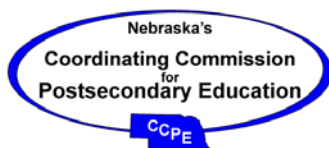


Request for Proposals

COLLEGE ACCESS CHALLENGE
GRANT PROGRAM (CACGP)

(CFDA NUMBER 84.378)

Fiscal Year 2011 Guidelines



Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS - 2011

COLLEGE ACCESS CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM (CACGP)

(Authorized under Section 781 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended,
20 U.S.C. Section 1141)

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose

The purpose of this program is to significantly increase the number of underrepresented students who enter and remain in postsecondary education. CACGP utilizes a formula to provide grants to states, which can award sub-grants to eligible entities. The grants are designed to foster partnerships among federal, state and local governments as well as philanthropic organizations to meet the needs of underrepresented students and families. (Appendix 1)

B. Amount of Funds

The Coordinating Commission has been designated by the governor to be the primary grant recipient. The Commission expects to have approximately \$1.1 million to award in subgrants each year for a five-year period. Although no minimum or maximum has been set for each award, it is expected that funding could range from \$40,000 to \$400,000 each year.

In 2010 the Coordinating Commission awarded \$903,000 in subgrants, most of which are committed for two years. For the 2011-2012 fiscal year, the Commission will award up to \$73,800 in subgrants.

C. Eligible Applicants

All public and non-profit-private institutions of higher education, K-12 public and private schools or districts, and non-profit organizations or partnerships of organizations based in Nebraska may apply for grants. See Section IV. C. for requirements for non-profit organizations.

D. Calendar

Deadline for Submission of Proposals	June 10, 2011
Project Starting Date	August 16, 2011 or upon receipt of the federal award, whichever is earlier
1 st Year Project Ending Date	August 15, 2012
Deadline for Final Project Report	30 days after completion of project or as directed by the U.S. Department of Education.

E. Project Duration

Projects may be submitted for the following time periods:

- One year only: projects with a short-term goal
- One year, with the possibility to re-apply for continuation of the grant the second year. This would apply to projects that can be completed in one year, but if successful, would benefit from a second year of funding.

II. AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES/SERVICES

Federal statutes specify that CACGP funds must be used for specific activities or services. The Commission is seeking projects that:

1. Provide information on financing options, including activities that promote financial literacy and debt management among students and families.
2. Provide information to students and families on postsecondary education benefits, opportunities, planning and career preparation.
3. Conduct outreach activities for students who may be at risk of not enrolling in or completing college.
4. Assist students in completing the Free Application for Financial Student Aid (FAFSA)
5. Implement professional development for guidance counselors at middle and secondary schools, and financial aid administrators and college admissions counselors at institutions of higher education. These activities would seek to improve such individuals' capacities to assist students and parents with:
 - a) Understanding entrance requirements for admission to institutions of higher education and state eligibility requirements for Academic Competitiveness Grants or National SMART grants;
 - b) Applying to institutions of higher education, applying for financial assistance and scholarships;
 - c) Activities that increase students' abilities to successfully complete the coursework required for a postsecondary degree (including tutoring and mentoring); and
 - d) Activities to improve secondary school students' preparedness for postsecondary entrance examinations.

III. PRIORITIES

CACGP requires that, within activities or services, priority be given to students and families who are living below the poverty line applicable to the individual's family size. In addition, the Commission will give priority to proposals that demonstrate new and creative ways of reaching and engaging families and students and retaining those students in higher education.

IV. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements apply to all proposals. **Proposals that do not meet requirements A, B, and C will be disqualified.**

A. Qualifying Students and Families

Activities and services must be made available to **all** qualifying students and families regardless of:

1. choice of postsecondary institution,*
2. type of student loan received,
3. server of such loan, and
4. student's academic performance.

Students and families may not be charged a fee to participate in the project or services.

** This does not prohibit institution-based projects from applying. Such projects may not, however, require students to attend their institution.*

B. Federal Share and Non-federal Match

1. Federal funds may be used to pay for up to two-thirds of the cost of the activities and services. The award recipient is required to provide non-federal funds equal to at least one-third of the costs of authorized activities and services. The non-federal match may be met through cash or in-kind contributions.
2. In-kind contribution means the value of non-cash contributions provided by non-federal parties. Contributions may be in the form of real property, equipment, supplies and other expendable property. Other qualifying contributions include the value of goods and services directly benefiting and specifically identifiable to the project or program.
3. Documentation of matching or in-kind contributions must contain adequate source documentation for the claimed cost sharing, provide clear valuation of in-kind matching, and provide support of cost-sharing by grant partners. (See Appendix 2 for details)

C. Awards to Non-profit Organizations

Non-profit organizations or partnerships of organizations are eligible to apply, providing that the organization or partnership:

1. Was in existence on or before September 27, 2007; and
2. Is participating in activities and services related to increasing access to higher education.

D. Reporting

Annual performance reports are required that include:

1. Description of the activities and services implemented, including measurable outcomes,
2. Associated cost of each activity or service,
3. Number and percentage of students that participated, and
4. Total verifiable non-federal matching contribution.

This information will be used to determine if projects are achieving the stated goals and objectives and if statutory and regulatory requirements are being satisfied. Subgrantees can be determined to be temporarily ineligible to participate in CACG if an annual performance report is not provided or if substantial progress is not being made in meeting the goals of the grant.

E. Disclosures

Any activity or service that intends to provide information about financing options for higher education shall:

1. Include information on the availability of federal, state, local, institutional, and other grants and loans; and
2. Present information on financial assistance that is not provided under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 in a manner that is clearly distinct from information on financial assistance under such title.

V. CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSALS

The following criteria will be used in the evaluation of proposals.

A. Demonstrated Need – in addition to basic eligibility (15 points)

- The proposal clearly describes the need(s) addressed by the project and explains why those needs are important.

B. Plan of Action (25 points)

- The goals are clearly defined and provide an overall context for what the project is trying to

accomplish in the long-term.

- The objectives are clearly defined and identify what the project is trying to achieve immediately. (see sample table in Appendix 3)
- The project activities and services are clearly and fully described and are related to the successful achievement of the objectives.
- A timetable for the project activities is provided and is reasonable and appropriate.

C. Proposed Outcomes (15 points)

- Proposed outcomes are realistic and measurable.
- Outcomes include performance indicators that can be tracked to substantiate success of the project.

D. Applicant's Commitment and Capacity (10 points)

- The key personnel are well qualified to conduct the project.
- The equipment, facilities and other resources required by the project are available.
- The extent to which the non-federal match exceeds the required one-third of the project cost.

E. Budget and Cost Effectiveness (20 points)

- The proposed expenditures are directly related to the objectives and activities of the project.
- Indirect and/or administrative costs requested are appropriate and within established guidelines (see Appendix 5).
- The proposed budget is cost effective and efficient.
- The proposal includes a detailed explanation for each budget line. (Appendix 6)
- If the project is dependant on funds from other sources, all other sources are identified and the amount expected from each is reported on the budget form. Evidence of the commitment of those funds must also be provided.

F. Long-Term Impact (10 points)

- The project is of high quality and of sufficient duration and intensity to promote a lasting effect.
- The project will have a long-term impact on other regions or projects in that it could be replicated by other organizations or to serve other populations.
- The project may be scalable, so that the size of the project could be changed to serve the needs of different groups.

G. Other Considerations – other characteristics of proposals that may be considered in making awards (5 points). Among them may be:

- The geographic distribution of the projects;
- The degree to which the proposal demonstrates ideas that are innovative and creative; and
- Other appropriate considerations.

VI. SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

A. Submission

Applicants must submit: one unbound original; three unbound, three-hole punched copies; and one electronic version (disk, CD or email) of the proposal to:

Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

Attention: Katherine Green

140 N. 8th Street, Suite 300

P.O. Box 95005

Lincoln, NE 68509-5005

Katherine.Green@Nebraska.gov

Proposals must be postmarked or delivered to the Commission office no later than 5:00 p.m., June 10, 2010. Proposals that are below the minimum criteria, late, incomplete or submitted by ineligible entities will be disqualified.

B. Review and Award Procedures

The project director will review the proposals and rank them in order of merit. The recommendations of the project director may be contingent upon the acceptance of certain changes in the project or the budget. The recommendations of the project director will be submitted to the executive director of the Coordinating Commission who will make recommendations to the Executive Committee of the Commission. The Executive Committee will determine the final awards which will be approved or ratified by the Commission at its July 21, 2011 meeting. The recommendations will be incorporated into the state's application to the U.S. Department of Education. All awards are contingent on approval of the 2011 application to the U.S. Department of Education. Award notification will be made in writing when the Coordinating Commission receives notification that the U.S. Department of Education has approved the application.

All applicants will be notified in writing of the decisions of the Commission and the U.S. Department of Education. A non-funded applicant may request information from the project director regarding the review of its proposal.

VII. BUDGET GUIDELINES

Federal funds may be used to pay for two-thirds (2/3) of the cost of activities and services proposed of the project. The Commission is requiring applicants to commit to providing non-federal funds equal to one-third (1/3) of the cost of authorized activities and services. This non-federal match may be met through cash or in-kind contributions and must be documented.

Documentation of matching contributions must contain adequate source documentation for the committed cost sharing and provide clear valuation of in-kind matching (Appendix 2). Applicants are required to value in-kind contributions in accordance with relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars and the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).

A budget, including narrative descriptions, is to be submitted for the project. Projects are funded only one year at a time after notification of receipt of funding from the U.S. Department of Education.

Grant funds are remitted after the grant recipient has submitted a request for reimbursement to the Commission. Such requests are limited to the amount expended on the project as of the date of the request. **All requests for funding must be accompanied by receipts of actual expenditures.** If providing receipts is prohibited due to administrative practices or verifiable auditing practices, the applicant must present to the Commission the rationale for not complying with the receipt requirement and receive an exception authorization from the Commission. In the case where the Commission has agreed to receipts not accompanying requests for reimbursement, the applicant must keep receipts and have those receipts available for Commission staff verification at site visits.

VIII. FORMAT FOR THE PROPOSAL

All proposals must include the following, using the forms found in the appendices that follow:

Required content of application:

1. Title Page
2. Section I: Abstract
3. Section II: Project Narrative
4. Section III: Goals and Objectives
5. Section IV: Budget and Narrative
6. Section V: Key Personnel
7. Section VI: Assurances

1. Application title page (See Appendix 7 for the required form)
2. Abstract of not more than one page that provides an overview of the purpose, scope and goals of the project.
3. The project narrative (10 pages or less) must clearly address, in detail, the questions listed in project narrative section. (See Appendix 3 for an explanation of this section)
4. The project must contain measurable goals and objectives. Activities, services, and anticipated outcomes should be clearly aligned with the goals and objectives of the project. The goals provide the overall context for what the project is trying to accomplish in the long-term and the objectives describe what the project is trying to achieve incrementally. Outcomes must be indicated and must be measurable. (See Appendix 4 for the required form for this section)
5. The budget summary and narrative must provide proposed expenditures (Federal and non-Federal) for the grant year. The budget summary indicates the expenditures of federal and non-federal funds for the grant year. The budget narrative outlines how funds will be used to accomplish the goals and objectives of the project. Each budget category must be justified in the budget narrative. Applicants must include the basis for estimating costs of all project expenditures and how costs relate to proposed activities and services. (See Appendix 6 for the required forms)
6. Brief resumes of key personnel. Emphasize experience and skills directly relevant to the proposed project. (two pages per person maximum)

7. Statement of assurances from the appropriate representative (See Appendix 8 for the required form)