

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of final priorities and selection criteria for fiscal year 1998.

SUMMARY: The Secretary announces final 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.

EFFECTIVE DATE: These priorities take effect August 6, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information about the two priorities under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities National Programs Federal Activities Grants Program, contact the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 603 Portals, Washington, D.C. 20202-6123. Telephone: (202) 260-3954. FAX (202) 260-3748. Internet: http://www.Patricia_Rattler@ed.gov.

Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service at (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

Note: This notice of final priority does *not* solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under these competitions is published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice contains two final priorities and related 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 awards for up to 24 months. Under absolute priority number two (CFDA 84.184J), Model Demonstration Programs, 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 that can be used

by school districts and other youth-serving agencies nationwide.

On May 19, 1998, the Secretary published the proposed priorities for these competitions in a Notice of Request for Public Comments in the **Federal Register** (63 FR 27646). In response to comments received, the Secretary made no modifications, as noted in the following section—Analysis of Comments and Changes—of this notice of final priorities.

Analysis of Comments and Changes

In response to the Secretary's invitation to comment on the proposed priorities, the Department received four responses. These included responses from local educational agencies, a State agency, and an individual. Comments that did not suggest changes in the priority language are not addressed. An analysis of the comments, organized by priority, follows.

Priority 1—State and Local Educational Agency Drug and Violence Prevention Data Collection

Comment: One commenter suggested strengthening the language in this priority concerning coordination with other existing data collection efforts by requiring applicants to document other existing data collection activities and how they will collaborate with them. The commenter suggested requiring letters from youth-serving agencies in other, non-educational domains as part of applications to help demonstrate collaboration.

Discussion: The language in the proposed priority requires applicants to describe how efforts proposed as part of the project have been coordinated with and will not duplicate existing data collection efforts. The proposed change in the priority would require a level of proof that is unnecessary in order to permit evaluation of a proposal.

Changes: None.

Priority 2—Model Demonstration Programs to Create Safe and Orderly Learning Environments in Schools

Comments: Two commenters proposed modifications to this priority that would limit the variety of program models that could be implemented with a grant under this priority.

Discussion: The existing language in the priority is specifically designed to include a wide range of possible program models that meet general criteria. The proposed limitations would significantly reduce the flexibility provided in the original language.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested that language in the priority be revised

to require that the entire model program proposed be based on research, not just specific components or strategies.

Discussion: The language in the proposed priority is intended to solicit applications that combine multiple strategies and programs into a model program that will comprehensively address the risk factors that predispose youth to drug use and violent behavior. Because research-based information about the effect of combined strategies and programs as a comprehensive model is limited, the proposed priority language allows applicants the flexibility to propose model programs that combine research-based programs and strategies in innovative or untested ways.

Changes: None.

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)**Priority 1:**

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 SDFSCA 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 time lines, 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 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 project, 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: 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 milestones 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: 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)

Priority 2:

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 that 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:

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

(2) 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);

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

(4) 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: (a) recent and historical data on drug use by youth; (b) data that describe patterns of violence and disruptive acts in schools; (c) rates of referral to juvenile justice authorities for bringing weapons to school, drug use or possession, and violent criminal acts; (d) evidence of gang and violence problems in the target community, and (e) 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 will be 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 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 will be 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.

Intergovernmental Review

This program is subject to the requirements of Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. The objective of the Executive Order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism by relying on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

In accordance with the order, this document is intended to provide early notification of the Departments's specific plans and actions for this program.

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

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Numbers 84.184G and 84.184J, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act National Programs—Federal Activities Grants Program.)

Dated: July 2, 1998.

Gerald N. Tirozzi,

Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA Nos.: 84.184G and 84.184J]

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education—Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities National Programs; Combined Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year 1998

Purpose of Program: The National Programs portion of the SDFSCA supports the development of innovative programs that (1) provide models or proven effective practices that will assist schools and communities around the Nation to improve their programs funded under the State Grants portion of the SDFSCA; and (2) develop, implement, evaluate, and disseminate new or improved approaches to creating safe and orderly learning environments in schools.

Eligible Applicants: State and local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, other nonprofit agencies, organizations, and individuals, and any combination of these types of entities.

Applications Available: July 2, 1998.

Deadline for Receipt of Applications: August 6, 1998.

Note: All applications must be received on or before the deadline date. This requirement takes exception to the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), 34 CFR 75.102. In accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553), it is the practice of the Secretary to offer interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed regulations. However, this amendment to EDGAR makes procedural changes only and does not establish new substantive policy. Therefore, under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(A), proposed rulemaking is not required.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: September 8, 1998.

CFDA No. and name	Range of awards	Estimated average size of awards	Estimated number of awards	Estimated available funds	Project period
84.184G State and Local Educational Agency Drug and Violence Prevention Data Collection.	\$400,000 to \$600,000 (estimated).	\$500,000	6	\$3,000,000	Up to 24 months.