

awareness, and alphabet knowledge. Applications that meet this invitational priority do not receive any absolute or competitive preference over other applications.

### Pre-Application Priorities

#### *Pre-Application Competitive Priorities*

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2), the Secretary gives two separate competitive preferences to Pre-Applications as follows:

#### Pre-Application Competitive Priority 1—Children from Low-Income Families

To meet Pre-Application competitive priority 1, each preschool center to be supported by the proposed Early Reading First project must have at least 75 percent of the children enrolled in the preschool center qualify to receive free or reduced price lunches; or at least 75 percent of the children enrolled in the elementary school, in the school attendance area in which that center is located qualify to receive free or reduced price lunches. In addition, each of those preschool centers must be located in a community served by an "eligible LEA," or primarily serve children who will attend kindergarten in an "eligible LEA." ("Eligible LEAs" for the purpose of this competitive priority are those LEAs that are listed as "eligible LEAs" for this FY 2003 grant competition on the Early Reading First Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/earlyreading/index.html>.)

An application that meets this first Pre-Application competitive priority would receive *10 points* in the Pre-Application portion of this grant competition. To receive these points, an applicant that qualifies must complete and submit Pre-Application Form B, included in the application package. These points are in addition to any points the applicant earns under the Pre-Application selection criteria or the other Pre-Application competitive priority.

This competitive priority is designed to ensure that Early Reading First funds are used to support local efforts to enhance the early language, literacy, and prereading development, primarily of preschool children who are from low-income families.

#### Pre-Application Competitive Priority 2—Novice Applicant

To meet Pre-Application competitive priority 2, the applicant must be a *novice applicant* (or a group of novice applicants) under 34 CFR 75.225 that is otherwise eligible to apply under this competition, and must check the appropriate box on ED Form 424

(Application for Federal Assistance), Question 6. A "novice applicant" under 34 CFR 75.225 means the following for this Pre-Application competitive priority: an applicant that has not had an active discretionary grant from the Federal Government in the five years before the deadline date for the Pre-Application in this grant competition. For the purposes of this requirement, a grant is active until the end of the grant's project or funding period, including any extensions of those periods that extend the grantee's authority to obligate funds. In the case of applications from more than one eligible applicant (that is, a group application), every eligible applicant must be a novice applicant to meet this Pre-Application competitive priority.

This competitive priority is included to broaden and diversify the pool of qualified applicants and provide greater opportunities for inexperienced applicants with high-quality applications to receive funding. An application that meets this second Pre-Application competitive priority would receive *5 points* in the competition. These points are in addition to any points the applicant earns under the Pre-Application selection criteria or the other Pre-Application competitive priority.

### Full Application Priority

Under 34 CFR 75.225, the Secretary gives a competitive priority to Full Applications as follows:

#### *Full Application Competitive Priority—Novice Applicant*

To meet the Full Application competitive priority, the applicant must be a *novice applicant* (or a group of novice applicants) under 34 CFR 75.225 that is otherwise eligible to apply under this competition, and must check the appropriate box on ED Form 424 (Application for Federal Assistance), Question 6. A "novice applicant" under 34 CFR 75.225 means the following for this Full Application competitive priority: an applicant that has not had an active discretionary grant from the Federal Government in the five years before the deadline date for a Full Application under this grant competition. For the purposes of this requirement, a grant is active until the end of the grant's project or funding period, including any extensions of those periods that extend the grantee's authority to obligate funds. In the case of applications from more than one eligible applicant (that is, a group application), every eligible applicant must be a novice applicant to meet this Full Application competitive priority.

This competitive priority is included to broaden and diversify the pool of qualified applicants and provide greater opportunities for inexperienced applicants with high-quality applications to receive funding. An application that meets this Full Application competitive priority would receive *5 points* in the competition. These points are in addition to any points the applicant earns under the selection criteria.

### Pre-Application Selection Criteria

The Secretary will use the following selection criteria in accordance with 34 CFR 75.200(b)(2) and 75.209 to evaluate Pre-Applications under this grant competition. The maximum score for all of these selection criteria is 100 points. The *maximum* score for each criterion is indicated in parenthesis with the criterion.

Each applicant must first use up to two (2) double-spaced pages of its Pre-Application to describe the context of the existing early childhood education programs serving preschool-age children (preschool programs) that they propose to support with Early Reading First funds. The Secretary recommends that, in the case of center-based programs, applicants generally include no more than a total of 5 centers to ensure that funds are sufficiently concentrated to achieve the program goals. The context description of the current program must include the following information: the ages and number of children being served; demographic and socioeconomic information on those children; information on the type of special needs that any of the children may have; the average hours the children attend the program (hours/day, days/week, and months/year); primary funding source(s) for the program; the basic instructional program; and the number of staff and their qualifications.

The Secretary believes that programs with the capacity and potential to become Early Reading First preschool centers of educational excellence are likely to be preschool programs that currently are stable and effectively attend to the developmental domains traditionally supported by preschool programs, including social, emotional, and physical. The Secretary recommends that applicants demonstrate the current program's capacity in these domains when describing the context of the existing program.

In addition to the 2-page context description, applicants must also include, in the Appendix to the Pre-Application, a list of the names and addresses of the preschool programs