

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA Nos. 84.116A; 84.116B]

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education—Comprehensive Program (Preapplications and Applications)

Subject: Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 1998.

Purpose of Program: To provide grants or enter into cooperative agreements to improve postsecondary education opportunities.

Eligible Applicants: Institutions of higher education or combinations of such institutions and other public and private nonprofit educational institutions and agencies.

Deadline for Transmittal of Preapplications: October 24, 1997.

Deadline for Transmittal of Final Applications: March 20, 1998.

Note: All applicants must submit a preapplication to be eligible to submit a final application.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: May 19, 1998.

Applications Available: August 25, 1997.

Available Funds: The Administration's request for the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education for FY 1998 is \$18,000,000. Of this amount, it is anticipated that approximately \$5,000,000 will be available for an estimated 72 new awards under the Comprehensive Program. The Congress has not yet completed action on the FY 1998 appropriation. The estimates in this notice assume passage of the Administration's request.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$15,000 to \$150,000 per year.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$70,000.

Estimated Number of Awards: 72.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 85, and 86.

Priorities:*Invitational Priorities*

While applicants may propose any project within the scope of 20 U.S.C. 1135(a), pursuant to 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

Projects to support new ways of ensuring equal access to postsecondary education, and to improve rates of retention and program completion, especially for low-income and under-represented minority students, whose retention and completion rates continue to lag disturbingly behind those of other groups.

Invitational Priority 2

Projects to improve campus climates for learning by creating an environment that is safe, welcoming, and conducive to academic growth for all students.

Invitational Priority 3

Projects to support innovative reforms of undergraduate, graduate, and professional curricula that improve not only what students learn, but how they learn.

Invitational Priority 4

Projects to make more productive use of resources to improve teaching and learning; and to increase learning productivity—that is, to transform programs and teaching to promote more student learning relative to institutional resources expended.

Invitational Priority 5

Projects to support the professional development of full- and part-time faculty by assessing and rewarding effective teaching; promoting new and more effective teaching methods; and improving the preparation of graduate students who will be future faculty members.

Invitational Priority 6

Projects to promote innovative school-college partnerships and to improve the preparation of K-12 teachers, in order to enhance students' preparation for, access to, and success in college.

Invitational Priority 7

Projects to disseminate innovative postsecondary educational programs which have already been locally developed, implemented, and evaluated.

Selection Criteria

In evaluating preapplications and final applications for grants under this program competition, the Secretary uses the following selection criteria chosen from those listed in 34 CFR 75.210.

Preapplications

In evaluating preapplications, the Secretary uses the following selection criteria:

(a) Need for Project

The Secretary reviews each proposed project for its need, as determined by the following factors:

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.

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

(b) Significance

The Secretary reviews each proposed project for its significance, as determined by the following factors:

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

(2) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

(3) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

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

(c) Quality of the Project Design

The Secretary reviews each proposed project for the quality of its design, as determined by the extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

(d) Quality of the Project Evaluation

The Secretary reviews each proposed project for the quality of its evaluation, as determined by the extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

Final Applications

In evaluating final applications, the Secretary uses the following selection criteria:

(a) Need for the Project

The Secretary reviews each proposed project for its need, as determined by the following factors:

(1) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.

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

(b) Significance

The Secretary reviews each proposed project for its significance, as determined by the following factors:

(1) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increase knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

(2) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies.

(3) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

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

(c) Quality of the Project Design

The Secretary reviews each proposed project for the quality of its design, as determined by the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.

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

(3) The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.

(d) Quality of the Project Evaluation

The Secretary reviews each proposed project for the quality of its evaluation, as determined by the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective

strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

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

(3) 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.

(d) The Quality of the Management Plan

The Secretary reviews each proposed project for the quality of its management plan, as determined by the plan's adequacy to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(e) Quality of Project Personnel

The Secretary reviews each proposed project for the quality of project personnel who will carry out the proposed project, as determined by the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

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

(f) Adequacy of Resources

The Secretary reviews each proposed project for the adequacy of its resources, as determined by the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project.

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

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

(4) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the

applicant organization or the lead applicant organization.

(5) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.

For preapplications (preliminary applications) and final applications (applications), the Secretary gives equal weight to each of the selection criteria. Within each of these criteria, the Secretary gives equal weight to each of the factors.

For Applications or Information Contact: Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue SW., Room 3100, ROB-3, Washington, DC 20202-5175. Telephone: (202) 358-3041 to order applications; or (202) 708-5750 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday, for information. Individuals may also request applications by submitting the name of the competition, their name, and postal mailing address to the e-mail address FIPSE@ED.GOV. Individuals may obtain the application text from Internet address <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/FIPSE/>. 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.

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; on the Internet Gopher Server (at [gopher://gcs.ed.gov](http://gcs.ed.gov)); or on the World Wide Web (at <http://gcs.ed.gov>). However, the official application notice for a discretionary grant competition is the notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Program Authority: U.S.C. 1135-1135a-3.

Dated: August 19, 1997.

David A. Longanecker,
Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.

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