

employment (percentage employed in the first quarter after program exit); (2) retention in employment (percentage of those employed in the first quarter after exit that were still employed in the second and third quarters after program exit); (3) average weekly earnings (average earnings of those participants who are employed in the first, second, and third quarters after the exit quarter); and (4) the annual cost per participant.

The AIVRS Annual Progress Reporting Form was revised in 2008 to collect data needed to assess the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Projects for American Indians with Disabilities program's performance on supplemental measures that are comparable to the job training and employment common measures. Each grantee will be required to collect and report data for these supplemental measures as part of the annual performance report requirement, including information on: (1) The number of individuals whose case record has not been closed, but have not received project services for 90 consecutive calendar days, (2) the number of eligible individuals who were employed three months after achieving an employment outcome, (3) the number of eligible individuals who were employed six months after achieving an employment outcome, (4) the average weekly earnings at entry, and (5) the average weekly earnings of the individuals whose employment outcomes resulted in earnings.

Note: For purposes of this section VI. 4., the term "employment outcome" has the meaning provided in 34 CFR 369.4.

5. **Continuation Awards:** In making a continuation award, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.253, the extent to which a grantee has made "substantial progress toward meeting the objectives in its approved application." This consideration includes the review of a grantee's progress in meeting the targets and projected outcomes in its approved application, and whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget. In making a continuation grant, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Agency Contact

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

August Martin, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5049, Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Washington, DC 20202-2800. Telephone: (202) 245-7410 or by e-mail: august.martin@ed.gov.

If you use a TDD, call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

VIII. Other Information

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotope, or computer diskette) by contacting the Grants and Contracts Services Team, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5075, PCP, Washington, DC 20202-2550. Telephone: (202) 245-7363. If you use a TDD, call the FRS, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

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Dated: April 5, 2011.

Alexa Posny,

Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

[FR Doc. 2011-8455 Filed 4-7-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Federal Student Aid Programs Under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as Amended

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice inviting letters of application for participation in the Quality Assurance Program.

SUMMARY: The Secretary of Education invites institutions of higher education that may wish to participate in the Quality Assurance Program, under section 487A(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), to submit a letter of application to participate in the program.

DATES: Letters of application may be submitted any time after April 8, 2011.

ADDRESSES: Institutions may apply to participate in the Quality Assurance Program by addressing a letter of application to Barbara Mroz, Federal Student Aid, U.S. Department of Education, and submitting this letter of application electronically to the Quality Assurance mailbox at: Quality.Assurance@ed.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Warren Farr, Federal Student Aid, U.S. Department of Education, 830 First Street, NE., UCP-3, Room 43H2, Washington, DC 20202-5232. Telephone: (202) 377-4380, or by e-mail: Warren.Farr@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audio tape or computer diskette) on request by contacting the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Institutions of higher education are invited to join the Department in an effort to simplify regulations and administrative processes for the Federal Student Aid Programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA). The goal of the Quality Assurance Program is to provide tools that help all institutions of higher education participating in these programs (Title IV, HEA programs) to promote better service to students, compliance with Title IV requirements, and continuous improvement in program delivery. The Quality Assurance Program encourages and provides tools to assist participating institutions to develop and implement their own comprehensive systems to verify student financial aid application data, and continually assess compliance with Federal requirements.

Pursuant to section 487A(a)(3) of the HEA (20 U.S.C. 1094a(a)(3)), the Secretary is authorized to waive for any institution participating in the Quality Assurance Program any regulations dealing with reporting or verification requirements, thus providing participating institutions with regulatory flexibility for the verification of student data, and encouraging alternative approaches that improve award accuracy.

The Secretary believes that the data provided to the Department by the institutions participating in the Quality

Assurance Program have influenced Federal verification policies. The data provided by participating institutions have addressed not only the accuracy of student aid awards and payments, but also the management of student aid offices and the delivery of services to students.

Features of the Program

The Quality Assurance Program gives institutions tools and techniques to assess, measure, analyze, correct, and prevent compliance problems. The Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) Analysis Tool provides participating institutions with data for achieving targeted verification outcomes, as explained below. The evaluation tools that QA schools must complete ("FSA Assessments") help schools develop policies and procedures as well as strengthen compliance.

The Secretary encourages institutions participating in the Quality Assurance Program to evaluate their verification policies and procedures and adopt improvements to those procedures. Institutions measure performance and test the effectiveness of their verification program by using the Department's ISIR Analysis Tool. The ISIR Analysis Tool is a Web-based software product that provides financial aid administrators with an in-depth analysis of their applicant population. It allows them to see not only which elements on the student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) changed when verified, but also what impact these changes have on the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) and aid eligibility. This analysis helps financial aid administrators develop a targeted institutional verification program, which ultimately makes the financial aid process easier for students, while ensuring accountability and program integrity.

The Quality Assurance Program also helps institutions make improvements beyond verification. By using the FSA Assessments, school staff in the financial aid office can, through teamwork, set goals for excellence in all areas of financial aid delivery on their campus. Another benefit of participating in the Quality Assurance Program is that both parties become engaged in promoting program integrity, stewardship, and customer service in the administration and delivery of the student financial assistance programs, thereby producing a more positive customer experience.

Invitation for Applications

The Secretary invites institutions of higher education that administer one or

more Title IV, HEA programs to submit a letter of application to participate in the Quality Assurance Program.

Institutions that currently participate in the program may continue to do so without submitting a new letter of application. The Secretary will review the letter of application, which should reflect the institution's commitment to:

- Improve the accuracy of institutional verification programs;
- Increase institutional flexibility in managing student aid funds, while maintaining accountability for the proper use of those funds; and
- Encourage the development of innovative management approaches to strengthen stewardship by using the FSA Assessments.

Review Process

The Department will screen prospective participants to determine if the institution meets general Title IV, HEA eligibility requirements and has a demonstrated record of program compliance. The Secretary may also consider the institution's performance with regard to financial responsibility, administrative capability, program review findings, audit findings, etc. as outlined in the applicable regulations and in the Federal Student Aid Handbook.

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To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at this site.

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Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1094a(a).

Dated: April 5, 2011.

William J. Taggart,

Chief Operating Officer, Federal Student Aid.

[FR Doc. 2011-8458 Filed 4-7-11; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Small, Rural School Achievement Program

AGENCY: Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice announcing application deadline.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.358A.

SUMMARY: Under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) awards grants on a formula basis to eligible local educational agencies (LEAs) to address the unique needs of rural school districts. In this notice, we establish the deadline for submission of fiscal year (FY) 2011 SRSA grant applications.

DATES: The deadline for transmittal of electronic applications is June 30, 2011, 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Eric Schulz, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Room 3W107, Washington, DC 20202. Telephone: (202) 401-0039 or by e-mail: reap@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Which LEAs are eligible for an award under the SRSA program?

An LEA (including a public charter school that is considered an LEA under State law) is eligible for an award under the SRSA program if—

(a) The total number of students in average daily attendance at all of the schools served by the LEA is fewer than 600, or each county in which a school served by the LEA is located has a total population density of fewer than 10 persons per square mile; and

(b) All of the schools served by the LEA are designated with a school locale code of 7 or 8 by the Department's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), or the Secretary has determined, based on a demonstration by the LEA and concurrence of the State educational agency, that the LEA is located in an area defined as rural by a governmental agency of the State.

The school locale codes are the locale codes determined on the basis of the NCES school code methodology in place on the date of enactment of section 6211(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended.

Which eligible LEAs must submit an application to receive an FY 2011 SRSA grant award?

An eligible LEA must submit an application to receive an FY 2011 SRSA grant award if that LEA has never submitted an application for SRSA