

**U.S. Department of Education
Arts Education Model Development & Dissemination Grant (AEMDD)**

***The following notes are meant to help clarify points in the Federal Register for the AEMDD.
Please refer to the Federal Register for all actual grant guidelines and requirements.***

SCORING THE PROPOSAL

Need for Project

15 points

The proposed project will provide services or otherwise address the need of students at risk of educational failure.

- Examples: Title I, API, Average Daily Attendance (ADA), % Free and Reduced-Price, Lunch, % ELL, % LD, etc
- Populations that have been traditionally underserved (race, color, national origin, gender, age, disability)

The specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

- Quantifying issues of access and equity.
- Explaining reasons for them and articulating the magnitude of impact.

Significance

10 points

The likelihood the products that will result from the proposed project, including the potential for their being used effectively in a variety of other settings.

- In other words, what other audiences would benefit from what this project is learning?
- What collateral “products” can be developed and disseminated?
 - Professional development models/services
 - Curricular maps
 - Trainings and workshops
 - Websites, webinars, pod-casts
 - Documentary

Quality of Project Design

25 points

The design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices.

- Cite research to substantiate program approach and/or design decisions
- If already piloted, draw upon data about what’s been learned.

The proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.

- Situate your goals and objectives into the overall philosophy or approach of this program
 - Make sure you connect this to the design of your evaluation.
- Emphasize standards-based curriculum
 - Offer sample curricula scope and sequencing with student assessment methods

- Explain why, what and how this program will improve teaching
- Explain how the program is developmentally appropriate to the learners being served.
- Explain possible challenges and your strategies for overcoming them.

The proposed project is designed to build the capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal assistance.

- Explain how you will sustain this program AEMDD
- Do more than cite “we will be seeking other grant opportunities.”

Quality of Project Personnel

10 points

Preference given to personnel who are from underserved populations

Quality of personnel’s experience and training to lead and manage this program

- Explain the personnel’s experience with this project and their level of expertise with this work.
 - Why were they selected? What do they bring to the table?

Quality of Management Plan

20 points

Adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

- Include a timeline for planning and implementation, using milestones or benchmarks for noting progress.
- Align items within the budget to key components of the project design and implementation.

The time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

- The % FTE to lead personnel is appropriate (not too much and not too little) and is reflected in the budget
- Staff from arts partnerships are accounted for and it is included in the budget.
- The Principal Investigator time commitment and evaluation budget (typically 20% of overall budget) is consistent with the evaluation plan.

Adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project

- Will you be using a planning committee or a steering committee?
- Are there points within the implementation plan that allow for feedback and course-corrections?
- Does the evaluation allow for data collection that can lead to program improvements?

Evaluation

20 points

The methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

- The evaluation score is what tends to separate a good proposal from a winning proposal
- Your evaluation should comprise 15-20% of the overall budget so that you have enough funds to complete a rigorous evaluation.

- The evaluation should include all of the points made in the note on Federal Register p. 2528
- Evaluations that are experimental or quasi-experiment are eligible for an additional 20 points (see p. 2524)
- There is an outside evaluator with qualifications to conduct this work.
 - Your evaluator is a professional, not a graduate student.
 - Strongly recommend having your evaluator write this section.
- There is coherence between the evaluation plan and the program design.
- There evaluation has rigor, it is relevant to the program objectives, and will realistically yield meaningful and useful data.
- The evaluation assesses both the implementation of the project and the impact of the project on teachers and students.

The methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress towards achieving intended outcomes.

- See notes in Quality of Management
- The evaluation plan is aligned with the program implementation plan.
- There are regularly scheduled check-in points (quarterly, or at natural program milestones) where the evaluator gives progress reports.
- Explain how these reports will be used to revise the plan or implementation strategies—especially with an eye as to how this can inform program design/reform as the grant evolves over the 4 years.

GRANT ADJUDICATION PROCESS

- Advanced practitioners (teaching artists, arts educators, arts education leaders) from across the country are nominated or apply to serve as a grant panelist.
- Panelists remove themselves if there is a conflict of interest with a given application.
- Three panelists “score” ten grant applications over a two week period in April.
 - First, grants are read and scored each panelist independently.
 - Then, panelists meet via conference call to discuss the merits of the grant and why they scored it the way they did.
 - In instances where there is a wide disparity in the scores, the panelists work to find consensus within a ~10 point margin.
- Staff at the U.S. Department of Education oversee and coordinate all the panelist teams.
- Proposals with the highest scores (in the 90’s) are moved forward to the Secretary for funding. About 25-30 grants are awarded.