

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA No: 84.306S]

Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) Comprehensive School Reform Research Grant Program: Notice of Application Review Procedures for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2000

SUMMARY: On April 20, 2000, we published in the **Federal Register** (65 FR 21284) a notice inviting applications for new awards for FY 2000 for the Comprehensive School Reform Research Grant Program. This notice explains the procedures that we will use to review your application.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Application Review Procedure**

We will use a two-tier review process for the new Comprehensive School Reform Research Grant competition for FY 2000. All reviewers will meet the qualifications for reviewers established in the regulations at 34 CFR 700.11. This two-tier process and scoring system are authorized by and in accordance with OERI program regulations in 34 CFR part 700, particularly §§ 700.21 and 700.30.

Tier I. At the Tier I level, your application will be assigned to at least three reviewers, or subpanel members, from the full panel of 12–15 members. Reviewers from each subpanel will evaluate and score applications in accordance with the four selection criteria in the application package:

- (1) National Significance. (30 points)
- (2) Quality of the Project Design. (35 points)
- (3) Quality and Potential Contributions of Personnel. (20 points)
- (4) Quality of the Management Plan and Adequacy of Resources. (15 points)

For each application, reviewers will review 50-page narratives, 5-page management plans, 3-page-per-individual biographical sketches, and budget information. In accordance with page limits as described in the closing date notice and application package, all pages in excess of the maximum will be removed unread.

The Tier I reviewers will meet in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, and subpanel members will discuss their assigned applications and their numerical ratings. Following discussion and any re-evaluation and re-rating,

reviewers in each subpanel will independently place each application in one of three categories, either “highly recommended,” “recommended” or “not recommended.”

OERI will then calculate the Tier I score for each application by averaging the scores assigned by subpanel members. OERI numerically ranks all applications according to their average score and establishes a cut-off point to determine which applications advance to Tier II. Only those applications with a Tier I score higher than the established cut-off point will advance to Tier II review, with the following exception. All applications that receive a “highly recommended” rating from a majority of subpanel members will advance to Tier II regardless of their average score.

In determining the cut-off point, OERI will consider the following two factors: clear distinctions between clusters of scores as evidenced by gaps in the ranking, and the number of proposals required to ensure a competitive Tier II evaluation.

Tier II. If your application advances to the Tier II level, it will be read, rated, and commented on by all members of the full panel. Each reviewer will independently apply the same selection criteria and scoring system that were used in the Tier I review. After a common discussion of all applications, reviewers will give final numerical ratings and comments. OERI will rank the applications to form the recommended slate. Should there be a number of applications at the cut-off point, then the competitive priority would be applied. In the event of a tie, the Assistant Secretary would determine which application or applications from that group fill the most critical gaps in comprehensive school reform research.

Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking

In accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553), it is the practice of the Department to offer interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed regulations. Section 437(d)(1) of the General Education Provision Act (GEPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232 (d)(1), however, exempts rules that apply to the first competition under a new or substantially revised program from the requirements. Therefore, the Assistant Secretary of OERI, in accordance with section 437 (d)(1) of GEPA, to ensure

timely awards, has decided to forego public comment with respect to these procedures. These procedures will apply only to the FY 2000 grant competition.

(The valid OMB control number for this collection of information is 1850–0763.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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C. Kent McGuire,

Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement.

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