

reviewers use to evaluate your application.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to limit the program narrative (text plus all figures, charts, tables, and diagrams) to the equivalent of 15 pages, using the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the program narrative.
- Use a font that is either 12-point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).
- Include all critical information in the program narrative, eliminating the need for appendices.
- The page limit does not apply to the title page form (ED 424), the one-page abstract, the budget summary form and narrative budget justification, the resumes, or the assurances and certifications.

We have found that reviewers are able to conduct the highest-quality review when applications are concise and easy to read, with pages consecutively numbered.

Applicable Regulations: The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 97, 98 and 99.

Description of Program: The Improving Literacy Through School Libraries (LSL) program, Subpart 4 of Part B of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act promotes comprehensive local strategies to improve student reading achievement by improving school library services and resources. The LSL program is one component of the Department's commitment to dramatically improving student reading achievement by focusing available resources, including those of school library media centers, on ensuring that no child is left behind. School library media centers contribute to the improvement of student reading achievement when there is increased collaboration among instructional and school library media center staff, provision of additional instructional materials and resources, and the extension of hours of operation to include non-school hours.

Invitational Priority

We are particularly interested in applications that meet the following invitational priority.

The Secretary strongly encourages applicants to focus on comprehensive and collaborative reading efforts that

maximize the impact of the project on improving student reading achievement. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate the direct link between the proposed activities and improved reading achievement.

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give an application that meets the invitational priority a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

Selection Criteria

We use the following selection criteria to evaluate applications for new grants under this competition. The maximum score for all of these criteria is 100 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses.

We evaluate an application by determining how well the proposed project meets the following provisions:

(a) *Meeting the purpose of the statute* (10 points).

How well the proposed project addresses the intended outcome of the statute to improve student literacy skills and academic achievement by providing students with increased access to up-to-date school library materials; a well-equipped, technologically advanced school library media center; and well-trained, professionally certified school library media specialists.

(b) *Need for school library resources* (10 points). How well the applicant demonstrates the need for school library media improvement, based on the age and condition of school library media resources, including: Book collections; access of school library media centers to advanced technology; and the availability of well-trained, professionally certified school library media specialists, in schools served by the applicant.

(c) *Use of funds* (35 points). How well the applicant will use the funds made available through the grant to carry out those of the following activities that meet its demonstrated needs—

(1) Acquiring up-to-date school library media resources, including books.

(2) Acquiring and using advanced technology, incorporated into the curricula of the school, to develop and enhance the information literacy, information retrieval, and critical thinking skills of students.

(3) Facilitating Internet links and other resource-sharing networks among schools and school library media centers, and public and academic libraries, where possible.

(4) Providing professional development, as described in section 1222(d)(2) of the ESEA, for school library media specialists, and providing

activities that foster increased collaboration between school library media specialists, teachers, and administrators.

(5) Providing students with access to school libraries during non-school hours, including the hours before and after school, during weekends, and during summer vacation periods.

(d) *Use of scientifically based research* (10 points). How well the applicant will use programs and materials that are grounded in scientifically based research, as defined in section 9101(37) of the ESEA, in carrying out one or more of the activities described under criterion(c) above.

(e) *Broad-based involvement and coordination* (15 points). How well the applicant will extensively involve school library media specialists, teachers, administrators, and parents in the proposed project activities and effectively coordinate the funds and activities provided under this program with other literacy, library, technology, and professional development funds and activities.

(f) *Evaluation of quality and impact* (20 points). How well the applicant will collect and analyze data on the quality and impact of the proposed project activities, including the extent to which the availability of, the access to, and the use of up-to-date school library media resources in the elementary schools and secondary schools served by the applicant were increased; and the impact on improving the reading skills of students.

Geographic Distribution

In making funding decisions we will also consider the equitable distribution of grants across geographic regions and among local educational agencies serving urban and rural areas.

Application Procedures

Note: Some of the procedures in these instructions for transmitting applications differ from those in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) (34 CFR 75.102). Under the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553) the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed regulations. However, these amendments make procedural changes only and do not establish new substantive policy. Therefore, under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(A), the Secretary has determined that proposed rulemaking is not required.

Pilot Project for Electronic Submission of Applications

In FY 2003, the U.S. Department of Education is continuing to expand its pilot project for electronic submission of