

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA NO.: 84.314B]

Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative Grants**AGENCY:** Department of Education.**ACTION:** Notice of Final Priority for Fiscal Year 1999.

SUMMARY: The Secretary announces an absolute priority for competitive grants awarded under the Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative grants for Fiscal Year (FY) 1999. Under this priority, the Department will support only Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiatives for any State applicant that includes in its application (1) indicators of program quality as described in Section 1210 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (as amended by the Reading Excellence Act) that the State has developed for Even Start Family Literacy projects; or (2) a plan and timeline for the development of those indicators within a reasonable time period, not to exceed one year from the date of the grant award. The law requires States to base these program quality indicators on the best available research and evaluation data. Upon development, the law requires States to use these quality indicators in evaluating Even Start projects' program performance and improvement for the purpose of continued funding.

Note: This notice of final priority does not solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under the FY1999 competition for Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative Grants is published in a separate notice in this issue of the **Federal Register**.

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 24, 1999.

WAIVER OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING: It is the Secretary's practice, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553), to offer interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed priorities that are not taken directly from statute. Ordinarily, this practice would have applied to the absolute priority in this notice. Section 437(d)(1) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), however, exempts from this requirement rules that apply to the first competition under a new or substantially revised program. The Reading Excellence Act, as enacted by Public Law 105-277, greatly expanded the funds available for these grants and added new substantive requirements, making this grant authority a "substantially revised program." The Secretary, in accordance with section 437(d)(1) of GEPA, has decided to forego public comment with

respect to the absolute priority in order to ensure timely awards. The absolute priority will apply only to the FY 1999 grant competition, which is being conducted in two stages.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mary LeGwin, U. S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-6132.

Telephone (202) 260-2499. 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.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternate format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the contact listed in the preceding paragraph.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternate format, also, by contacting that person. However, the Department is not able to reproduce in an alternate format the standard forms included in the application package.

Absolute Priority:

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute preference to any State applicant that includes in its application (1) indicators of program quality, as described in Section 1210 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (as amended by the Reading Excellence Act) that the State has developed for Even Start family literacy projects; or (2) a plan and timeline for the development of those indicators within a reasonable time period, not to exceed one year.

States are required to develop these indicators by Section 1210 of the ESEA. The law requires these indicators to be based upon the best available research and evaluation data. Once developed, the law requires States to use the indicators in evaluating Even Start projects' program performance and improvement for the purpose of continued funding. To improve family literacy outcomes for adults and children, performance indicators must provide data to identify areas in which the programs are working well and areas in which improvement is needed. Even Start quality indicators will provide a measure of accountability to assess the extent to which overall program goals and objectives are being achieved and provide the basis for continuous improvement of local family literacy projects.

The indicators of performance quality as described in Section 1210 of the ESEA must include the following:

(1) With respect to eligible participants in a program who are adults—

(A) Achievement in the areas of reading, writing, English language acquisition, problem solving, and numeracy;

(B) Receipt of a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma;

(C) Entry into a postsecondary school, job retraining program, or employment or career advancement, including the military; and

(D) Such other indicators as the State may develop.

(2) With respect to eligible participants in a program who are children—

(A) Improvement in ability to read on grade level or reading readiness;

(B) School attendance;

(C) Grade retention and promotion; and

(D) Such other indicators as the State may develop.

The Secretary funds under the FY 1999 competition for these grants only applicants that meet this absolute priority.

Electronic Access To This Document

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<http://ocfo.ed.gov/fedreg.htm>

<http://www.ed.gov/news.html>

To use the pdf you must have the Adobe Acrobat Reader Program with Search, which is available free at either of the previous sites. If you have questions about using the pdf, call the U.S. Government Printing Office toll free at 1-888-293-6498.

Anyone may also view these documents in text copy only on an electronic bulletin board of the Department. Telephone (202) 219-1511 or, toll free, 1-800-222-4922. The documents are located under Option G-Files/Announcements, Bulletins and Press Releases.

Note: The official version of a document is the document published in the **Federal Register**.

You may view information about the Department's funding opportunities, including copies of application notices for discretionary grant competitions, on the Department's electronic bulletin board (ED Board), telephone (202) 260-9950; or on the Internet Gopher Server at GOPHER.ED.GOV (under Announcements, Bulletins, and Press Releases). However, the official

application notice for a discretionary grant competition is the notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 6362(c).

Dated: February 19, 1999.

Judith Johnson,

Acting Assistant Secretary, Elementary and Secondary Education.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA No.: 84.314B]

Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative Grants

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice inviting State applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 1999 funds for Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative grants.

Note to Applicants: This notice is a complete application package. Together with the statute authorizing these grants, and the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), this notice contains all of the information, application forms, and instructions needed to apply for a grant under this competition. These grants are authorized by Section 1202(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Reading Excellence Act (REA) (enacted as Title VIII of the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriations Act, 1999 by Section 101(f) of Public Law 105-277, the Omnibus Appropriations Act for FY 1999).

Summary of Program: Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative grants are awarded to States for planning and implementing Statewide family literacy initiatives, consistent with the Even Start Family Literacy Program (Part B of Title I of the ESEA). The purpose of Even Start is to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the Nation's low-income families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program. These initiatives coordinate and, where appropriate, integrate existing Federal, State, and local literacy resources to strengthen and expand family literacy services in the State.

States must conduct Even Start Statewide family literacy initiative activities through a consortium that includes at least the following State-level programs:

- Title I of the ESEA, Part A (LEA grants);
- Even Start (Title I, Part B);
- Migrant Education Program (Title I, Part C);
- Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (Title I, Part E, Section 1502);
- Head Start;
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act; and
- All other State-funded preschool programs and State-funded programs providing literacy services to adults.

The State must include in its application a plan developed by the consortium to use a portion of the State's resources (monetary or non-monetary, or both) from one or more of the programs required to be in the consortium, to strengthen and expand family literacy services in the State. The consortium also may include other programs, such as programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), and programs for children with disabilities under Sections 611 and 619 of the IDEA.

The law specifically requires the programs listed above to be part of the consortium that conducts the initiative's activities. The law also requires the consortium to coordinate and integrate activities and resources from specified programs. Please note that these programs differ slightly from the State-level programs required to be part of the consortium.

The initiative must coordinate and integrate resources and activities from, at least, the following programs: Part A of Title I of the ESEA (LEA grants); Even Start (Title I, Part B); the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act; Head Start; and the State's block grant under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The law also requires the consortium to coordinate its activities with the activities of the reading and literacy partnership for the State established under Section 2253(d) of the REA if the State Educational Agency receives a reading and literacy grant under the REA. The consortium is encouraged to coordinate and integrate resources and appropriate activities from other programs as well, such as programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities and children with disabilities under the IDEA, and programs included in the consortium such as Migrant Education (Title I, Part C), Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (Title I, Part E), and State-funded preschool and adult literacy programs.

Eligible Applicants: One State office or agency from each State, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: States will have two opportunities to submit their applications under this competition for FY 1999 funds. Transmittal deadline for the first stage of applications: April 26, 1999. Transmittal deadline for the second stage of applications: August 20, 1999.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: First stage: April 30, 1999. Second stage: September 3, 1999.

Applications Available: February 24, 1999.

Available Funds: \$10,000,000.

Note: The Secretary intends to reserve about \$328,000 from these funds to provide technical assistance to the Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative.

Matching and Use of Funds Requirements: A State receiving a grant for an Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative must make available non-Federal contributions (cash or in-kind) in an amount at least equal to the Federal funds awarded under the grant. These non-Federal contributions may be from State or local resources, or both. Grantees may not use these grant funds for indirect costs, either as a direct charge or as part of the matching requirement.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$75,000-\$250,000 for each of two years.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$186,000 for 52 grants.

Estimated Number of Awards: 40-52.

Note: This Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice. The Secretary expects that the amount of available funds will be sufficient for all States with high-quality applications to receive awards. Funding for each stage of this competition will be based initially on the estimated average size of awards (\$186,000) multiplied by the number of approved applicants (grantees) in each stage. If the sum total of the approved application budgets in either stage exceeds the total funding available for that stage of the competition, all of the budgets will be reduced proportionately. If there are remaining funds at the end of the second stage, each grantee's budget will be increased proportionately up to the amount of the approved budget.

Project Period: 24 months (comprised of two one-year budget periods).

Applicable Regulations: The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) as follows:

- 34 CFR Part 75 (Direct Grant Programs).
- 34 CFR Part 77 (Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations).