**Context**

The [Magnet Schools Assistance Program](http://innovation.ed.gov/what-we-do/parental-options/magnet-school-assistance-program-msap/) (MSAP) provides grants to eligible local educational agencies (LEAs) and consortia of LEAs to support the development and implementation of magnet schools under an approved desegregation plan. These program resources can be used in pursuit of the objectives of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESSA), which supports State and local efforts to enable all elementary and secondary school students to achieve high standards and which holds schools, LEAs, and States accountable for ensuring that their students do so. In particular, the MSAP provides an opportunity for eligible entities to expand their capacity to provide public school choice to students who attend low-performing schools. The Department of Education (Department), Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII), is seeking peer reviewers for the MSAP grant competition.

**Who?**

We are seeking peer reviewers from various educational backgrounds and professions, including State or district education officials, PK-12 teachers and principals, attorneys, college or university educators, researchers, and evaluators with experience from one or more of the following areas: magnet school planning and implementation; education civil rights law; education administration, curriculum development and staff development for elementary and/or secondary education; and/or evaluation of educational programs.

***Magnet School Planning and Implementation***

* Knowledge of magnet schools and/or theme-based education, including planning and implementation.
* Knowledge of the sociocultural context in which diverse students learn.
* Understanding and knowledge of school desegregation, public school choice, and minority achievement.
* Knowledge of effective desegregation strategies including student assignment, attendance zones, weighted lotteries, magnet school siting, and recruitment plans.
* Understanding of the research on school climate and its impact on school achievement.
* Knowledge of working in comprehensive school buildings and the role of family and community engagement.

***Education Civil Rights Law***

* Knowledge of education civil rights enforcement with a particular emphasis on desegregation court orders and voluntary desegregation plans.
* Understanding of the importance of diversity and fostering meaningful interaction among students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, beginning at the earliest stage of such students’ education.
* Knowledge of recent Supreme Court decisions concerning civil rights and desegregation.

***Education Administration, Curriculum and Staff Development***

* Knowledge of elementary and secondary schools, magnet and/or theme-based curricula.
* Knowledge of and experience with school structures, effective leader paradigms, managerial processes and fiscal management.
* Understanding of research-based staff development strategies as well as high-quality professional development methods, particularly as it relates to magnet and/or theme-based schools.
* Knowledge of frameworks for outcome based professional development that focuses on change in teachers’ classroom practices, change in their beliefs and attitudes, and change in students’ achievement levels.
* Knowledge of comprehensive instructional programs and the research targeting approaches for heterogeneous groups that result in high achievement.

***Evaluation of Educational Programs***

* Familiarity with What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards.
* Knowledge of, and experience with, studies of school reforms focused on increasing socioeconomic diversity and academic achievement.
* Understanding of accountability structures, program and grant management.
* Understanding of education research, quantitative and qualitative methods of project evaluation, and recent findings of the relevant literature.
* Knowledge in evaluating school assessment plans and benchmarks for effective student outcomes.

***Review***

* Experience reviewing grant applications.

**What?**

Peer reviewers will independently read, score, and provide written comments for grant proposals submitted to the Department from applicants seeking federal funding under the MSAP. The purpose of this program is to provide competitive grants to eligible LEAs and consortia of LEAs to support magnet schools that are part of an approved desegregation plan. Through the implementation of magnet schools, program resources are utilized to eliminate, reduce, or prevent minority group isolation in elementary and secondary schools with substantial portions of minority students as well as enable magnet school students to meet high academic standards. The review process will be conducted both remotely and in Washington, DC. Reviewers will receive an honorarium for their services. Completed reviews will be used to recommend applications for funding. They will also be shared with each applicant and comments regarding winning applicants will be made available to the general public following the completion of the application review process.

**Requirements**

In addition to the skills, attributes and expertise highlighted above, peer reviewers must also meet the following requirements:

***Availability.*** Reviewers for the competition will need to dedicate approximately 80 hours for the review process. Forty hours will be needed to review all assigned applications the weeks of May 8 and May 15, and another 40 hours will be needed to participate in the on-site application review the week of May 22. This time estimate includes participation in an orientation session by conference call/webinar prior to evaluating the applications, time for reading, scoring, developing comments, and discussing assigned applications.

***Location.*** Reviewers will read, score, develop and revise comments remotely. Reviewers will then travel to Washington, DC to participate in panel discussions and revise/finalize comments.

***Tools.*** Each reviewer must have access to the Internet, a phone, a computer, a printer and have the ability to interact within the web environment.

**Conflict of Interest**

If you are affiliated with an organization that intends to apply for a grant under the MSAP competition, you may not be eligible to serve as a reviewer. As a reviewer, you will have a conflict of interest if: you helped prepare an application, regardless of financial interest in the success or failure of that application; you have agreed to serve, or you have been offered a position, as an employee, advisor, or consultant on the project; and/or your personal financial interest will be affected by the outcome of the competition, which would include any family members, employees or associates of the project applying for funding. These and other potential conflicts of interest will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis once identified/disclosed.

**Interested?**

If you would like to be considered for this role, please (1) complete the [Peer Reviewer Information Checklist](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/J2DFKTS), which can be found hyperlinked both in this document and at the [Magnet Schools Assistance Program](http://innovation.ed.gov/what-we-do/parental-options/magnet-school-assistance-program-msap/) website under “What’s New”, and (2) submit an updated resume or curriculum vitae to [***msap.team@ed.gov***](mailto:msap.team@ed.gov) by ***Friday, March 10, 2017***.

The Department solicits reviewers without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability. The Department will provide reasonable accommodations for a qualified individual with a disability so that individual might participate in the peer reviewer application process. If you require a reasonable accommodation to apply to participate in this review, please contact the MSAP staff by phone, 202-453-7200, or email at [*msap.team@ed.gov*](mailto:msap.team@ed.gov) no later than ***Friday, March 4, 2017*** to ensure we can properly facilitate the application process.