

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**Office of Elementary and Secondary Education—Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities National Programs; Federal Activities Grant Program—Middle School Drug Prevention and School Safety Program Coordinators**

**AGENCY:** Department of Education.

**ACTION:** Notice of final priority and selection criteria for Fiscal Year 1999 and subsequent years.

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary announces the final priority and selection criteria for fiscal year (FY) 1999, and at the discretion of the Secretary for subsequent years, under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) National Programs Federal Activities Grants Program for the Middle School Drug Prevention and School Safety Program Coordinators competition. The Secretary takes this action to focus Federal financial assistance on national needs to recruit, hire, and train drug prevention and school safety program coordinators for middle schools with significant drug, discipline and violence problems.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This priority takes effect on April 14, 1999.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information about this priority 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, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Room 3E324, Washington, DC 20202-6123. Telephone: (202) 260-3954. FAX: (202) 260-7767. Internet: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS>.

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 alternative format (e.g. Braille, large print, audio tape, or computer diskette) upon request to the contact office listed above. Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format, also, by contacting that office. However, the Department is not able to reproduce in an alternate format the standard forms included in the application package.

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

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This notice contains the final priority and selection criteria for FY 1999, and at the discretion of the Secretary, subsequent years. Under the absolute priority (Middle School Drug Prevention and School Safety Program Coordinators (CFDA 84.184K)), the Secretary may make awards for up to 36 months to local educational agencies.

In making awards under this grant program, the Secretary may take into consideration the geographic distribution and the diversity of proposed activities addressed by the projects, in addition to the rank order of applicants.

Contingent upon the availability of funds, the Secretary may make additional awards in FY 2000 from the rank-ordered list of unfunded applications from this competition.

#### Definitions

The following definitions apply to this competition:

(a) Middle schools are defined as any school serving students in two or more grades from grades five through nine.

**Note:** Students in grades lower than five or higher than nine are not eligible to be served under this priority.

(b) Local education agencies (LEAs) with the most significant problems in their middle schools are defined as those that have identified drug use, drug prevention and school safety as serious problems in their most recent needs assessment and have taken one or more of the following actions within the 12 months preceding the date of this announcement:

(1) Suspended, expelled, or transferred to alternative schools or programs at least one middle school student for possession, distribution, or use of alcohol or drugs, including tobacco;

(2) Referred for treatment of substance abuse at least five middle school students;

(3) Suspended, expelled, or transferred to alternative schools or programs at least one middle school student for possession or use of a firearm or other weapon;

(4) Suspended, expelled or transferred to alternative schools or programs at least five middle school students for physical attacks or fights.

Applications for this competition must be received at the address specified in the notice inviting applications for this competition no later than 4:30 p.m. on June 1, 1999. Applications received after that time will not be eligible for funding. Postmarked dates will not be accepted.

#### Absolute Priority

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

Under the absolute funding priority for this grant competition, LEAs with significant drug, discipline, or school safety problems in their middle schools must propose projects that—

(a) Recruit, hire, and train full-time drug prevention and school safety program coordinator(s) for their middle schools with the most significant drug, discipline, or school safety problems;

(c) Require coordinators hired with funds under this priority to perform at least the following functions in one or more middle schools with significant drug, discipline or school safety problems:

(1) Identify research-based drug and violence prevention strategies and programs;

(2) Assist schools in adopting the most successful strategies, including training of teachers, staff and relevant partners as, as needed;

(3) Develop, conduct, and analyze assessments of school crime and drug problems;

(4) Work with community agencies and organizations to ensure that students' needs are met;

(5) Work with parents and students to obtain information about effective programs and strategies and encourage their participation in program selection and implementation;

(6) Assist in the development and implementation of evaluation strategies;

(7) Identify additional funding sources for drug prevention and school safety program initiatives;

(8) Provide feedback to SEAs on programs and activities that have proven to be successful in reducing drug use and violent behavior; and

(9) Coordinate with student assistance and employee assistance programs.

Local educational agencies may apply for funding under this priority to hire one or more coordinators to serve middle schools in the district. Each coordinator hired with funds from this grant must:

(1) Serve at least one middle school but no more than seven middle schools;

(2) Serve only students in two or more grades from grades five through nine;

**Note:** Students in grades lower than five or higher than nine are not eligible to be served under this priority.

(3) Have no duties other than coordination of drug prevention or school safety programs;

(4) At a minimum, have a degree from an accredited four-year institution of higher education and an academic background or equivalent work experience in a field related to youth development, such as education, psychology, sociology, social work, or nursing.

LEAs may apply in consortia with one or more adjacent LEAs; however, each participating LEA must ensure that all requirements of the priority for this competition are met.

The Secretary funds under this competition only applications that meet this absolute priority.

### Selection Criteria

The following selection criteria will be used to evaluate applications for new grants under this competition. The maximum score for all of these criteria is 100 points.

(1) *Need for the project.* (25 points)

(a) Applicants must:

(i) Describe the drug, violence, or safety problems in middle schools that will be served by coordinators(s) funded by these grants;

(ii) Provide data on the number of students in grades five through nine who were suspended, expelled or transferred to alternative settings for drug use or violent behavior during the 12 months preceding the date of this announcement;

(iii) Explain how the coordinator(s) will make a difference in the drug, violence and safety problems at the middle schools to be served by this initiative; and

(iv) Describe how the position funded by this grant will be coordinated with existing prevention programs and staff.

(b) In determining the need for the proposed project, the following factor is considered:

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

(a) Applicants must:

(i) Provide a detailed description of their plan for bringing about change in the type and quality of drug prevention and school safety programs for students in grades five through nine; and

(ii) Describe how the community will be involved in designing and supporting these programs.

(b) The following factors are considered in determining the quality of the project design:

(i) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population;

(ii) 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;

(iii) The extent to which the proposed project will establish linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations providing services to the target population, including community coalitions;

(iv) The extent to which the proposed project encourages parental involvement; and

(v) The extent to which performance feedback and continuous improvement are integral to the design of the proposed project.

(3) *Adequacy of Resources* (25 points)

(a) Applicants must:

(i) Describe their plan for supporting and institutionalizing the coordinator position into the district's permanent staffing structure, including how they will ensure its continuation when Federal funding ends;

(ii) Explain how this coordinator position will be integrated into the staffing structure of the district as a whole, including where the coordinator will be housed and to whom the coordinator will report;

(iii) Explain the district's plan to support the authority of the coordinator to design, select and implement prevention initiatives; and

(iv) Explain how information developed by coordinators will be used by LEA policy makers.

(b) Factors considered in determining the adequacy of resources are:

(i) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization;

(ii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits;

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

(iv) 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.

(4) *Quality of the project evaluation* (25 points)

(a) Applicants must:

(i) Provide a detailed description of their plan to evaluate implementation of

the coordinator initiative with particular attention to how prevention strategies have changed as a result of the coordinator's efforts and the effects on student outcomes; and

(ii) Agree to cooperate with the national evaluation of the coordinators' initiative that will be funded by the Department of Education.

(b) In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the following factors are considered:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are appropriate to the context within which the project operates;

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies; and

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

### Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking

It is the Secretary's practice, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553), to offer interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed rules. Section 437 (d)(1) of the General Education Provision Act (GEPA), however, exempts from this requirement rules that apply to the first competition under a new or substantially revised program. Funding was provided for this new initiative in the fiscal year 1999 appropriations act enacted October 21, 1998. The Secretary, in accordance with section 437 (d)(1) of GEPA, has decided to forego public comment in order to ensure timely grant awards.

### 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 government for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

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

### Electronic Access to This Document

Department of Education documents are published in the **Federal Register**, in text or portable document format (PDF) on the world wide web at either of the following sites:

<http://www.ocfo.ed.gov/fedreg.html> or <http://www.ed.gov/news.html>.

To use pdf you must have the Adobe Acrobat Reader Program with Search, which is available free at either of the preceding sites. If you have questions about using the pdf, call the U.S. Government Printing Office toll free at 1-888-293-6498.

Individuals may view these documents in text copy only on an electronic bulletin board of the Department. The documents are located under Option G—Files/Announcement, Bulletins and Press Releases. Telephone: (202) 219-1511 or, toll free, 1-800-222-4922.

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

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

(Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.184K, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act National Programs—Federal Activities Grants Program)

**Judith Johnson,**

*Acting/Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.*

[FR Doc. 99-9341 Filed 4-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-U

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Office of Elementary and Secondary Education—Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities National Programs; Federal Activities Grant Program—Middle School Drug Prevention and School Safety Program Coordinators; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year 1999

*Purpose of Program:* The National Programs portion of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) supports the development of 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:** Local educational agencies.

**Applications Available:** April 14, 1999.

**Deadline for Receipt of Applications:** June 1, 1999.

**Note:** All applications must be received on or before the deadline date. Applications received after that time will not be eligible for funding. Postmarked dates will not be accepted. Applications by mail should be sent to U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: CFDA #84.184K, Washington, D.C. 20202-4725.

**Deadline for Intergovernmental Review:** July 28, 1999.

**Available Funds:** \$31,650,000.

**Estimated Range of Awards:** \$55,000-\$275,000.

**Estimated Average Size of Awards:** \$106,000.

**Estimated Number of Awards:** 300.

**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, 81, 82, 98, and 99; and

(b) The notice of final priority and selection criteria for FY 1999 published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

**For Applications or Information Contact:** Ethel Jackson at the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3E314, Washington, DC 20202-6123. Telephone: (202) 260-3954. By FAX: (202) 260-7767. Internet: <http://www.ed.gov/OESE/SDSF>.

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.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative

format (e.g. Braille, large print, audio tape, or computer diskette) upon request to the contact person listed above. Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format, also by contacting that person. However, the Department is not able to reproduce in an alternative format the standard forms included in the application package.

### Electronic Access to This Document

Anyone may view this document, as well as all other Department of Education documents published in the **Federal Register**, in text or portable document format (pdf) on the World Wide Web at either of the following sites:

<http://ocfo.ed.gov/fedreg.htm> or on the World Wide Web at <http://www.ed.gov/news.html>

To use the pdf you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader Program with Search, which is available free at either of the previous sites. If you have questions about using the pdf, call the U.S. Government Printing Office at (202) 512-1530 or, toll free at 1-888-293-6498.

Individuals may also view these documents in text copy on the electronic bulletin board of the Department. Telephone: (202) 219-1511, or toll free, 1-800-222-4922. The documents are located under Option G—Files/Announcements, Bulletins, and Press Releases.

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

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

(Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.184K, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act National Programs—Federal Activities Grants Program)

**Judith Johnson,**

*Acting/Assistant Secretary, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.*

[FR Doc. 99-9342 Filed 4-13-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-U