

Dated: June 6, 1995.

Sharon P. Robinson,

Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement.

[FR Doc. 95-14222 Filed 6-8-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

21st Century Community Learning Centers

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of Final Priority for FY 1995.

SUMMARY: The Secretary announces a priority for Fiscal Year 1995 under the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program. The Secretary takes this action to focus Federal financial assistance in areas of the country identified as areas of pervasive poverty, unemployment and general distress. The priority restricts the funds available under the 21st Century Program to applicants that are located in Empowerment Zones or Supplemental Empowerment Zones.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This priority takes effect July 10, 1995.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Seresa Simpson, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Room 522, Washington, DC 20208-5524. Telephone (202) 219-1935.

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.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice contains one final priority under the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program. The purpose of this program is to award grants to rural and inner-city public elementary or secondary schools, or consortia of such schools, to enable them to plan, implement, or to expand projects that benefit the educational, health, social service, cultural, and recreational needs of a rural or inner-city community.

Background on Empowerment Zone Initiative

The Empowerment Zone initiative is a critical element of the Administration's community revitalization strategy. The program is the first step in rebuilding communities in America's poverty-stricken inner cities and rural heartlands. It is designed to empower people and communities by inspiring Americans to work together to create jobs and opportunity.

The Departments of Agriculture and Housing and Urban Development have

designated 6 urban and 3 rural empowerment zones and two supplemental urban empowerment zones. These urban zones are located within the following cities: Atlanta, Georgia; Baltimore, Maryland; Chicago, Illinois; Cleveland, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Los Angeles, California; New York, New York; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania/Camden, New Jersey. The rural zones are located in the following states and counties: Kentucky (Clinton, Jackson and Wayne Counties); Mississippi (Bolivar, Holmes, Humphreys, and LeFlore Counties); and Texas (Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy Counties).

The Empowerment Zones and Supplemental Empowerment Zones were designated based on locally-developed strategic plans that comprehensively address how the community will link economic development with education and training, as well as how community development, public safety, human services, and environmental initiatives will together support sustainable communities. Designated areas will receive Federal grant funds and substantial tax benefits and will have access to other Federal programs. (For additional information on the Empowerment Zones program contact HUD at 1-800-998-9999.)

The Department of Education is supporting the Empowerment Zone initiative in a variety of ways. It is encouraging zones to use funds they already receive from Department of Education programs (including Chapter 1 of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, the Adult Education Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act) to support the comprehensive vision of their strategic plans. In addition, the Department of Education is giving preferences to zones in a number of discretionary grant programs that are well suited for inclusion in a comprehensive approach to economic and community development.

The Empowerment Zone initiative and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program share some common features. Both programs are concerned with helping communities that have areas with high poverty rates address educational, health, social service, cultural, and recreational needs. Communities that have been designated as Empowerment Zones or Supplemental Empowerment Zones have demonstrated a capacity for the type of cooperative planning that is required to implement a 21st Century

Community Learning Center. The Secretary believes that the limited resources available under the 21st Century Program will have the greatest impact if the funds are directed to communities that have the greatest need and have already established comprehensive community development plans. Therefore, the Secretary establishes the following absolute priority to focus Federal funds on 21st Century projects that will address the needs of Empowerment Zones or Supplemental Empowerment Zones.

Absolute Priority: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), 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:

Projects that offer a broad selection of services that address the needs of the community. Grants may be used to plan, implement, or expand community learning centers and projects must be carried out by a school or consortia of schools located in an Empowerment Zone or Supplemental Empowerment Zone.

Applicants must ensure that the proposed program relates to the strategic plan and will be an integral part of the Empowerment Zone program.

Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking

In accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553), it is the practice of the Department of Education to offer interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed regulations. However, in order to make timely grant awards in Fiscal Year (FY) 1995, the Assistant Secretary, in accordance with section 437(d)(1) of the General Education Provisions Act, has decided to issue these final priorities which will apply only to the FY 1995 grant competition.

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 governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

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

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 8241-8246.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance
Number 84.287, 21st Century Community
Learning Centers Program)

Dated: June 6, 1995.

Sharon P. Robinson,

*Assistant Secretary for Educational Research
and Improvement.*

[FR Doc. 95-14223 Filed 6-8-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P