

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Educational Research and Improvement; National Institutes' Field-Initiated Studies Grant Program

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year 1996.

SUMMARY: The Secretary invites applications for new awards for fiscal year 1996 and announces closing dates for the transmittal of applications under the Field-Initiated Studies Grant Program supported by five new National Institutes: Student Achievement, Curriculum, and Assessment; Education of At-Risk Students; Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management; Early Childhood Development and Education; and Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning. The Field-Initiated Studies Grant Program will support educational research projects related to the missions of the Institutes.

DATES: The closing dates for transmitting applications under this notice are listed in Section I of this notice.

ADDRESSES: *For Applications or Further Information:* The address and telephone number for obtaining applications for, or further information about, individual Institutes are in Section II of this notice.

For Users of TDD or FIRS: 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 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

For Electronic Access to Information: Information about the Department's funding opportunities, including copies of 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**.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Educational Research, Development, Dissemination, and Improvement Act of 1994 ("Act") (20 U.S.C. 6002 *et seq.*) established five National research institutes within the Department. Each of the Institutes will support a Field-Initiated Studies (FIS) Grant program to fund field-initiated research projects on topics related to the mission of the relevant Institute. The application announcement for each FIS Grant

program, in Section II of this notice, contains a summary of the mission of each of the five Institutes. Section 931 of the Act (20 U.S.C. 6031) contains a complete description of the mission of each Institute.

The Secretary has established invitational priorities for each of the FIS Grant program competitions. The invitational priorities provide examples of research projects that the Secretary believes would enhance the work of each Institute. The invitational priorities are examples only and applicants may propose education research projects on any topic within the mission of the relevant Institute.

The Field-Initiated Studies Grant program provides assistance to institutions of higher education, public and private organizations, institutions, agencies, and individuals for educational research and demonstration to improve American education. The Act defines "educational research" to include basic and applied research, inquiry with the purpose of applying tested knowledge gained to specific educational settings and problems, development, planning, surveys, assessments, evaluations, investigations, experiments, and demonstrations in the field of education and other fields relating to education (20 U.S.C. 6011(l)(6)). The Act also defines the term "field-initiated research" to mean education research in which topics and methods of study are generated by investigators, including teachers and other practitioners (20 U.S.C. 6011(l)(7)).

Program Information Shared by All National Institutes

Eligible Applicants: Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, public and private organizations, institutions, agencies, and individuals, or a consortium thereof.

Length of Application: The application narrative may not exceed 25 double-spaced, 8½ x 11" pages (on one side only). The applicant must use a non-proportional 12-point or larger font (i.e., no more than 10 characters to the inch). The entire application package, including all forms, appendices, and attachments may not exceed 45 pages. All pages must have at least 1-inch margins on all sides. Pursuant to this Department's authority to establish instructions governing the form of application, applications which do not follow these specifications will not be considered for funding.

Project Periods: Research projects may extend from one to three years.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85 and 86 (part 86 applies to IHEs only); and (b) The regulations in 34 CFR part 700 (Standards for the Conduct and Evaluation of Activities Carried Out by OERI), as published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

Applicable Evaluation Criteria: In accordance with 34 CFR 700.30, the Secretary applies the following evaluation criteria to the Field-Initiated Studies Grant program competitions.

(1) **National Significance** (30 points).
(i) The Secretary considers the national significance of the proposed project.
(ii) In determining the national significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors—

(A) The importance of the problem or issue to be addressed.

(B) The potential contribution of the project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

(C) The potential contribution of the project to the development and advancement of theory and knowledge in the field of study.

(2) **Quality of the Project Design** (30 points). (i) The Secretary considers the quality of the design of the proposed project.

(ii) In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors—

(A) Whether the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the project are clearly specified and measurable.

(B) Whether a specific research design has been proposed, and the quality and appropriateness of that design, including the scientific rigor of the studies involved.

(3) **Quality and potential contributions of personnel** (15 points).

(i) The Secretary considers the quality and potential contributions of personnel for the proposed project.

(ii) In determining the quality and potential contributions of personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors—

(A) The qualifications, including training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.

(B) The qualifications, including training and experience, of key project personnel.

(4) **Adequacy of Resources** (15 points).

(i) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project.

(ii) In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors—

(A) Whether the budget is adequate to support the project; and
 (B) Whether the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the project.
 (5) *Quality of the Management Plan* (10 points). (i) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan of the proposed project.
 (ii) In determining the quality of the management plan of a proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors—

(A) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the project, including the specification of staff responsibility, timelines, and benchmarks for accomplishing project tasks.
 (B) Whether time commitments of the project director or principal investigator and other key personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet project objectives.
 (C) How the applicant will ensure that persons who are otherwise eligible to participate in the project are selected

without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.
Organization of Notice
 This notice contains two sections. *Section I* includes a chart listing the common closing date, and other pertinent information about each competition covered by this notice. *Section II* consists of the individual application announcement for each competition under the Field-Initiated Studies Grant program.

SECTION I.—INSTITUTES AND FIS GRANT CLOSING DATES

| Title of program and CFDA number | Applications available | Application deadline date | Tentative award date | Estimated available funds | Estimated range of awards | Estimated average size of annual awards | Estimated number of awards |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| National Institute on Student Achievement, Curriculum, and Assessment FIS Grant Program (84.305F) | 10/13/95 | 01/05/96 | 06/28/96 | \$2,580,000 | \$100,000–300,000 | \$250,000 | 10 |
| National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students FIS Grant Program (84.306F) | 10/13/95 | 01/05/96 | 06/28/96 | 2,580,000 | 100,000–300,000 | 250,000 | 10 |
| National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education FIS Grant Program (84.307F) | 10/13/95 | 01/05/96 | 06/28/96 | 1,290,000 | 100,000–250,000 | 200,000 | 6 |
| National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management FIS Grant Program (84.308F) | 10/13/95 | 01/05/96 | 06/28/96 | 860,000 | 50,000–300,000 | 150,000 | 6 |
| National Institute on Post-secondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning FIS Grant Program (84.309F) | 10/13/95 | 01/05/96 | 06/28/96 | 1,290,000 | 100,000–400,000 | 250,000 | 5 |

Section II—Application Notices

CFDA No. 84.305F—The National Institute on Student Achievement, Curriculum, and Assessment, Field-Initiated Studies Program

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the National Institute on Student Achievement, Curriculum, and Assessment is to provide leadership to improve student achievement in core content areas. The institute is to support research and development to identify and develop innovative and exemplary methods to improve student knowledge at all levels in the core content areas.

Priorities: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) the Secretary is particularly interested in applications that meet one or more of the following invitational priorities. However, an application that meets one or more of these invitational priorities does not receive competitive or absolute preference over other applications:

Invitational Priority 1. Methods and activities to reduce and prevent violence in schools.

Invitational Priority 2. Effective use of technology to improve learning, teaching, and testing.

Invitational Priority 3. Methods of delivering teacher education and inservice professional training that lead to improved student achievement.

For Applications or Information Contact: Clara Lawson-Holmes, National Institute on Student Achievement, Curriculum, and Assessment, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Room 510, Washington, DC 20208–5573. Telephone (202) 219–2079, or clawson@INET.ED.GOV.

CFDA No. 84.306F—The National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students, Field-Initiated Studies Program

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the National Institute for the Education

of At-Risk Students is to expand research-based knowledge and strategies that will promote excellence and equity in the education of children and youth placed at risk of educational failure because of limited-English proficiency, poverty, race or ethnicity, or geographic location. The Institute will carry out a program of research and development to identify and assist others to replicate and adapt programs and models which promote greater achievement and educational success by at-risk students, including innovative methods of instruction, student assessments, professional development, and curricula.

Priorities: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) the Secretary is particularly interested in applications that meet one or more of the following invitational priorities. However, an application that meets one or more of these invitational priorities does not receive competitive or absolute preference over other applications:

Invitational Priority 1. Increasing academic achievement and reducing the dropout rates of American Indian and Alaska Native students.

Invitational Priority 2. Improving the success of students at-risk through coordinated school, community, and family programs, including programs designed to increase learning time.

Invitational Priority 3. Improving student outcomes in schools where a majority of students live in poverty.

For Applications or Information Contact: Beth Fine, National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Room 610, Washington, DC 20208-5521. Telephone (202) 219-2239, or bfine@INET.ED.GOV.

CFDA 84.307F—The National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education, Field Initiated Studies Program

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education is to identify, develop, evaluate and assist others to replicate methods and approaches that improve early childhood development and education. The Institute is to carry out a program of research and development in areas such as the social and educational development of young children; factors relating to readiness, including prenatal care, health services, and nutrition; family literacy; the role of parental involvement in their children's learning; effective learning methods and curriculum for young children; methods for integrating learning in settings other than the classroom; the impact of outside influences, such as television, violence, and drug abuse; and instruction that considers the cultural environment of children.

Priorities: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) the Secretary is particularly interested in applications that meet one or more of the following invitational priorities. However, an application that meets one or more of these invitational priorities does not receive competitive or absolute preference over other applications:

Invitational Priority 1. The development of pre-reading, reading, and family literacy skills.

Invitational Priority 2. Improving long-term outcomes for teenage parents and young children.

Invitational Priority 3. Developing programs that use technology to involve low-income families in the teaching of basic skills to young children.

Invitational Priority 4. Developing methods that enable early childhood caregivers to identify behavior problems

early in young children and effectively use interdisciplinary intervention strategies that will replace those problem behaviors with positive behaviors.

Invitational Priority 5. Determining the effectiveness of programs or curricula that address the development of motor, language, speech and other skills needed for young children to be successful in a variety of settings.

For Applications or Information Contact: Joe Caliguro, National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20208-5520 Telephone (202) 219-1935.

CFDA 84.308F—The National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policy-Making, and Management, Field Initiated Studies Program

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policy-Making, and Management is to improve student achievement through restructuring and reform of the education system. The Institute is to carry out a program of research and development to provide a sound basis from which to identify, develop, and evaluate approaches in elementary and secondary education governance, finance, policy-making, and management at the State, local, tribal, school building, and classroom level which promise to improve educational equity and excellence.

Priorities: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) the Secretary is particularly interested in applications that meet one or more of the following invitational priorities. However, an application that meets one or more of these invitational priorities does not receive competitive or absolute preference over other applications:

Invitational Priority 1. The development and coordination, integration, and coherence of governance, finance, policymaking and management strategies that promote and sustain education innovations and raise levels of learning for all students.

Invitational Priority 2. The costs and effects of particularly promising approaches for improving the learning of different groups of students in different settings.

Invitational Priority 3. The impact on student learning of open enrollment programs, public school choice, magnet schools and other systems through which parents may select the public schools and educational programs in which their children enroll.

Invitational Priority 4. The impact on student learning of improving the context in which learning occurs

through professional development; participatory governance structures; caring, concerned, and disciplined learning environments; and other innovative or improved ways to enhance learning.

For Applications or Information Contact: Elizabeth DeBra or Edward Fuentes, National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policy-Making, and Management, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20208-5510. Telephone (202) 219-2021 or-2032.

CFDA 84.309F—The National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries and Lifelong Learning, Field Initiated Studies Program

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries and Lifelong Learning is to improve postsecondary education and adult learning so that adults will be better prepared to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The institute will carry out a program of research and development that will include subjects such as the development of human capital through postsecondary and adult education; the role of special mission educational institutions such as women's colleges and historically black colleges and universities; new models of service delivery through library systems; effective methods of adult literacy education; and the uses and application of new technology to improve teaching and lifelong learning.

Priorities: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) the Secretary is particularly interested in applications that meet one or more of the following invitational priorities. However, an application that meets one or more of these invitational priorities does not receive competitive or absolute preference over other applications:

Invitational Priority 1. To examine how public library systems and other community-based educational institutions can take full advantage of the potential of new information technologies to expand opportunities for adult lifelong learners.

Invitational Priority 2. To examine innovative and experimental approaches used by community-based education providers with respect to: instruction, the provision of information on self-directed learning, assessment of learner needs, and collaborative activities with other community-based education providers. Community-based education providers include libraries, museums, and local continuing education programs.

Invitational Priority 3. To examine the capacities of special mission institutions to provide access and excellence in higher education. Special mission institutions include Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribally-Controlled Indian Community Colleges, women's colleges, Hispanic-serving institutions and institutions serving students with disabilities.

Invitational Priority 4. To examine the effectiveness of various model

approaches to the provision of family literacy programs.

Invitational Priority 5. To increase our understanding of workplace education and training approaches to improve workforce productivity and meet the challenges of the international economy.

For Applications or Information Contact: Delores Monroe, National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New

Jersey Avenue, NW, Room 620, Washington, DC 20208-5531. Telephone (202) 219-2229, or FIS@INET.ED.GOV.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 6031 (c)(2)(B).

Dated: September 11, 1995.

Sharon P. Robinson,

Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement.

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