

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA Nos.: 84.305F, 84.306F, 84.307F, 84.308F, and 84.309F]

Office of Educational Research and Improvement—National Institutes' Field-Initiated Studies Grant Program; Combined Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 1997

SUMMARY: The Secretary invites applications for new awards for FY 1997 and announces closing dates for the transmittal of applications under the Field-Initiated Studies Grant Program supported by the five National Research Institutes:

1. Student Achievement, Curriculum, and Assessment (84.305F).
2. Education of At-Risk Students (84.306F).
3. Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management (84.307F).
4. Early Childhood Development and Education (84.308F).
5. Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning (84.309F).

The Field-Initiated Studies Grant Program will support educational research projects related to the missions of the Institutes.

ADDRESSES: *For Applications or Further Information:* The address and telephone number for requesting an application or obtaining further information about individual institutes are listed in this notice under the section "Institute Mission Statements."

For Users of TDD or FIRS: 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.

For Electronic Access to Information: Information about the Department's funding opportunities, including copies of application notices for discretionary grant competitions, can be viewed on the Department's electronic bulletin board (ED Board), telephone (202) 260-9950; on the Internet Gopher Server at (gopher://gcs.ed.gov); or on the World Wide Web at (http://gcs.ed.gov). However, the official application notice for a discretionary grant competition is the notice published in the Federal Register.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Educational Research, Development, Dissemination, and Improvement Act of 1994 ("Act") (20 U.S.C. 6001 *et seq.*) established five national research institutes within the Department. Each of the institutes supports a Field-

Initiated Studies (FIS) Grant program to fund field-initiated research projects on topics related to the legislative mission of the relevant Institute. Only applications for educational research projects will be considered for funding. Section 931 of the Act (20 U.S.C. 6031) contains a complete description of the mission of each Institute.

The Field-Initiated Studies Grant program provides assistance to institutions of higher education, public and private organizations, institutions, agencies, and individuals for educational research and development to improve American education. The Act defines "educational research" to include basic and applied research, inquiry with the purpose of applying tested knowledge gained to specific educational settings and problems, development, planning, surveys, assessments, evaluation, investigation, experiments, and demonstrations in the field of education and other fields relating to education (20 U.S.C. 6011(l)(6)). The Act also defines the term "field-initiated research" to mean education research in which topics and methods of study are generated by investigators, including teachers and other practitioners (20 U.S.C. 6011(l)(7)).

Invitational Priorities

National Research Priorities Plan

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications that meet one or more of the following priorities included in the Department's published Research Priorities Plan. If an applicant addresses one of the priorities in the plan, please indicate in the application which one is addressed. However, under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) an applicant that addresses one of these priorities will not receive competitive or absolute preference over other applicants.

The priorities include:

- Improving curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student learning at all levels of education to promote high academic achievement, problem-solving abilities, creativity, and the motivation for further learning;
- Ensuring effective teaching by expanding the supply of potential teachers, improving teacher preparation, and promoting career-long professional development at all levels of education;
- Strengthening schools, particularly middle and high schools, as institutions capable of engaging young people as active and responsible learners;
- Supporting schools to effectively prepare diverse populations to meet high standards for knowledge, skills, and productivity, and to participate

fully in American economic, cultural, social and civic life;

- Promoting learning in informal and formal settings, and building the connections that cause out-of-school experiences to contribute to in-school achievement;
- Improving learning and development in early childhood so that all children can enter kindergarten prepared to learn and succeed in elementary and secondary schools;
- Understanding the changing requirements for adult competence in civic, work, and social contexts, and how these requirements affect learning and the futures of individuals in the nation.

The Department's Research Priorities Plan is available on-line at (<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/RschPriority/>). Copies may also be requested by calling Paulette Lee at 202-219-1519.

Eligible Applicants: Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, state and local agencies; public and private organizations, institutions, and agencies; and individuals.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: June 9, 1997.

Note: All applications must be received on or before that date. This requirement takes exception to EDGAR, 34 CFR 75.102. In accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553), it is the practice of the Secretary to offer interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed regulations. However, this amendment makes procedural changes only and does not establish new substantive policy. Therefore, under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(A), proposed rulemaking is not required.

Tentative Award Date: August 29, 1997.

Applications Available: April 18, 1997.

Available Funds: \$1,050,000 per Institute.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$100,000-225,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$150,000.

Estimated Number of Awards: 7.

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

Project Periods: Research projects may extend from one to three years.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR Parts 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 85 and 86 (Part 86 applies to IHEs only); and (b) The regulations in 34 CFR Part 700.

Length of Application: The application narrative must not exceed a total of 40 pages, with printing on only

one side of the paper, on 8½×11 inch paper. This includes the title page form, table of contents, abstract, proposal narrative, the budget summary form, budget narrative, and all attachments. We strongly encourage applicants to use double-spacing, a 12 point or larger font size, and 1-inch margins. Applications should be concise, clearly written, and pages should be consecutively numbered.

Applicable Evaluation Criteria

In accordance with 34 CFR 700.30, the Secretary applies the following evaluation criteria to the Field-Initiated Studies Grant program competitions.

(1) *National Significance* (30 points).

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

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

(A) The importance of the problem or issue to be addressed.

(B) The potential contribution of the project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.

(C) The potential contribution of the project to the development and advancement of theory and knowledge in the field of study.

(2) *Quality of the Project Design* (30 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) Whether the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the project are clearly specified and measurable.

(B) Whether a specific research design has been proposed, and the quality and appropriateness of that design, including the scientific rigor of the studies involved.

(3) *Quality and potential contributions of personnel* (20 points).

(i) The secretary considers the quality and potential contributions of personnel for the proposed project.

(ii) In determining the quality and potential contributions of personnel for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors—

(A) The qualifications, including training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.

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

(4) *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 following factors—

(A) Whether the budget is adequate to support the project.

(B) Whether the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the project.

(5) *Quality of the Management Plan* (10 points).

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

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

(A) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the project, including the specification of staff responsibility, timelines, and benchmarks for accomplishing project tasks.

(B) Whether time commitments of the project director or principal investigator and other key personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet project objectives.

(C) How the applicant will ensure that persons who are otherwise eligible to participate in the project are selected without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

Institute Mission Statements

CFDA No. 84.305F—The National Institute on Student Achievement, Curriculum, and Assessment, Field-Initiated Studies Program

Purpose of Program

The purpose of the National Institute on Student Achievement, Curriculum, and Assessment is to provide leadership to improve teaching and learning. The Institute will carry out a program of research to identify, develop, and evaluate innovative and exemplary methods to improve student knowledge K–12 in the core academic subject areas; to examine the areas of learning, cognition and performance, including the organization of schools which promote excellence in learning and instruction, and motivational issues related to student achievement; to identify, develop, and evaluate programs designed to enhance academic achievement and narrow performance gaps in a variety of subject areas; and to address such issues as validity, reliability, generalizability, costs, relative merits, and appropriate uses of various approaches and methods of assessing student learning and achievement.

For Applications or Information Contact: Clara Lawson-Holmes, or Carol Cameron Lyons, National Institute on

Student Achievement, Curriculum, and Assessment, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW., Room 510, Washington, DC 20208–5573. Telephone (202) 219–2079 or E-Mail: clawson@inet.ed.gov or Carol_Lyons@ed.gov

CFDA No. 84.306F—The National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students, Field-Initiated Studies Program

Purpose of Program

The purpose of the National Institute for the Education of At-Risk Students is to expand research-based knowledge and strategies that will promote excellence and equity in the education of children and youth placed at risk of educational failure because of limited-English proficiency, poverty, race or ethnicity, or geographic location. The Institute will carry out a program of research and development to identify and assist others to replicate and adapt programs and models which promote greater achievement and educational success by at-risk students, including innovative methods of instruction, student assessments, professional development, and curricula.

For Applications or Information Contact: Beth Fine or Karen Suagee, National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW., Room 610, Washington, DC 20208–5521. Telephone (202) 219–1323 or E-Mail: bfine@inet.ed.gov; or (202) 219–2244 or E-Mail: Karen_Suagee@ed.gov

CFDA 84.307F—The National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education, Field-Initiated Studies Program

Purpose of Program

The purpose of the National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education is to identify, develop, evaluate and assist others to replicate methods and approaches that improve early childhood development and education. The Institute is to carry out a program of research and development for young children in areas such as the social and educational development; topics relating to school readiness, including prenatal care, health services, and nutrition; family literacy; the role of parental involvement in their children's learning; effective learning methods and curriculum for young children; methods for integrating learning in settings other than the classroom; the impact of outside influences, such as television, violence, and drug abuse; and

instruction that considers the cultural environment of children.

For Applications or Information Contact: Veda Bright, National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20208-5520. Telephone (202) 219-1935 or E-Mail: Veda_Bright@ed.gov

CFDA 84.308F—The National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policy-Making, and Management, Field-Initiated Studies Program

Purpose of Program

The purpose of the National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policy-Making, and Management is to develop and disseminate research-based information that helps guide the design and implementation of governance arrangements, finance systems, policy approaches, and management strategies that will support high levels of learning by all students. By law, the Institute supports work which promises to

improve education equity and excellence at the State, local, tribal, school building, and classroom levels of elementary and secondary education in the United States.

For Applications or Information Contact: Jim Fox or Duc-Le To, National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policy-Making, and Management, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20208-5573. Telephone (202) 219-2234 or E-Mail: Jim_Fox@ed.gov; (202) 219-2248 or E-Mail: Duc-Le_To@ed.gov

CFDA 94.309F—The National Institute on Postsecondary Education Libraries and Lifelong Learning, Field-Initiated Studies Program

Purpose of Program

The purpose of the National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries and Lifelong Learning is to promote greater coordination of Federal research and development on issues related to adult learning and to carry out a

program of research and development in adult learning to provide nonpartisan, research-based leadership to the United States as it seeks to improve libraries, postsecondary education, literacy, and lifelong learning throughout the United States.

For Applications or Information Contract: Delores Monroe or Norman Brandt, National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Room 620, Washington, DC 20208-5531. Telephone (202) 219-2229 or E-Mail: dmonroe@inet.ed.gov; or (202) 219-1662.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 6031(c)(2)(B).

Dated: March 14, 1997.

Marshall S. Smith,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement.

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