OFFICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Intervention for College Attendance Program
Fiscal Year 2026 Request for Proposal Technical Questions

These questions have been submitted to the Office of Higher Education regarding technical questions for the Intervention for College Attendance Program (ICAP), fiscal year 2026, Request for Proposal.

Will the Office of Higher Education fund out of state travel for a college visit?

No. Out of state travel is not a reimbursable expense under ICAP. An applicant may consider including expenses for out of state college visits on the match side. Please reference the "Expenditures" section beginning on page 16 within the request for proposal.

Are Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs eligible to apply for the ICAP grant? The majority of ABE programs are operated through the Community Education Departments of local education agencies.

Yes. Since eligible applicants include school districts and community-based organizations, Adult Basic Ed programs could apply for ICAP. Please reference the "Eligibility" section beginning on page 3 within the request for proposal.

What are the characters or word limits for each of the Proposal Narrative questions? the RFP says this " To complete the Proposal Narrative, applicants must upload a written document (Word or PDF format) into the grants portal. The Proposal Narrative must be published using 12-point font, have at least 1.5 line spacing, and not be more than 12 pages in total length."

We still want to limit the lengths of each category within the narrative, although applicants will not be uploading PDF or Word formatted documents for this section. The character limits are as follows:

1. Explain the significance and need of the proposed project and include the following components (25 points) …: 8000 characters
2. Explain the how the program will be designed and structured. In your explanation, provide the following components (25 points) …: 8000 characters
3. Describe how the proposed project will commit to equitable services and outcomes (15 Points) …: 6000 characters
4. Explain how the proposed program will be evaluated to measure achievement of goals, effectiveness of activities, participant outcomes, and the impact on student success in pursuing postsecondary education (15 points) …: 6000 characters
5. Discuss the projected budget for the proposed project by identifying what program costs are anticipated to be expended through the ICAP Grant. Also, explain how the dollar-for-dollar match requirement will be met, and be specific as to what type of cash or in-kind contribution will be used to meet the match requirement. The budget should also explain the following (10 Points) …: 3000 characters

6. Explain how quality of personnel, resources, and management will be ensured for the proposed program. The explanation should include the following (10 Points) …: 3000 characters

Can ICAP grant funds from a different state agency be used as match for this grant opportunity?

Yes. Other state agency grant funds can be used toward the dollar-for-dollar match requirement.

Do you want us to include resumes from every member of our team? Or could we instead include resumes from the program Director and managers?

Yes, If ICAP is going to support a staff position(s) related to the program, the applicant must submit a copy of the staff's resume. If you have personnel that will be strictly on the match side, then you would not need to provide those resumes. The resumes will only need to be submitted for personnel who will have any portion of their position reimbursed through ICAP funds. Please reference page 11 of the request for proposal regarding the resume requirement.

The RFP says indirects can be "8% of Personnel Costs," but the application portal says "8% of Direct Costs," which will include our personnel costs. Which is correct?

The indirect cost amount is limited to 8% of the total personnel costs. I have put in a request to get this language updated in the portal to match the request for proposal.

We note that tuition/fees for undergraduate courses are not an allowed expense. Given that the bridge program would be free to the participating students (all of whom would meet ICAP eligibility criteria), could we still grant credit to students who complete the program? Or is the "spirit" of the program (regardless of whether we charge tuition/fees) that ICAP funding should not enable students to earn college credit?

The program cannot pay for costs associated with tuition and fees for postsecondary coursework (as stated in the inquiry). Summer bridge programs have generally not counted for college credit, since they are precollege programs. In order to grant a participant college credit, they would need to be regularly admitted as a student for that summer. Since college courses that are counting for credit need to be transcribed, there would be a cost associated with the credit. These costs would not be eligible for reimbursement through ICAP.

An application must include "external" letters of support. Can you clarify this? Our project won't involve partners external to the organization, but the project will require support from numerous offices at the organization (postsecondary institution, K-12 school, non-for-profit, community organization, business entity) Could these parties supply letters of support, specifying both the cash and in-kind match they'll provide and more general, organizational support?

Applicants may use entities outside of the program to write letters of support. If you are a large organization who has various departments collaborating with the program to strengthen the support of your target population, you may obtain a letter of support from an department/unit that is supporting the initiative, but does not specifically have responsibilities under the program being established through this grant. When making a request on who should provide a letter of support, consider the following:
1. How are you recruiting students to participate in this program?
2. Do you have K12 partners, or community support?

3. Are there entities within the community that are informed of the program who have provided feedback and support?
4. The letters do not necessarily need to come from a funding or human resource partner. Rather, the letter could be from an outside entity that sees the value that the program would bring to the communities the program would serve.

In determining our eligible first-year college students – can you provide clarity on how we would know from their 6th-12th grade years which students: Were counted under section (Title I), were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, received assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Law?

Some applicants have access to this information through the K-12 schools that they have partnered with. As a postsecondary institution who may not have access to this information, this could be part of an application process with the program. However, the statute Sec. 136A.861 MN Statutes, states "Eligible students include students in grades six through 12 who meet one or more of the following criteria" and for undergraduate students the statute states, "Eligible undergraduate students include those who met the student eligibility criteria as 6th through 12th graders." So, if your program is recruiting students who have already been identified as a member of a group traditionally underrepresented in higher education, then it would not be necessary to require that you have the data on who met the other criterion.

Is there a threshold for family income that is used for all 3? Is Pell-Grant eligible a measurement? Is it EFC?

Pell eligible and Student Aid Index (SAI formerly EFC) is not a specified criterion that was established within the statute Sec. 136A.861 MN Statutes. Here is where you can find the income guidelines for family income or defining program criteria to qualify for the following programs.

1. Were counted under section (Title I): COMPS-748.pdf (pages 85-86 discuss the definition of "Children to be counted")
2. Were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch: Income Eligibility Guidelines | Food and Nutrition Service
3. Received assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Law: C-140 TANF Need Standards Oct 24

Can our match be scholarships we give to eligible students who receive the eligible services?

Please reference the Request for Proposal document, Intervention for College Attendance Program: FY2026 Request for Proposal, on page 24 under "Match Contributions." This section states "Match contributions may but are not required to align with grant budget categories or expenditure types. A grantee may apply a match contribution to expenditures that are ineligible for grant funds as long as the match supports the program funded by grant." A grantee may not use funds that are for tuition and fees, on either the reimbursement or match side, to attend postsecondary institution (ie: federal or state grants or scholarships, and private scholarships). However, if you are providing ICAP specific items to ICAP participants, these may be used on the match side as long as the match supports the program funded by grant.

Regarding the budget and salary vs fringe, in the past salary was always one line item, and then fringe (FICA, retirement, and healthcare) was another line. In the new portal, it seems that the tax/FICA portion of fringe is now in salary, which leaves the assumption that fringe Is only retirement and healthcare. Is this correct? If salary is now salary plus FICA, and fringe is retirement and healthcare, we can adjust our calculations accordingly?

Yes, please adjust your budget according to the change this year (as stated in the portal).

In looking ahead at the "Financial and Applicant Capacity Review" and "Submission Signatures" screens for the ICAP proposal in Intelligrants, I notice there are a couple signature fields. It appears that we can simply type in the signature of our Authorized Representative, but will that be overridden by the user profile information of the person submitting? That is, do we need to create a profile for our President & CEO (Authorized Representative) and hit submit under his profile to avoid having my information populate these signature fields?

Yes. Since you your CEO will be signing off on the Financial and Applicant Capacity Review, they would need a log in. The role I would assign is "Authorized signatory."

Can an applicant request more funding in year two than year one for the ICAP Grant, as long as they stay within the two-year max of $120,000?

The Request for Proposal states on page one under "Funding Availability:"

> *The maximum grant amount is $120,000 for the biennium; $60,000 per year. This is subject to change based on the outcomes of the 2025 legislative session. Contracts will be established for FY2026, with a maximum annual award of $60,000. If all grant administration requirements are met, the grantee has the option to renew the grant for a second year with an additional annual amount not to exceed $60,000. In the case of a renewal for FY2027, the contract would undergo an amendment to extend the grant expiration date to August 31, 2027.*

The annual maximum is $60,000, so an applicant cannot request more than $60,000 in the first year. If a grantee does not spend all of their first year's grant allocation AND the applicant is able to renew their contract for the second year, then the grantee's unused funds from year one will roll into year two of the grant cycle. Thus, potentially making the allowable ICAP funds in the second year greater than the allocation in the first year.

When an applicant requests letters of recommendation, how should they be addressed? Is "To whom it may concern" acceptable or is more detail needed?

Yes. "To whom it may concern," is just fine.

When going through the budget forms in the portal, does OHE have advice for us on how to split the expenses between ICAP and matching. Can we just split each line item 50/50 or do you expect line items to be exclusive to one or the other?

There are a few ways an applicant can set up the budget to meet the dollar-for-dollar match requirement. The match does not need to be category-for-category, but it can be. Overall, the match needs to be at least equal to the total reimbursable expenditures you are requesting AND the match dollars also need to apply specifically to ICAP. It is up to you if you would split every line 50/50 between the reimbursement side and match side, but it is not required. For example, you may have all of the expenditures for reimbursement coming from personnel, and all of the match dollars being allocated under consumable materials and supplies.

What kind of match documentation is appropriate for the Match Supporting Document. The applicant's match will be coming from private grants. Can the applicant list which grants they have secured and which they would anticipate as renewals over the grant period?

Yes, an applicant may list grants that have been secured and would anticipate these funds being renewed over the grant period. For the initial supporting document for the proposal, the applicant <u>may</u> **(not required)** submit letters from the grantor providing the grant to confirm the secured funding and the grant period in which the funding can be used.

Please note <u>if selected as a grantee</u>: During the reimbursement process, the grantee will need to provide proof of payment to ICAP related expenditures that the match funds were attributed to.

Is there a way to enter a table in the text boxes for each part of the narrative? Especially in the part of our proposal where we discuss demonstrated need, we have tables that make the data that demonstrates need easier to read. I tried pasting a table into the text box on the grant management system from the word document where I'm working on my draft of the proposal, and the result was just the text from my table without the formatting.

Unfortunately, with the text fields, the function does not allow formatted tables.

Are there any places to include supporting attachments? We have schedules for the two classes we plan to teach for our program that would break up our narrative if we included them in our writing. In a previous application, we were able to attach them as appendices, but I don't see a place where I can do that in the grant management system.

I will follow-up with our vendor to see if we could add an "other supporting document" upload to the attachments page. In the meantime, you may upload additional attachments on the "attachments" form. The form allows you to add repeatable rows in the different categories. So, although the supporting documents are not Letters of Support, Resumes, or Match Support documents, you could click add under Match Supporting Document and upload the additional documentation there.

In terms of match, if we envision that ICAP allows UMN Morris to serve students who are cannot currently be served by the TRIO SSS project (for example, low income students who do not meet federal citizenship requirements), can the match be staff time/effort serving TRIO SSS students; only TRIO SSS students who also meet ICAP eligibility requirements; or only additional staff time/effort toward the ICAP-served students?

You need to make sure that the personnel who are being counted under either the match or reimbursement side of the budget, would be working and providing services to student participants of ICAP. If the staff member has roles outside of ICAP, then the budget item would need to be prorated to only reflect ICAP related expenditures (i.e. If only 10% of their position is being attributed to ICAP, then only 10% could be counted for the budget). The students do not need to meet federal citizenship requirements to be student participants of ICAP. The program's scope is to provide services for historically underserved students to access higher education.

Does ICAP require data/outcome reporting via Workforce One, or is all of that done through Intelligrants?

Yes. Progress reports will be completed by the grantee through the Intelligrants portal.

In terms of the budget, we want to clarify that figures should reflect Year 1 and Year 2 combined. For example, if Staff A earns $40,000 (simple math for my sake, not a real base salary) and will be dedicated 25% to ICAP, we should enter $20,000 (not $10,000), correct?

If the annual salary is $40,000 and you are anticipating that the employee will have ICAP related roles for both years over the project period, then yes. I would calculate the total salary as $80,000 ($40,000 year 1 and $40,000 year 2) multiplied by .25 equals $20,000 over the full project period being attributed to ICAP. When you enter this into the portal you would put the total salary as $80,0000 and the percentage being attributed to ICAP as 25%.

Can the ICAP costs include food for students' families at workshops? If so, would this be listed under participant costs, consumables, or other?

Yes. Because the food being purchased would be for students and their families to attend a workshop, this should go under "other direct costs." The service identified in the statute for this type of expenditure would be "Fostering and improving parental involvement in planning for and facilitating a college education."

If the food was being provided only to student participants for a workshop, you could put this under "consumable supplies and instruction materials." If the food was part of meals for student participants of the ICAP who had meal costs when traveling in Minnesota for ICAP related events (i.e. College visits), or if the ICAP was set up for all day programming and the grantee was providing meals for student participants, then the food costs would be categorized under "participant costs."

If school districts are identifying and referring students to be served through our ICAP design, is it sufficient to "take their word for it" that they've determined the student's eligibility, or do we need to submit documentation from the district verifying this? If we can "take [the district's] word for it," do we need the district to explicitly tell us under which category they determined each student's eligibility?

Regarding obtaining date directly from partnering district, there would most likely need to be a release of information that the districts have on file to allow them to release any student data to other entities. As far as how specific the eligibility criteria needs to be that you receive from the partnering schools to determine participant eligibility, the grantee does need to collect the specific criteria that the applicant meets to determine their eligibility. The reason for this, is because we ask for specific data during the progress reporting period that the grantee needs to report on.

Data projections for grant application: We plan to estimate the students we would serve using public data from our primary high school partners. Would this approach be acceptable for the grant application?

The applicant should review their program and what the program capacity would be based on the program structure. If the program is existing and you are looking to grow the already established program, then you could base the anticipated number of participants on current enrollment and projected growth. I would be hesitant to use solely the public data from your primary high school participants, because you should be evaluating the capacity and goal for ICAP specifically. However, you of course could use the public data to support the proposal and need of the project. The applicant can explain this piece more in the Proposal Narrative.

Determining eligible undergraduate students: Could you confirm the criteria used by OHE/ICAP for identifying underrepresented students in higher education? Does it include socioeconomic status (e.g., free/reduced lunch), documented disability, and/or ethnicity? The statute for ICAP state the following in regard to eligible applicant, and the student only needs to meet one of these. Sec. 136A.861 MN Statutes

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Subd. 2.Eligible students.

(a) Eligible students include students in grades six through 12 who meet one or more of the following criteria:

(1) are counted under section 1124(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I);

(2) are eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Act;

(3) receive assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Law (Title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996); or

(4) are a member of a group traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

(b) Eligible undergraduate students include those who met the student eligibility criteria as 6th through 12th graders.

Demographic data for reporting: During the grant reporting stages, we could ask students for additional details on their program application. Do you have a recommended list of demographic questions we should use to ensure we are meeting ICAP expectations, particularly in the current political climate?

The Office of Higher Education has not received direction from the State of Minnesota that we need to stop diversity, equity, and inclusion practices for state funded programs. Grantees will continue to collect data on eligible student specific information as listed in the statute, Sec. 136A.861 MN Statutes, Subd. 2. Eligible students.

Can ICAP funds be used to purchase laptops for students to keep upon completing the program? Alternatively, could we establish a laptop loaner program, where students use the devices during the courses, and we reuse them for future programs? Our proposal includes a keyboarding course paired with integrated technology workshops, with a hybrid format. Providing laptops would support student participation and serve as an incentive for successful completion.

The only way that the laptop purchase would be allowable for ICAP is if the college established a laptop loaner program for a keyboarding course that was NOT for college credit, this cost would be allowable for ICAP and the applicant would list the cost under consumable material and supplies.

If the laptops are purchased for students to use and keep after the course (non-credit), the laptops would not be an allowable expense for ICAP because it would be viewed as a financial incentive.

If the laptops are purchased for students to use and keep after the course counting toward postsecondary academic credit, the laptops would not be an allowable expense for ICAP because it would be viewed and supplies for a postsecondary course.

We anticipate the summer bridge programming to run in the mornings or as full-day sessions. Would it be permissible to allocate ICAP funds for food (breakfast or lunch) specific to the program? We are considering either purchasing food from our cafeteria or issuing vouchers for students to use on the day of the event.

Food vouchers would not be an allowable expenditure, but food through the cafeteria would be for all day programming.

> **Food Voucher follow-up question: We envision distributing vouchers on the day of each event so students can use them during their lunch break. Our reasoning is that ordering meals from the cafeteria each time involves a lot of paperwork and processes. Providing food vouchers would streamline the process and give students the experience of selecting their own meals in the cafeteria. Would this approach be allowable?**
>
> If the food vouchers are applied in such a way where the student participants would only be able to use the voucher for the food onsite at the location where the ICAP event is being held AND at the time the event is being held, then a food voucher would be allowable. The justification for the expense needs to be clearly stated in the expenditure justification. We want to stay away from financial incentives for students to participate in ICAP. However, food for ICAP student participants is allowable for students to attend an ICAP related event.

We are interested in applying for the ICAP grant, but I would like to confirm if the funding is still available, considering the current volatility of funding for the Office of Higher Education from the federal government.

ICAP is through the State of Minnesota directly and is not part of any Federal funding. We anticipate that ICAP funding will be available pending the MN 2025 Legislative session.

Can ICAP fund be used for support personnel hired to provide services to students who are taking a remedial course in their first year of college, if the student participants meet the student eligibility requirement for ICAP?

*Keep in mind that ICAP cannot be used for tuition/fees books and materials for postsecondary course work. Please refer to pages 16-18 on expenditures in the ICAP RFP, https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/Documents/ICAP%20FIS/ICAP%20FY2026%20RFP_ADA.pdf.

The grant can pay for personnel who provide services to historically underserved students as outlined in Sec. 136A.861 MN Statutes. From how I am reading the inquiry, the funds will not be supporting costs associated with the remedial (developmental) course, rather students required to take the course will be offered the support of the newly hired coaches. If this is the case, then as long as the student participants meet the student eligibility requirements of Minnesota Statute 136A.861 and the coaches being hired to provide direct services to students such as: Academic counseling, mentoring, fostering and improving parental involvement in planning for and facilitating a college education, services for students with English as a second language, academic enrichment activities, tutoring, career awareness and exploration, orientation to college life, assistance with high school course selection and information about college admission requirements, and financial aid counseling. Then, the personnel costs would be eligible for ICAP.

The ICAP grant will need to be allocated to represent the portion of the coaches' role that is attributed to serving ICAP eligible students. If personnel costs are being used for the dollar-for-dollar match, make sure that the budgeted amount is representing ICAP related costs only.

Do Grantee Authorized Officials (AO) and Grantee Authorized Signatories (AS), need to provide their resumes? Does the AO or AS have a minimum effort threshold on this award?

Applicants only need to provide resumes for personnel who are included in the budget for the personnel costs. If the AO and AS will not be part of the Personnel Costs budget category, then you do not need to include their resumes.

It is not required that the AO or AS need to have any paid or measurable effort on the award. Further, we did not specify a threshold in the RFP for what percentage of an employee's salary can be counted toward the budget for ICAP reimbursement or match.

The program we are looking to request ICAP funds for takes place in July. The Year 1 grant report is due on June 30, would this disqualify our program from applying for this grant?

The timing of your program alone would not disqualify the program of being eligible. Contracts will be established this summer (July or August) and expenditures for the first year would need to fall between the date the contract is finalized and 06/30/2026. Then, year 2 of the grant would be 07/01/2026-08/31/2027.

A majority of students (77% last year) that attend the program either qualify for free/reduced lunch or are students of color. Are programs that serve both underserved and non-underserved students eligible? Could we submit a request where funding is only applied to the eligible students?

If your program serves both underserved and non-underserved students, the ICAP student participants would specifically be the underserved student population, so when you set up your anticipated expenditures you need to allocate funds based specifically on services being provided to students who meet the ICAP eligible student requirements as established in Sec. 136A.861 MN Statutes.

In the past, our organization has received funds from the OHE for this program that we are seeking ICAP funds for, in support of the attendance of low-income students. Does this present a conflict? The projected combined total of both grants would represent less than 10% of the overall program cost.

No, this does not present a direct conflict.

Is there additional guidance on which groups qualify as underserved in higher education in Minnesota?

Historically underserved students in higher education include: First generation college students, students of color, low-income student, and English as a Second Language learners.

We currently have an application for our summer bridge program. Would it be acceptable to modify it to include a questions to determine student eligibility? The application would include the following language "Please confirm your student (or, if you're 18 or older, you) is eligible for one of the following reasons: Currently eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, currently receiving assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Law, a member of a group traditionally underrepresented in higher education (examples include first-generation college students, students with financial need, students of color, students with disabilities, etc.)."

Yes.

In looking at the ICAP grant, can we use it to pay for a tool for students like a physical planner? It looks like we cannot pay for "swag" items like t-shirts, or pens or stickers to advertise or incentivize correct? Would a planner be in this same category?

Planners are okay to purchase and can be included under consumable materials and supplies. Swag may be an allowable expense if being used to recruit students into the program. Swag is not an allowable expense if being provided as a gift or incentive to complete the program.

I gained my access to the portal this morning and do not see a Work Plan template.

Under "Proposal," you should be able to see the Proposal Coversheet, Proposal Narrative, Proposed Budget, and Financial and Applicant Capacity Review. Under "Budget: you should be able to see Personnel, Personnel Travel, Participant Costs, Consumable Supplies and Materials, Marketing and Communication, Other Directs Costs, Budget Summary, Attachments, and Submission Signatures. You will identify your plan in the proposal narrative and your budget narrative will be compiled as you write out a justification for each anticipated expense. Selected grantees, once awarded, will move into next steps of the portal where they will complete a workplan and budget. However, during the proposal phase, the applicants will only complete the proposal forms and budget forms.

I am also trying to pinpoint whether a list of funders we provide should be our full 2025 major funders document or one that isolates our relevant Youth After School and Summer programming funders only?

The applicant will only be entering funders, providing match dollars, for the program that they are hoping will be partially funded through ICAP. So, narrow the funders to the entities that would be funding other ICAP expenditures that would not be counted on the reimbursement side.