Secretary DeVos Launches New Grant Competition to Spark Student-Centered, Agile Learning Opportunities to Support Recovery from National Emergency

States can compete for more than $300 million to rethink education by creating flexible K-12 models, developing postsecondary tools that aid economic recovery

WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced today more than $300 million in discretionary grant funds will be available for states to use to create adaptable, innovative learning opportunities for K-12 and postsecondary learners in response to the COVID-19 national emergency. The grants will be funded through the Education Stabilization Fund (ESF), authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, signed into law by President Donald J. Trump.

“If our ability to educate is limited to what takes place in any given physical building, we are never going to meet the unique needs of every student,” said Secretary DeVos. “The current disruption to the normal model is reaffirming something I have said for years: we must rethink education to better match the realities of the 21st century. This is the time for local education leaders to unleash their creativity and ingenuity, and I’m looking forward to seeing what they do to provide education freedom and economic opportunity for America’s students.”

The CARES Act provides $307.5 million for these discretionary grants, which the Department will divide between two competitions: $180 million for the Rethink K-12 School Models Grant and $127.5 million for the Reimagining Workforce Preparation Grant.

The Rethink K-12 School Models Grant is aimed at opening new, innovative ways for students to access K-12 education with an emphasis on meeting students’ needs during the coronavirus national emergency. The competition is open to state educational agencies which can apply for funds in one of the three categories:

1. Microgrants for families, so that states can ensure they have access to the technology and educational services they need to advance their learning
2. Statewide virtual learning and course access programs, so that students will always be able to access a full range of subjects, even those not taught in the traditional or assigned setting
3. New, field-initiated models for providing remote education not yet imagined, to ensure that every child is learning and preparing for successful careers and lives

The full Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) will be available online today.
The Reimagining Workforce Preparation Grants are designed to expand short-term postsecondary programs and work-based learning programs in order to get Americans back to work and help small businesses return to being our country’s engines for economic growth. The full NIA for this competition will be issued later this week.

Secretary DeVos continued, “Current students and displaced workers will be navigating a very different job market and economy once America reopens. This competition is a tremendous opportunity for states to think creatively and strategically about what their workforce needs will be and how to support entrepreneurs and small business in order to get the economic engines in their states firing on all cylinders again.”

Application packages for these competitions will be available within two weeks. Applicants will then have 60 days to apply. As with most of the Department of Education’s discretionary grant competitions, applications will be evaluated by a panel of independent peer reviewers, and the highest-scoring applications will be funded. For additional information about how to apply, please visit https://oese.ed.gov/offices/education-stabilization-fund/states-highest-coronavirus-burden/.

The Department continues to update www.ed.gov/coronavirus with information on COVID-19 for students, parents, educators and local leaders.