

may extend a deadline for applicants affected by Acts of God such as floods and hurricanes, when there is widespread disruptions of mail service, or for other disruptions of services, such as a prolonged blackout, that affect the public at large. A determination to waive or to extend deadline requirements rests with the Chief Grants Management Officer. Applicants will receive a confirmation postcard upon receipt of an abstract. Copies of the program announcement, necessary application forms, and appendices can be obtained by contacting the above address. Copies of the program announcement and necessary application forms can also be downloaded from the Head Start Web site at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

When contacting ACYF directly with questions send to William Wilson, Grants Officer, 330 C Street, SW., Washington, DC 20447, 202-205-8913, wwilson@acf.hhs.gov, or Frankie Hoover Gibson, Program Specialist, 330 C St, SW., Washington, DC 20447, 202-205-8399, fgibson@acf.hhs.gov.

Statutory Authority

This announcement is authorized by the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9801).

Eligible Applicants

Any public or private non-profit organization, including state and local governments, Federally recognized Indian tribes, faith-based organizations, and private nonprofit organizations, including universities and other institutions of higher education, may apply. Applications may also be submitted by private for-profit organizations provided no grant funds are to be paid as profit to grantees, *i.e.*, any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs of the recipient (45 CFR 74.81).

Process for Application Submission

ACYF and the Head Start Bureau are engaging in a three-part process. First, eligible organizations are invited to submit an abstract based on the requirements in this announcement. Second, organizations submitting successful abstracts will be invited to submit applications, addressing the planning phase and the implementation phase, for competitive review and possible funding. Third, organizations successfully completing the planning phase will be eligible for consideration of implementation funding.

Available Funds

Financial awards will be made only in the second and third part of the process;

no financial awards will be made based on abstracts submitted. An invitation to submit an application is not a guarantee of funding.

The number of projects funded as a result of this announcement will depend in large part on the quality and usefulness of the innovations and improvements responding organizations propose. In addition, we expect that the size of awards will vary significantly depending on the nature of each project. Generally, planning awards will be up to \$100,000 and subsequent implementation awards will be up to \$1,000,000. Smaller awards may be appropriate in many cases and occasionally larger awards will be justified. It is anticipated that \$3,000,000 is available in FY 2003 for 30-40 planning grants. In later phases, we expect that total funding for planning and implementation grants will be up to \$10,000,000 in any fiscal year. Planning awards will be for a period of up to nine months. Subsequent implementation awards will be for one to three 12-month periods. Continued funding of any project selected through the competitive process is contingent upon the continued availability of appropriated funds. Further, continued funding may be ended on a determination by ACYF that continuation of the project is no longer desirable from a policy perspective. In the latter event, ACYF will not terminate the funding prior to the end of the budget period and will provide the grantee with 45 days notice of the end of the project.

Applicants are encouraged to provide a share of the resources needed to support their proposal. However, there is no specific amount of non-federal support required of applicants or other third parties. If a proposed project activity has approved funding support from other funding sources the amount, duration, purpose and source of the funds should be indicated in materials submitted under this announcement. If completion of the proposed project activity is contingent upon approval of funding from other sources, the relationship between the funds being sought elsewhere and from ACYF should be discussed in the budget information submitted as a part of the abstract. In both cases, the contribution that ACYF funds will make to the project should be clearly presented.

Part I. Purpose and Background

Purpose

The Head Start program provides comprehensive child development services to more than 900,000 of our

nation's neediest young children. The President has identified Head Start as an important link in the improvement of our country's education system through the Good Start, Grow Smart Early Childhood Initiative. ACYF is working to improve the effectiveness of Head Start in important areas such as supporting early literacy, strengthening parental involvement and assuring that all children achieve measurable improvement as a result of participating in Head Start.

There are a number of organizations and institutions with innovative concepts, projects and products that could help improve the effectiveness and management of local Head Start and Early Head Start sites. It is the intent of ACYF to solicit proposals for innovations and improvements so these efforts can be identified and considered. If they are found to have merit, ACYF plans to provide financial assistance so they can be further developed or assessed and made available to local Head Start programs. This is the first of what we expect will be periodic solicitations of this type.

Many organizations (at the national, state and local level) seek the Head Start Bureau's guidance because they have seen a need for activities that will improve the quality of Head Start programming. These are organizations that wish to respond and do not have the capacity but have valid concepts, products, and projects that address the President's priorities for improving the comprehensive services provided by the Head Start Bureau. This competition will assess the feasibility of funding some of these projects. The focus will be on developing new concepts, products, and projects, primarily related to the important priorities and special needs listed in part II. However, this competition is not limited to these priority areas.

This solicitation will be carried out in a three-phase process: (1) Abstract submittal; (2) planning grant application submission by successful abstract applicants; and (3) implementation grant awards to a limited number of successful planning grant recipients. Interested parties are therefore expected to detail in the abstract the long-term goals and strategies to be implemented, if awarded a subsequent implementation grant. They should also describe the benefits of the planning grant (up to nine months in duration) in terms of how it will be used to prepare for the implementation phase.

Background

Head Start, established in 1965, is a comprehensive child development