

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION****[CFDA No. 84.303A]****Challenge Grants for Technology in Education; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 1996**

*Purpose of Program:* The Challenge Grants for Technology in Education Program provides grants to consortia that are working to improve and expand new applications of technology to strengthen the school reform effort, improve student achievement, and provide sustained professional development of teachers, administrators, and school library media personnel.

*Eligible Applicants:* Only consortia may receive grants under this program. Consortia shall include at least one local educational agency (LEA) with a high percentage or number of children living below the poverty line. They may also include other local educational agencies, State educational agencies, institutions of higher education, businesses, academic content experts, software designers, museums, libraries, and other appropriate entities.

Note: In each consortium a participating LEA shall submit the application on behalf of the consortium and serve as the fiscal agent for the grant.

*Deadline for Receipt of Applications:* June 21, 1996.

*Deadline for Intergovernmental Review:* August 20, 1996.

*Applications Available:* April 22, 1996.

*Estimated Available Funds:* \$23,000,000.

*Estimated Range of Awards:* \$500,000 to \$2,000,000 per year.

*Estimated Average Size of Awards:* \$1,000,000 per year.

*Estimated Number of Awards:* 23.

*Project Period:* 5 years.

Note: The Department of Education is not bound by any of the above estimates in this notice. The Department is currently operating under the terms of a Continuing Resolution for fiscal year (FY) 1996. That Continuing Resolution, P.L. 104-122, does not make funds available for this competition. The Secretary anticipates, however, that the final appropriation for FY 1996 will include approximately \$23 million for this competition. The actual amount available will be determined by final congressional action on April 24, 1996, or later. The award of grants pursuant to this competition will depend upon the availability of funds.

*Maximum Award:* The Secretary does not consider an application that proposes a budget exceeding \$2,000,000 for any 12-month budget period.

*Applicable Regulations:* The Education Department General

Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR Parts 74, 75 (except 34 CFR 75.102(b), 75.200(b)(3), 75.210, and 75.217), 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, and 85.

*Other Requirements:* The requirements in the notice of selection criteria, selection procedures, and application procedures published in this issue of the Federal Register. **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Challenge Grants for Technology in Education Program is authorized under Title III, section 3136, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6846). This FY 1996 competition supports the second round of grants under this program.

As catalysts for change, grants under this program will support communities of educators, parents, industry partners, and others who are working to transform their schools into information-age learning centers. These challenge grants will support the development and innovative use of technology and new learning content in specific communities. Each effort should clearly focus on integrating innovative learning technologies into the curriculum to improve learning productivity in the community.

The Secretary believes that the information superhighway is creating new possibilities for extending the time, the place, and the resources for learning. Challenge grant communities can use it to develop first-class learning environments that provide affordable access to quality education and training. Especially promising possibilities are anticipated from a creative synthesis of ideas generated by educators and software developers, telecommunications firms and hardware manufacturers, entertainment producers, and others who are extending the possibilities for creating new learning communities.

Challenge grant communities need not be limited by geography. The information superhighway can be used to create virtual learning communities linking schools, colleges, libraries, museums, and businesses across the country or around the world. Students of all ages, no matter where they live, could tap vast electronic libraries and museums containing text and video images, music, art, and language instruction. They could work with scientists and scholars around the globe who can help them use mapping tools, primary historical documents, or laboratory experiments to develop strong research and problem solving skills.

The Secretary encourages each community to view this competition as an opportunity to act on its most

ambitious vision for education reform. It is essential, however, to guard against a future in which some communities have access to vast technological resources, while others do not. Low-income neighborhoods and other areas with the greatest need for technology should not be left behind in the acquisition of knowledge and skills needed for productive citizenship in the 21st century. A failure to include those communities will put their future, and the future of the country, at risk. For this reason, the Secretary gives special consideration to applications from consortia which are developing effective responses to the learning technology needs of areas with a high number or percentage of disadvantaged students or the greatest need for educational technology.

**Project Activities**

The statute authorizes the use of funds for activities similar to the following activities:

(a) Developing, adapting, or expanding existing and new applications of technology to support the school reform effort.

(b) Funding projects of sufficient size and scope to improve student learning and, as appropriate, support professional development, and provide administrative support.

(c) Acquiring connectivity linkages, resources, and services, including the acquisition of hardware and software, for use by teachers, students, and school library media personnel in the classroom or in school library media centers, in order to improve student learning by supporting the instructional program offered by such agency to ensure that students in schools will have meaningful access on a regular basis to such linkages, resources, and services.

(d) Providing ongoing professional development in the integration of quality educational technologies into school curriculum and long-term planning for implementing educational technologies.

(e) Acquiring connectivity with wide area networks for purposes of accessing information and educational programming sources, particularly with institutions of higher education and public libraries.

(f) Providing educational services for adults and families.

Note: Section 14503 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, (20 U.S.C. 8893) is applicable to the Challenge Grant Program. Section 14503 requires that an LEA, SEA, or educational service agency receiving financial assistance under this program must provide private

school children and teachers, on an equitable basis, special educational services or other program benefits under this program. The section further requires SEAs, LEAs, and educational service agencies to consult with private school officials during the design and development of the Challenge Grant projects. Each application should describe the ways in which the proposed project will address the needs of private school children and teachers.

#### Selection Criteria

In evaluating applications for grants under this program competition, the Secretary uses the following unweighted selection criteria, as described in the notice of selection criteria, selection procedures, and application procedures for this program published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register and repeated below:

(a) *Significance.* The Secretary reviews each proposed project for its significance by determining the extent to which the project—

(1) Offers a creative, new vision for using technology to help all students learn to challenging standards or to promote efficiency and effectiveness in education; and contributes to the advancement of State and local systemic educational reform;

(2) Will achieve far-reaching impact through results, products, or benefits that are easily exportable to other settings and communities;

(3) Will directly benefit students by integrating acquired technologies into the curriculum to enhance teaching, training, and student achievement or by other means;

(4) Will ensure ongoing, intensive professional development for teachers and other personnel to further the use of technology in the classroom, library, or other learning center;

(5) Is designed to serve areas with a high number or percentage of disadvantaged students or other areas with the greatest need for educational technology; and

(6) Is designed to create new learning communities, and expanded markets for high-quality educational technology applications and services.

(b) *Feasibility.* The Secretary reviews each proposed project for its feasibility by determining the extent to which—

(1) The project will ensure successful, effective, and efficient uses of technologies for educational reform that will be sustainable beyond the period of the grant;

(2) The members of the consortia or other appropriate entities will contribute substantial financial and other resources to achieve the goals of the project; and

(3) The applicant is capable of carrying out the project, as evidenced by

the extent to which the project will meet the problems identified; the quality of the project design, including objectives, approaches, evaluation plan, and dissemination plan; the adequacy of resources, including money, personnel, facilities, equipment, and supplies; the qualifications of key personnel who would conduct the project; and the applicant's prior experience relevant to the objectives of the project.

#### Application Deadline

In order to ensure timely receipt and processing of applications, the Secretary requires that an application must be received on or before the deadline date announced in this application notice. The Secretary will not consider an application for funding if it is not received by the deadline date unless the applicant can show proof that the application was (1) sent by registered or certified mail not later than five days before the deadline date; or (2) sent by commercial carrier not later than two days before the deadline date. An applicant must show proof of mailing in accordance with 34 CFR 75.102(d) and (e). Applications delivered by hand must be received by 2:00 p.m. (Washington, D.C. time) on the deadline date. For the purposes of this program competition, the Secretary does not apply 34 CFR 75.102(b) which requires an application to be mailed, rather than received, by the deadline date.

#### Additional Information

Prospective applicants may access a summary of questions and answers about the competition from the Department of Education's On-Line Library by using the Department's WWW Server at URL <http://www.ed.gov/> or by using the Internet Gopher Server at GOPHER.ED.GOV (under Announcements, Bulletins, and Press Releases). For additional help accessing the On-Line Library, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327). To receive a hard copy of the summary, fax requests to (202) 708-6003 or call (202) 708-6001.

*For Applications or Information Contact:* Telephone 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) for applications. For information contact Challenge Grants for Technology in Education, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-5544. Telephone (202) 708-6001. Individuals may fax requests for applications. Fax (202) 708-6003. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m.,

Eastern time, Monday through Friday of each week except Federal holidays.

Information about the Department's funding opportunities, including copies of the application notices for discretionary grant competitions, can be viewed on the Department's electronic bulletin board (ED Board), telephone (202) 260-9950; or on the Internet Gopher Server at GOPHER.ED.GOV (under Announcements, Bulletins, and Press Releases). However, the official application notice for a discretionary grant competition is the notice published in the Federal Register.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 6846.

Dated: April 5, 1996.

Sharon P. Robinson,

*Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Challenge Grants for Technology in Education; Notice

**AGENCY:** Department of Education.

**ACTION:** Notice of selection criteria, selection procedures, and application procedures.

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary establishes selection criteria, procedures for evaluating applications, and procedures for submission of applications under the Challenge Grants for Technology in Education Program. The program provides grants to consortia comprised of one or more local educational agencies and other appropriate entities for the purpose of improving and expanding new applications of technology to strengthen the school reform effort, improve student achievement, and provide sustained professional development of teachers, administrators, and school library media personnel. The Secretary establishes selection criteria and related procedures to make informed funding decisions on applications for technology projects having great promise for improving elementary and secondary education.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** The provisions of this notice take effect May 13, 1996.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Challenge Grants for Technology in Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC 20202-5544. Telephone (202) 708-6001. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339