2015 NYCP
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1. Who is eligible for the Demonstration Grants?
The entities that are eligible to apply for Demonstration Grants are Indian tribes, Indian organizations, BIE-funded schools, Indian institutions (including Indian institutions of higher education (IHEs)), State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), and consortia of such entities. The term "BIE-funded schools" includes tribally-controlled schools funded by BIE, as well as individual BIE-operated schools.

All applications for the Native Youth Community Project (NYCP) priority under the Demonstration Grants competition must be submitted as part of a partnership or a consortium, and the lead entity submitting the application must be one of these eligible entities.

2. Who can participate in a partnership for the Native Youth Community Project?
Any configuration of entities can participate in a partnership for the NYCP priority as long as: 1) the lead applicant is an eligible entity; 2) the partnership includes the required partners, which are at least one tribe or tribal educational agency (TEA) and at least one LEA or BIE-funded school; and 3) at least one partner has the requisite experience in improving student outcomes that are relevant to the project focus, in accordance with the definition of NYCP. (See questions 23 and 24 for more information about successful experience.) Each project may include any other optional entities that will be helpful for the project's success. For example, community based organizations may be included in a partnership agreement submitted by an eligible lead entity. The number and variety of partners need to be adequate to meet the objectives of the project. The applicant must decide with which tribes, schools, and other organizations, including Indian IHEs, they should partner based on the needs of the population of American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN) children to be served by the project. The capacity and resources of the partners, collectively, must be sufficient to implement the proposed activities.

A tribal college or other Indian IHE can apply under the priority for NYCP either in a consortium or a partnership that includes at least the two required partners. Although not eligible to apply alone, the tribal college could play a major role in the proposed project.

3. What is the difference between a consortium agreement and the partnership agreement required by the NIA?
To be eligible for NYCP, all applicants must submit a partnership agreement, as described in the NIA.
If all participants are independently eligible to apply under Demonstration Grants, the applicants may form a consortium, and the consortium agreement can serve as the partnership agreement required by the NIA. Note that this consortium agreement must meet the requirements of 34 CFR 75.127 through 75.129. For example, if three tribes coordinate their project with two school districts, all five entities could form a consortium and apply with a consortium agreement because tribes and schools are eligible entities. One entity would be designated as the lead applicant and would receive the grant on behalf of the consortium. That consortium agreement would also constitute the partnership agreement required by the NIA.

If a group applying together for an NYCP grant includes both eligible and non-eligible entities, they cannot form a consortium. The applicant must form a partnership and submit a partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) as part of its application. For example, a tribe, a BIE-funded school, and a non-profit organization that is not an Indian organization can apply for a grant under the NYCP priority as a partnership, but not a consortium.

4. How is the NYCP priority different from Demonstration Grant priorities in the past?

The NYCP is a new priority under the Demonstration Grants program under title VII of the ESEA (Indian education). Unlike the Demonstration Grant priorities in recent years, which focused on either early childhood readiness or college readiness, the new NYCP priority allows the local community to choose a project focus based on a needs assessment or other data analysis as well as the areas the community identifies as having the biggest impact on improving outcomes for AI/ AN youth.

5. What can we do with the NYCP grant?
Activities under the NYCP priority must meet the purpose of the Demonstration Grants program, which is to develop, test, and demonstrate the effectiveness of services and programs to improve educational opportunities and achievement of AI/AN children. Therefore, while very broad, the scope of allowable activities under NYCP are limited by statute (ESEA §7121(c)(1)). The beneficiaries of the Demonstration Grants must be Indian children (see definition of "Indian" in §263.20 of the regulations). Although it would be appropriate for an NYCP to focus on parents of AI/AN students (e.g., parental involvement in schools or a family literacy approach) as a strategy to increase college and career readiness of Indian students, a general community-wide program to alleviate the effects of poverty would be outside the scope of NYCP.

6. What age groups are served by NYCP?
The term "youth" in the title of the Native Youth Community Project is not meant to limit the age groups of children served by the projects to adolescents. The NYCP projects are allowed to address barriers experienced by AI/AN children from early childhood through the age limit for which the State provides free public education.

7. What costs are permitted under these grants?
Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the costs stipulated in their proposed budget are reasonable and necessary for addressing the proposed project effectively. The application must adequately describe the rationale for the proposed activities and their costs. For example, transportation can be a reasonable and necessary expense for the project, if the applicant provides justification in the application narrative. In other words, an activity and its cost might be reasonable, allowable, and allocable in one project, but not in another. Applicants should review the cost principles, particularly the guidance concerning "reasonable," "allocable," and "necessary" costs. The uniform administrative requirements and cost principles are published in 2 CFR part 200, which is available on the U.S. Government Printing Office website at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=6214841a79953f26c5c230d72d6b70a1&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl.

8. Can we include planning activities?
No. NYCP grants are for implementation of proposed projects, and grant funds may not be used for planning purposes prior to implementation. In fact, we recommend that applicants plan activities that can begin immediately upon funding and will result in early tangible successes. However, as part of capacity-building efforts related to grant implementation, grantees may

use funds to regularly collect and review performance and outcome data in order to improve the implementation of the project.

9. What is the definition of community?
The partnering entities must determine the geographical area to be served by the proposed project, and are responsible for clearly defining and describing the area served by the project. Applicants should describe their rationale for selecting the boundaries of the project's geographical area. The project must include all AI/AN children or their families who are experiencing the identified barrier or barriers within the defined community. Projects may not select a subpopulation of AI/AN children based on tribal affiliation.

10. How can an applicant meet the rural priority?
LEAs qualify for the rural priority if they are eligible for assistance under either of the Rural Education Achievement Programs (REAP), that is, Small Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income Schools (RLIS). BIE-funded schools, which are not eligible for REAP, meet the rural priority if they are located in areas assigned Census locale codes 42 and 42.
The list of LEAs eligible for SRSA and RLIS is available on the REAP program's webpage on the Department's website at http://www2.ed.gov/programs/reapsrsa/eligibility.html. Information on Census locale codes is available on the National Center Education Statistics' webpage on the Department's web site at http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/rural_locales.asp

11. What does it mean to have a goal of college and career readiness as required by the definition of NYCP?
The goal of all NYCP projects must be to improve the college and career readiness of Indian students in the local community. Each applicant must develop its own objectives for reaching that goal based on the needs assessment. The objectives may address in or out of school issues. For example, a community might choose the objective of increasing 3rd grade reading scores, increasing graduation rates, or creating more culturally appropriate climates among the early learning programs in the community.
There are many different measures for being on track for college and careers depending on the present levels of performance and development of the AI/AN children. Applicants are free to use the measure or measures that make sense for their respective communities.

12. What if our community supports readiness for careers in a subsistence economy?
To participate in NYCP, the community's needs assessment should reveal the barriers and opportunities for the AI/AN youth, whether they want to participate fully in careers needed in the community or pursue postsecondary education and training. Communities with subsistence economies are encouraged to use the information gathered through the needs assessment, including their local resources, to consider how NYCP funding might introduce creative opportunities to prepare their AI/AN children to become lifelong adult contributors to the community, such as financial literacy and capability, legal and treaty negotiations, and effective language and communication.

13. What must be included in the needs assessment or data analysis?

Based on a needs assessment or other data analysis, communities applying for NYCP will work together to address local barriers to the college and career readiness of Indian children, as well as to identify opportunities and existing resources.

To conduct the needs assessment, each community will analyze data relating to their defined geographic area and participant population to identify and assess the barriers, opportunities, and resources for AI/AN students for college and career readiness, prior to applying for a grant. It is possible to use an existing analysis, as long as it has been completed within the last 3 years.

After analyzing the community needs and opportunities, the partnership will choose the strategy or strategies that best address that need or opportunity, based on factors that include the existing resources and expertise of partners in the project. Given the limited amount of funds available for these FY 2015 grants, we expect that applicants will tailor their projects in order to address the significant need or opportunity identified by the partnership.

The needs assessment will be reviewed under the selection criterion Need for Project. The evidence from the needs assessment, however, informs the entire project and thus may affect aspects of the application evaluated under several selection criteria. In order for the peer reviewers to have the information they need to rate applications, the applicants should include a clear description of the evidence on needs, opportunities, and resources. Specifically, applicants should tell the readers what is lacking in the community, what is present in the community, and what policies and practices will support or hinder the project's efforts. Based on this information, the proposed project should address the optimal way to remediate the needs by leveraging the available strengths and the supports.

14. What is meant by opportunities in the definition of NYCP?
The definition of NYCP requires that the project be informed by data on not only barriers but also "opportunities in the local community to support Indian students;" and requires that the project be "focused on one or more barriers or opportunities." In this context, opportunities mean untapped resources that might be used to address the barriers identified through the needs assessment (e.g., expanding a program to encourage enrollment in advanced secondary school classes, providing extracurricular opportunities, such as debate or chess, led by tribal elders, or many other possibilities).

15. What are examples of existing resources in the definition of NYCP?
The NYCP definition requires applicants to examine existing resources in determining the best strategy to reach the project goal. These resources could include existing funding sources, such as the school district's title VII formula grant or title I formula grant, discretionary grants received by the district, tribe, or other organization, philanthropic resources such as donations from private entities, and other sources. In addition, existing resources include the skills and knowledge of project partners. For example, if a tribe identified drug abuse as the greatest barrier to college and career readiness, and a local community organization has successfully started a program for middle school students to prevent drug use, that organization would be a valuable partner that could bring important resources to the project.

16. Must an applicant hire a contractor to conduct a needs assessment?
No. Applicants are not required to hire a contractor to perform a needs assessment or data analysis. An applicant may conduct its own needs assessment or may use an existing needs assessment, as long as it was conducted for the same local community, was conducted recently (i.e., within the last 3 years), and is relevant to the NYCP priority.

17. What barriers or opportunities should a community choose to focus on?
There are many possible theories of action from which a project can choose to address the community's needs. The strongest theory of action will arise from an in-depth examination of the needs done through the needs assessment or other data analysis (discussed in questions 13-16). While there are many interrelated and complex factors that impact students, based on the needs assessment, an applicant should focus on the barrier or barriers the community believes will be most impactful given the size of the estimated grant awards. Over time, if additional funding is available, it may be possible to expand the areas for a more comprehensive approach.

For example, in a community that identifies a high drop-out rate in the local public high school as the greatest barrier to college and career readiness for AI/ AN students, the theory of action should link the strategy to an underlying reason for and likely effect on the drop-out rate. If a student survey reveals that the most common reason for dropping out is lack of engagement in school due to a school culture that is not welcoming for AI/AN students, the strategy could be a redesigned high school curriculum that integrates the local tribe's history and culture, as well as professional development for teachers and administrators on cultural competency.

18. What is a measurable objective?
Measurable objectives state what will be done, to whom, by whom, when, and how it will be measured. Grantees must use measurable objectives in carrying out the strategy chosen to meet the purpose of the program and reach the goal of the project. The measurable objectives indicate how the scientific research or modified program will result in the increased college and career readiness of Indian children. The measurable objectives might be significant activities or benchmarked steps, on which projects will report data using the annual performance report. Data collection might be more frequent based on the project management and evaluation plans.

19. What are the possible roles for IHEs in NYCPs?
IHEs, including Native American Serving Non-tribal Institutions, can be vital partners in an NYCP; an Indian IHE can be a lead applicant. Although postsecondary education, training, or employment services are not allowable, an IHE might provide direct services to AI/AN youth. For example, an IHE could provide secondary transition services, offered to school-aged AI/AN children, that prepare them for postsecondary education, training, or employment. An IHE may partner with the tribe and school to provide dual enrollment for youth in secondary school. Also, the IHE might supervise internships for their pre-service teacher trainees, who implement project activities, such as before and after school programs for AI/AN children.

20. Can a tribe apply if the community includes students from multiple tribes?

Yes. We expect grantees to serve students from all tribes within the community of the NYCP project. For schools that have students from multiple tribes with a presence in the community, we would encourage a tribe planning a NYCP application to consult with other relevant tribes. One option would be for all the affected tribes to be partners in the project. Another option is for the tribes in the community to agree to collaborate with the tribe or tribes that will serve as the project partner or partners.

21. Would we be more likely to be successful with a tribal lead or LEA lead?

Generally, the scoring of applications does not depend on the entity designated as the lead applicant; rather, the selection criteria address the strength of the project described in the application and the quality of the project's model. However, an application should clearly designate the lead applicant, as well as the roles of each partner in the project. Note that under the competitive priorities for FY 2015, we give more points under priority two for applications with a tribal lead than we do under priority four for applications with tribal partners that are not the lead applicant.

22. Can we submit more than one application with different partners?

An entity is allowed to be a partner in multiple applications. In fact, one entity can be the lead applicant on multiple applications. Each application will be separately screened to determine whether the application meets requirements, and will be separately reviewed for quality. The proposed projects should not refer to services or activities that would be provided by a project described in another application. Also, the resources of the partnering entities, including personnel, must be sufficient to cover the commitments in all proposed projects. In other words, each project must be able to be implemented, as written, regardless of whether another proposed project is funded or not.

23. What does "demonstrates the capacity to improve outcomes" mean?

Each eligible NYCP applicant must demonstrate that either the lead applicant or one of the partners in the project has the capacity to improve student outcomes that are relevant to the project focus, through prior experience with programs funded through other sources. Under selection criterion (e) "Quality of Experience," peer reviewers will judge the extent to which the applicant demonstrates this capacity. Evidence of past success is not required to meet the What Works Clearinghouse standards. However, the evidence of past success should be relevant to the project focus.

For example, if a tribe partners with a local school district and the partnership determines that the greatest barrier to student outcomes is high-school dropout rates, the partnership may choose a strategy focused on the local middle school and high school that includes cultural competence training for teachers and a new after-school program. In that case, the tribe could not submit evidence of its past success in the Head Start program that it runs, because that is not directly related to the specific strategy chosen for its NYCP. However, after researching local or national programs that have evidence of success in lowering the drop-out rate, the partnership could add a partner that has experience and success with such a program. The

evidence of past success does not need to be specific to AI/AN students, but if it is not, the program model chosen must be modified to be culturally appropriate.

24. Do programs "funded through other sources" include philanthropic resources, as well as Federal, State, tribal, and local sources?
Yes. As noted in the answer above, applicants must show that either the lead applicant or one of the partners has the demonstrated capacity to improve student outcomes that are relevant to the project focus, through prior experience with programs funded through other sources. We intend that applicants and their partners can describe this past experience with reference to programs funded from a wide range of sources, such as philanthropies, foundation grants, and state, local, or tribally-funded programs. Examples of federal programs from which a partner can show evidence of success include grants funded through other offices in the Department (e.g., Office of Special Education Programs, Office of Career Technical and Adult Education, and Office of Postsecondary Education) and through components of other departments (e.g., Head Start, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Indian Health Service, Temporary Aid for Needy Families, and Bureau of Indian Education).

25. What does it mean to have scientific research as the basis for the project?
One application requirement is that the proposed project must be based either on scientific research or on an existing program that has been modified to be culturally appropriate. The selection criteria under Quality of Project Design include the extent to which the project is based on scientific research or an existing program that has been modified to be culturally appropriate, and also the extent to which the project is supported by strong theory. Strong theory means "a rationale for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice that includes a logic model." (34 CFR 77.1(c)) A logic model (also referred to as theory of action) means "a well-specified conceptual framework that identifies key components of the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice (i.e., the active "ingredients" that are hypothesized to be critical to achieving the relevant outcomes) and describes the relationships among the key components and outcomes, theoretically and operationally." (34 CFR 77.1(c))

26. What is community collaborative effort and how does it increase?
One of the GPRA performance measures (see NIA section VI.4) is designed to assess successful place-based projects in terms of increased community participation and collaboration in the project. Although this element is difficult to assess with objective measurable data, all projects can collect self-reported data on collaborative efforts. For example, a grantee could conduct a pre- and post-assessment by giving a survey at the start of the grant period and at the end of each grant year. The survey could be given to participating partner entities as well as parents, businesses, school staff, etc., and could contain questions about the status of collaboration around student outcomes, the perceived relationship between school district and tribe, and other indicators.

Grantees will report the data for GPRA measures in the annual performance report (APR) due at the end of each budget period. The Office of Indian Education (OIE) will aggregate the data across all projects to report on the program's overall performance. Projects also include

project-specific data on their APRs. OIE project staff will work with the directors of funded projects to ensure appropriate project-specific data are collected and reported.

27. What technical assistance (TA) will be available to applicants and grant recipients?
OIE will broadcast a pre-application webinar after the NIA is published in the Federal Register. The pre-application TA, including this webinar, will support potential applicants in how to develop partnerships, how to conduct a local needs assessment, how to design activities that address the barriers, and how to create a logic model that displays the relationship between the activities and desired changes/improvements.

After grants are awarded, grant recipients will receive on-going TA. This TA will support projects in working in, and with, tribal communities to improve student achievement, building the capacity of existing organizations and institutions, conducting community outreach, gaining stakeholder buy-in, and developing strategies for reaching the project objectives.

28. Who must comply with the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) hiring preference?
NYCP grants that are primarily for the benefit of members of federally-recognized tribes are subject to the provisions of section 7(b) of the ISDEAA (Pub. L. 93-638). That section requires that, to the greatest extent feasible, a grantee—
> (i) Give to Indians preferences and opportunities for training and employment in connection with the administration of the grant; and
> (ii) Give to Indian organizations and to Indian-owned economic enterprises, as defined in section 3 of the Indian Financing Act of 1974 (25 U.S.C. 1452(e)), preference in the award of contracts in connection with the administration of the grant.

A federally-recognized tribe that receives a NYCP grant is subject to the hiring preference. If such a tribe partners with an SEA or LEA or any other entity, that entity would be subject to the hiring preference when using NYCP funds. However, a State-recognized tribe generally would not be subject to this hiring preference.