DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education—Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities National Programs—Federal Activities—State and Regional Coalition Grant Competition To Prevent High-Risk Drinking Among College Students

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of final priority, eligible applicants, and selection criteria for fiscal year 1999 and subsequent years.

SUMMARY: The Secretary announces a final priority, eligible applicants, 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 National Programs—Federal Activities—State and Regional Coalition Grant Competition to Prevent High-Risk Drinking Among College Students. The Secretary takes this action to focus Federal financial assistance on an identified national need. This competition seeks to reduce and prevent high-risk drinking among college students by funding State or regional coalitions for a two-year period to bring together institutions of higher education (IHEs) to share ideas and develop, implement, and evaluate collaborative strategies.

EFFECTIVE DATE: These priorities take effect July 16, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kimberly Light, Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202–6123. Telephone: (202) 260–3954. FAX (202) 260–7767. Internet: http://www.ed.gov/OESE/SDFS.

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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: High-risk drinking, including ''binge'' drinking, continues to affect the health, learning, and safety of college students. Excessive use of alcohol has resulted in deaths, serious injuries, vandalism, and sexual assault on college campuses. There is strong evidence that environmental factors, including alcohol availability, high-risk alcohol use norms, and the restrictiveness of State drunk driving laws, play a major role in student alcohol use. Different IHEs may have high-risk drinking problems that are affected by similar environmental concerns; therefore, developing partnerships with other IHEs can provide a forum to develop common solutions as well as a mechanism to create the ''critical mass'' of concerned stakeholders needed to influence broader environmental changes. The recent development of a number of IHE coalitions across the country suggests that such partnerships may be an effective method for IHEs with common environmental concerns to build local capacity to address high-risk drinking within their campus-communities. In addition, these efforts can have an impact within a larger community context, such as geographic regions within States (*e.g.*, a large metropolitan area), similar institutions within States (*e.g.*, all public universities), or institutions in States that share common borders. This competition seeks to encourage these collaborative efforts and evaluate their effectiveness so that other IHEs may adopt effective strategies.

This notice contains a final priority, eligible applicants, and related selection criteria for fiscal year 1999 and subsequent years. Under this absolute priority, the Secretary may make awards for up to 24 months.

On April 20, 1999, the Secretary published the proposed priorities for this competition in a Notice of Proposed Priority in the **Federal Register** (64 FR 19347–19349). In response to the 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 two responses from institutions of higher education. Most of the comments were related to the proposed selection criteria, which were selected from the established selection criteria published in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). An analysis of the comments, organized by topic, follows:

Focus of Priority

Comment: One commenter suggested that the priority include not only binge drinking, but also other patterns of abusive drinking that have negative consequences for student life. The commenter indicated that other patterns of abusive drinking are seen at historically Black IHEs.

Discussion: The existing language in the priority is specifically designed to include a range of high-risk drinking problems. Although ''binge'' drinking is a significant type of high-risk drinking, the priority would not preclude a focus on other types of abusive drinking.

Changes: None.

Selection Criteria—Need for Project

Comment: One commenter proposed points be reassigned under this criterion to place more emphasis on identifying and addressing gaps and weaknesses in services, rather than on the magnitude and severity of the problem to be addressed, in order to reflect the amount of additional work required by applicants to identify gaps and weaknesses.

Discussion: The points assigned for this selection criterion are intended to place greater emphasis on the magnitude and severity of the high-risk drinking problem to be addressed by the coalition. Because of the limited funds available for this initiative, emphasis is placed on directing funds to areas with the greatest need.

Changes: None.

Selection Criteria—Significance and Quality of the Project Design

Comment: One commenter proposed that the subcriterion under Quality of the Project Design addressing capacity building be combined with the subcriterion under Significance addressing system change and improvement. The commenter suggested that system change, by definition, will build capacity and yield results beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.

Discussion: These subcriteria were selected to address two different, but related, aspects of project impact. Capacity building may not necessarily lead to system change and improvement, and system change and improvement may not necessarily include capacity building. Therefore, both of these selection criteria help select projects that have the greatest potential to continue the work of the project after the Federal project period ends.

Changes: None.

Selection Criteria—Quality of Project Design

Comment: One commenter suggested that the number of points be increased under the subcriterion addressing clearly specified and measurable goals, objectives and outcomes, because the

organization's goals, objectives and outcomes have a major impact on the functioning of the project. In addition, this commenter proposed that this subcriterion be expanded to include proposed activities for achieving the stated goals, objectives and outcomes.

Discussion: Clearly specified and measurable goals, objectives and outcomes are an important part of the design of a project; however, the quality of the content of the goals, objectives and outcomes is most important to the design of projects under this program, and is therefore more heavily weighted. The subcriterion on the extent to which the design of the project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice will allow reviewers to assess the quality of the project goals, objectives and outcomes, including the proposed project activities.

Changes: None.

Selection Criteria—Quality of the Project Personnel and Quality of the Management Plan

Comment: One commenter suggested that the Quality of the Project Personnel criterion and the Quality of the Management Plan criterion be combined and renamed ''management and organizational capability.''

Discussion: The selection criteria Quality of Project Personnel and Quality of the Management Plan need to be handled separately because they address different aspects of an application. For example, an applicant could have well qualified personnel but the management plan may be poorly designed or written. Both the plan and personnel are critical to the success of the grant.

Changes: None.

Selection Criteria—Quality of the Management Plan

Comment: One commenter proposed that the subcriterion on bringing a diversity of perspectives to bear on the operation of the proposed project be expanded to specify which faculty/student leaders should be included. This commenter also suggested that this subcriterion include both receiving input from and providing information to key stakeholders.

Discussion: Applicants are encouraged to bring a wide variety of perspectives to the operation of their proposed projects. The specific individuals who are included may vary depending on the project goals and design. This subcriterion does not preclude applicants from both receiving input from and providing information to key stakeholders.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested a subcriterion be included to require a one-page organization chart to graphically portray the management structure of the project.

Discussion: Illustrating the management structure with an organization chart is deemed to be the prerogative of the applicant.

Changes: None.

Selection Criteria—Adequacy of Resources

Comment: One commenter proposed that a criterion be added that addresses the level of networking between the applicant and members of national, statewide and regional college consortiums and related collaborations.

Discussion: The level of networking by applicants will vary depending on the design and scope of their projects.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter suggested the expansion of the subcriterion on reasonable costs by adding that the proposed budget be complete, detailed, and allowable. This commenter also suggested that this criterion require a description of how non-Federal resources will be utilized.

Discussion: Administration of Federal grants is governed by Federal cost principles that will be referenced in the application package information. These cost principles provide information on allowable costs. In addition, applicants will be required to submit a budget form and narrative detailing their plans for the use of funds.

Changes: None.

Absolute Priority

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 the following priority. The Secretary funds under this competition *only* applications that meet the following absolute priority:

Implement and Evaluate the Impact of a State or Regional Coalition to Develop Strategies for Reducing and Preventing High-Risk Drinking Among College Students

Applicants proposing a project under this priority must:

(1) Propose to expand an existing or establish a new State or regional coalition of IHEs and other relevant organizations that includes key stakeholders who will have an impact on the development and implementation of State, local, and campus policies and programs to reduce and prevent high-risk drinking;

(2) Explain how coalition members will work together on a regular basis, including meeting to discuss common problems and share effective strategies;

(3) Use community collaboration prevention approaches, including involvement of students, that research or evaluation has shown to be effective in preventing or reducing high-risk drinking;

(4) Use a qualified evaluator to design and implement an 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 coalition;

(5) 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

(6) Share information about their projects with the Department of Education or its agents.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants under this competition are IHEs, consortia of IHEs, and other public and private nonprofit organizations.

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

(1) *Need for project* (15 points)

In determining the need for the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (10 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* (14 points)

In determining the significance of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement. (10 points)

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

(3) *Quality of the project design* (15 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. (4 points)

(b) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice. (6 points)

(c) 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. (5 points)

(4) *Quality of the project personnel* (15 points)

In determining the quality of project personnel, the following factors are considered:

(a) 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. (3 points)

(b) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel. (12 points)

(5) *Adequacy of resources* (16 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. (8 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. (4 points)

(c) The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support. (4 points)

(6) *Quality of the management plan* (14 points)

In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) 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. (10 points)

(b) 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. (4 points)

(7) *Quality of the project evaluation* (11 points)

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the following factors are considered:

(a) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives and outcomes of the proposed project. (4 points)

(b) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. (3 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. (4 points)

Intergovernmental Review

This program is subject to the requirements of Executive Order 12372 and the regulations of 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 this order, this document is intended to provide early notification of the Department'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 Number 84.184H, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities National Programs—Federal Activities—State and Regional Coalition Grant Competition to Prevent High-Risk Drinking Among College Students)

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

Judith Johnson,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA No: 84.184H]

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education—Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities National Programs-Federal Activities—State and Regional Coalition Grant Competition To Prevent High-Risk Drinking Among College Students

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year 1999.

Purpose of the Program: The National Programs portion of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) supports the development of programs to prevent the illegal use of drugs and violence among, and to promote safety and discipline for, students at all educational levels from preschool through the postsecondary level. This competition seeks to reduce and prevent high-risk drinking among college students by funding State or regional coalitions to bring together institutions of higher education (IHEs) to share ideas and develop, implement, and evaluate collaborative strategies.

Eligible Applicants: IHEs, consortia of IHEs, and other public and private nonprofit organizations.

Applications Available: June 14, 1999.

Deadline for Receipt of Applications: July 14, 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 the U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: CFDA #84.184H, Washington, DC 20202–4725.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: September 14, 1999.

Available Funds: $1,450,000.

Estimated Range of Awards: $170,000–$250,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: $200,000.

Estimated Number of Awards: 7.

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

Project Period: Up to 24 months.

Applicable Regulations

(a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in