

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA NO.: 84.184G & J]

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities National Programs—Federal Activities Grants Program

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of Proposed Priorities and Selection Criteria for Fiscal Year 1998.

SUMMARY: The Secretary announces proposed priorities and selection criteria for fiscal year (FY) 1998 under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) National Programs Federal Activities Grants Program. The Secretary takes this action to focus Federal financial assistance on identified national needs to promote the creation of safe and orderly learning environments for all students and to encourage the development of systems to collect data related to youth drug use and violent behavior.

Invitation To Comment

Interested persons are invited to submit comments and recommendations regarding these proposed priorities. All comments submitted in response to this notice will be available for public inspection, during and after the comment period, in Room 603, Portals Building, 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday of each week except Federal holidays.

On request, the Department supplies an appropriate aid, such as a reader or print magnifier, to an individual with a disability who needs assistance to review the comments. An individual with a disability who wants to schedule an appointment for this type of aid may call (202) 205-8113 or (202) 260-9895. An individual who uses a TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339, between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

DATES: Comments must be received by the Department on or before June 18, 1998.

ADDRESSES: All comments concerning these proposed priorities should be addressed to Ethel Jackson, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Maryland Avenue, SW., Suite 603, Portals Building, Washington, DC 20202-6123. Comments may also be sent through the Internet to: comments@ed.gov. You must include the term "Federal Activities Grant Program" in the subject line of your electronic message.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ethel Jackson, Safe and Drug-Free

Schools Programs, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 603, Portals, Washington, DC 20202-6123. Telephone: (202) 260-3954. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternate format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the contact person listed above.

Note: This notice of proposed priorities and selection criteria does not solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under this competition will be published in the **Federal Register** concurrent with or following the publication of the notice of final priorities.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

This notice contains two proposed priorities and selection criteria for fiscal year 1998. Under absolute priority one (CFDA 84.184G, State and Local Educational Agency Drug and Violence Prevention Data Collection), the Secretary may make grant awards for up to 24 months. Under absolute priority number two (CFDA 84.184J, Model Demonstration Program), the Secretary may award cooperative agreements for up to 60 months. Cooperative agreements funded through this priority will serve as national demonstration sites to test strategies, assess effectiveness, and make a major contribution to the development and dissemination of models and components of models which can be used by school districts and other youth-serving agencies nationwide.

Priorities

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1994, the Secretary gives an absolute preference to applications that meet one of the following priorities. The Secretary funds under this competition only applications that meet one of these absolute priorities.

Absolute Priority 1 and Selection Criteria—State and Local Educational Agency Drug and Violence Prevention Data Collection (CFDA 84.184G)

Under this priority, applicants must propose projects that—

- (1) Develop, improve, expand, or enhance the collection of data related to youth drug use and violence; and
- (2) Develop and implement processes to ensure that high-quality data are used to form policy, assess needs, select

interventions, and assess the success of drug and violence prevention activities funded under the SDFSC State Grants Program. Projects may be State-wide in scope or limited to an individual local educational agency, or a consortium of local educational agencies, with a student enrollment that exceeds 30,000.

Projects must address drug and violence prevention data for students in general, not just for a sub-set of the population (e.g., non-English speaking students or hearing-impaired students). To be considered for funding under this competition, a project must include—

(1) Concrete plans, with timelines, that detail how the results of new or improved data collection efforts will be incorporated into State and local educational agency efforts to assess needs, select interventions, and assess success of drug and violence prevention efforts;

(2) Outcome-based performance indicators that will be used to judge the success of the project;

(3) A description of how efforts proposed as part of the project have been coordinated with and will not duplicate data collection efforts being implemented by other State or local agencies; and

(4) If the applicant is other than a State or local educational agency, evidence of commitment from the State educational agency (for State-wide projects) or from the superintendent of schools (for local projects).

Selection Criteria

(a)(1) The Secretary uses the following selection criteria to evaluate proposals submitted under this priority.

The maximum score for all of the criteria in this section is 100 points.

The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses with the criterion.

(b) *The criteria.*—

1. *Need for project.* (15 points)

In determining the need for the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project.

(b) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

2. *Significance.* (25 points)

In determining the significance of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The significance of the problem or issues to be addressed by the proposed project.

(b) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.

(c) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population.

3. Quality of the project design. (25 points)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

(b) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

(c) The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State and Federal resources.

4. Adequacy of resources. (15 points)

In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed projects, the following factors are considered:

(a) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(b) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of Federal funding.

5. Quality of the management plan (10 points)

In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the following factor is considered:

(a) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, time lines, and milestone for accomplishing project tasks.

6. Quality of the project evaluation. (10 points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation to be conducted for the proposed project, the following factor is considered:

(a) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

Absolute Priority #2 and Selection Criteria—Model Demonstration Programs to Create Safe and Orderly Learning Environments in Schools (CFDA 84.184J)

Projects proposed under this priority are expected to comprehensively address multiple factors that predispose youth to drug use and violent behavior. Therefore, projects will not be funded for: (a) basic support of existing programs; (b) replication of a single program of demonstrated effectiveness, or (c) less than \$500,000 or more than \$1 million.

Projects supported under this priority will be funded for implementation in one site for three years and for replication in additional sites for two years. Projects will be reviewed during the third year to examine, among other factors, the degree to which the evaluation findings at the original site are promising, and the quality of the evaluation design proposed to test the model at other sites during years four and five. Projects which fail to demonstrate effectiveness at the original site will not be funded to test the model's replication in other sites.

Under this priority, applicants must propose projects that:

(A) Develop and implement a model with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data;

(B) Identify outcomes intended to result in behavioral change in youth served and other indicators of the effectiveness of the model (e.g. improved bonding to school and to the community, reductions in disciplinary referrals, absence of firearms and other weapons in schools, acquisition of pro-social skills, and reductions in alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use by the target population);

(C) Evaluate the model by using multiple measures to determine the effectiveness of the model and its components or strategies; and

(D) Produce detailed documentation of procedures and materials that would enable others to replicate the model as implemented at the original site.

Applicants must provide the following: (1) recent and historical data on drug use by youth; (2) data that describes patterns of violence and disruptive acts in schools; (3) rates of referral to juvenile justice authorities for bringing weapons to school, drug use or possession and violent criminal acts; (4) evidence of gang and violence problems in the target community, and (5) demographic information for the geographic area in which the school is located.

Selection Criteria

(a)(1) The Secretary uses the following selection criteria to evaluate proposals submitted under this priority.

The maximum score for all of the criteria in this section is 100 points.

(2) The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses.

(b) *The criteria.*—

1. *Significance* (30 points)

In determining the significance of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study.

(b) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings that may be utilized by other appropriate agencies and organizations.

(c) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.

(2) Quality of the project design (25 points)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

(b) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.

(c) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(d) The quality of the proposed demonstration design and procedures for documenting project activities and results;

(e) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priority or priorities established for the competition.

3. Adequacy of resources (10 points)

In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

(b) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design and potential significance of the proposed project.

4. Quality of the management plan (10 points)

In determining the quality of the management plan, the following factors are considered:

(a) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(b) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

5. *Quality of the project evaluation* (25 points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the following factors are considered:

(a) The extent to which the methods of the evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives and outcomes of the proposed project.

(b) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

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Note: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 7131.

Dated: May 14, 1998.

Gerald N. Tirozzi,

Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education.

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