DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities National Programs—Grants to Institutions of Higher Education (Validation Competition)

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 Grants to Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) Validation Competition. The Secretary takes this action to focus Federal financial assistance on an identified national need. The priorities are intended to increase knowledge about effective programs by validating and disseminating model programs and strategies to promote the safety of students attending IHEs by preventing violent behavior and the illegal use of alcohol and other drugs by college students.

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 604, Portals Buildings, 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 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 that 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 (FIRS) 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 July 9, 1998.

ADDRESSES: All comments concerning these proposed priorities should be addressed to Tina McCrary, U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, Portals Building—Room 604, Washington, DC 20202–6123. Comments may also be sent through the Internet: comments@ed.gov.

You must include the term ''Alcohol, Other Drug, Violence Prevention for IHEs'' in the subject line of your electronic message.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tina McCrary, (202) 260–3954. Individuals who use a telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service 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 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.

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 or all of the following priorities. The Secretary funds under this competition only applications that meet one or all of these absolute priorities:

Absolute Priority 1

Correcting misperceptions of student alcohol and other drug use among a large or influential subpopulation of students attending institutions of higher education.

Applicants must:

(1) Identify one large or influential student subpopulation (e.g. student athletes, members of fraternities and sororities) who will receive the intervention;

(2) Justify the selection of the subpopulation, and design the intervention, based on an assessment of objective data (such as needs assessments, student use surveys, assessment of students' dispositions toward drug use);

(3) Propose activities designed to correct misperceptions of this subpopulation about levels of student campus alcohol and drug use, student alcohol and drug use norms, and the consequences of student alcohol and drug use;

(4) Use a campus and community coalition to plan and implement the project;

(5) Develop measurable goals and objectives linked to the identified needs;

(6) Use a qualified evaluator to implement a rigorous evaluation of the project using outcomes-based (summative) performance indicators in addition to process (formative) measures, that document strategies used and measure the effectiveness of the program or strategy in reducing student drug use and violent behavior, and utilize a reference group or comparison group at the grantee's own or similar campus;

(7) Share information about their projects with Department of Education staff or their agents in order to assist grantees in the development of an evaluation strategy and to coordinate cross project site comparisons;

(8) Demonstrate ability to start the project within 60 days after receiving Federal funding in order to maximize the time available to show impact or prepare an article for pubilcation within the grant period; and

(9) Provide statistics and information on crimes occurring on campus, especially liquor law violations, drug abuse violations, and weapons possession; and, at the request of the Secretary, coordinate with any report being prepared under section 204(a)(4)(B) of the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act on policies, procedures and practices which have proven effective in the reduction of campus crime.

Absolute Priority 2

Assess the impact of an existing or new consortium (such as coalitions and other partnerships at the community, State, or regional levels) on limiting illegal alcohol and other drug use, and preventing intoxication and violence.

Applicants must:

(1) Establish a new, or expand an existing consortium at the community, State, or regional level by working together in partnership with key stakeholders to share information and to impact campus and public policy;

(2) Demonstrate evidence of commitment of consortium members and explain how the IHE will create or sustain opportunities for members to meet and work together on a regular basis;

(3) Describe proposed consortium activities and justify how such activities will bring about improvements in drug prevention programs and policies affecting AOD use decisions, and violence on campus;

(4) Provide criteria for membership, and how any potential expansion of membership would be carried out if additional individuals or organizations seek to join the consortium;

(5) Develop measurable goals and objectives for consortia linked to identified needs;

(6) Use prevention approaches that research or evaluation has shown to be effective in preventing or reducing violent behavior or the illegal use of alcohol and other drugs;

(7) Use a qualified evaluator to design and implement a rigorous evaluation of the project using outcomes-based (summative) performance indicators in addition to process (formative) measures that documents strategies used and measures the effectiveness of the consortium;

(8) Share information about their projects with Department of Education staff or their agents in order to assist grantees in the development of an evaluation strategy and to coordinate cross project sites;

(9) Design a program based on assessment of objective data (such as needs assessments, student use surveys, assessments of students' dispositions toward drug use, environmental assessments);

(10) Demonstrate the ability to start the project within 60 days after receiving Federal funding in order to maximize the time available to show impact within the grant period; and

(11) At the request of the Secretary, coordinate with any report being prepared under section 204(a)(4)(B) of the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act on policies, procedures and practices which have proven effective in the reduction of campus crime.

Absolute Priority 3

Disseminate knowledge of existing model programs, new prevention theories, or new application of theories, theoretical models, or conceptual approaches (theories) to alcohol and other drug or violence prevention or both.

Applicants must:

(1) If proposing to disseminate knowledge on an existing model program, (a) document how the program was proven effective by explaining the needs assessment, implementation, evaluation, and outcomes of the program; (b) document how the model program effectively changed the campus and/or community; (c) explain how the model program advanced prevention thinking and activities; (d) discuss the type of institution(s) and student demographics to which the model program would be most replicable or adaptable; and (e) provide a timeline for the submission of the draft and final papers with appropriate attachments.

(2) If proposing a new theory or approach, (a) provide evidence that the theory/approach is based on an assessment of objective data (such as needs assessments, student use surveys, assessment of student dispositions toward drug use, statistics and information on crimes occurring on campus(es); (b) document how the theory/approach can be applied effectively to change the campus and/or community; (c) explain how the theory/approach will advance prevention thinking and activities; (d) discuss the type of institution(s) and student demographics to which the theory would be most replicable or adaptable; and (e) provide a timeline for the submission of the draft and final papers with appropriate attachments;

(3) Provide a letter of support from the applicant's direct supervisor and demonstrate the ability to start the project within 30 days after receiving Federal funding in order to maximize the time available to prepare an article for publication within the grant period; and

(4) At the request of the Secretary, coordinate with any report being prepared under section 204(a)(4)(B) of the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act on policies, procedures and practices which have proven effective in the reduction of campus crime.

Selection Criteria for Absolute Priority 1 and Absolute Priority 2

(a)(1) The Secretary uses the following selection criteria to evaluate applications for new grants under this competition.

(2) The maximum score for all of these criteria is 100 points.

(3) The maximum score for each criterion or factor under that criterion is indicated in parentheses.

(b) *The criteria.*

(1) *Need for project.* (10 points)

(i) The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.

(ii) In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(A) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (5 points)

(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. (5 points)

(2) *Significance.* (10 points)

(i) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.

(ii) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(A) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study. (5 points)

(B) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings. (5 points)

(3) *Quality of the project design.* (20 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) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (5 points)

(B) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. (10 points)

(C) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice. (5 points)

(4) *Quality of the project personnel.* (10 points)

(i) The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

(ii) In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(A) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been under represented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. (2 points)

(B) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (8 points)

(5) *Adequacy of resource.* (10 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) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project. (5 points)

(B) 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. (5 points)

(6) *Quality of the management plan.* (15 points)

(i) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

(ii) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(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. (5 points)

(B) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project. (5 points)

(C) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of students, faculty, parents, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate. (5 points)

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

(i) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

(ii) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(A) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives and outcomes of the proposed project. (10 points)

(B) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (5 points)

(C) 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. (10 points)

Selection Criteria for Absolute Priority 3

(1) *Need for project.* (10 points)

(i) The Secretary considers the need for the proposed project.

(ii) In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(A) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (5 points)

(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. (5 points)

(2) *Significance.* (25 points)

(i) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.

(ii) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(A) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study. (5 points)

(B) 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. (15 points)

(C) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings. (5 points)

(3) *Quality of the project design.* (20 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) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable. (5 points)

(B) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework. (10 points)

(C) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice. (5 points)

(4) *Quality of the project personnel.* (20 points)

(i) The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

(ii) In determining the quality of the project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(A) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been under represented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. (2 points)

(B) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (18 points)

(5) *Adequacy of resources.* (10 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 extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits. (10 points)

(6) *Quality of the management plan.* (15 points)

(i) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

(ii) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers one or more of the following factors:

(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. (5 points)

(B) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project. (5 points)

(C) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of students, faculty, parents, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate. (5 points)

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

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Dated: June 4, 1998.

Gerald N. Tirozzi,

Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education.

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