information.
- The U.S. Secretary of Education may provide a grantee with additional funding for data collection analysis and reporting.

## Performance Measures

USED developed three measures to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the CGSA program. Grantees are expected to include in their interim and final performance reports information about the accomplishments of their projects:

1. The percentage of grantees, for each grant cycle, that demonstrate significant progress towards improving, developing, or implementing a new model for measuring the achievement of students.
2. The percentage of grantees, for each grant cycle, that demonstrate collaboration with institution of higher education, other research institutions, or other organizations to develop or improve State assessments.
3. The percentage of grantees that, at least three times during the period of their grants, make available to SEA staff in non-participating States and to assessment researchers' information on findings resulting from the CGSA program through presentations at national conferences, publications in refereed journal, or other products disseminated to the assessment community.

## General Award Information

- The CGSA grant award is a discretionary grant.
- Estimated available funds for the CGSA program are \$17,71,000 (actuals are dependent on final congressional action for FY2022).

## Current USED Guidance

As stated in the *FAQ – Impact of COVID-19 on 2021-2022 Accountability Systems Required under ESEA*, USED encourages States to explore “opportunities to improve statewide summative assessments, which may include, consistent with ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(B)(vi), the use of multiple *Start Printed Page 8822* measures of student academic achievement, including measures of higher-order thinking skills and understanding, which may include measures of student academic growth and may be partially delivered in the form of portfolios, projects, or extended performance tasks which can provide students with culturally and linguistically responsive ways of demonstrating progress.”

### USED Contact Information

Donald Peasley, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Telephone: 202-453-7982

Email: [esea.assessment@ed.gov](mailto:esea.assessment@ed.gov)

Address: U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Room 3W106,  
Washington, DC 20202-6132

### Key Resources

1. [2022 CGSA Federal Register Notice](#)
2. [2022 CGSA NIA](#)
3. [CGSA Application Package](#)
4. [2022 CGSA Applicant Webinar](#)
5. [CGSA Webinar Chat Log](#)
6. [SAM Unique Entity Identifier Fact Sheet](#)
7. [USED Common Instructions for Grant Application](#)
8. [2 CFR 3474.20: Open Licensing Requirement for Competitive Grant Programs](#)
9. [2 CFR part 170: Reporting Subaward and Executive Compensation Information](#)