

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**[CFDA No.: 84.332B]****Comprehensive School Reform Quality Initiatives****AGENCY:** Department of Education.**ACTION:** Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2002.

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 the competition. These grants are authorized under section 1608 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Pub. L. 107-110).

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM: The purpose of the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) Quality Initiatives program is to support activities in the following categories:

(1) *Technical assistance in making informed decisions.* To support public and private efforts in which funds are matched by private organizations to assist States, local educational agencies (LEAs), and schools in making informed decisions regarding approving or selecting providers of comprehensive school reform, consistent with the requirements in section 1606(a) of the ESEA, as amended; and

(2) *Model development and capacity building.* To foster the development of comprehensive school reform models, and to provide effective capacity building for comprehensive school reform providers to expand their work in more schools, assure quality, and promote financial stability.

Eligible Applicants: Public or private organizations that provide educational or related services.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: May 5, 2003.

Notification of Intent to Apply for Funding: We will be able to develop a more efficient process for reviewing grant applications if we have a better understanding of the number of entities that intend to apply for funding. Therefore, we strongly encourage each potential applicant to send, by April 7, 2003, a notification of its intent to apply for funding to the following address: irene.harwarth@ed.gov.

The notification of intent to apply for funding is *optional* and should not include information regarding the proposed application. Eligible

applicants that fail to provide the notification may still submit an application by the application deadline.

Estimated Available Funds:

Approximately \$7 million of fiscal year (FY) 2002 funds. Of this amount, we will award approximately \$2 million to support activities under category 1 (*i.e.*, technical assistance in making informed decisions) and approximately \$5 million to support activities under category 2 (*i.e.*, model development and capacity building).

Estimated Number of Awards: We anticipate making 1 to 2 awards under each category.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$1 million—\$2 million annually under category 1 (*i.e.*, technical assistance in making informed decisions); \$2.5 million—\$5 million annually under category 2 (*i.e.*, model development and capacity building). Funding of continuation awards after the initial year of funding is contingent upon future Congressional appropriations for the program.

Note: These estimates are projections for the guidance of potential applicants. The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 36 months.

Applicable Regulations: The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 81, 82, 86, 97, 98, and 99.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The State-administered Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) Program and the CSR Quality Initiatives are both authorized under Part F of Title I of the ESEA, as amended. The State-administered CSR program is designed to improve student achievement by supporting the implementation of comprehensive school reforms based on scientifically based research and effective practices so that all children, especially those in low-performing, high-poverty schools, can meet challenging State academic achievement standards. Comprehensive school reform is a systemic approach to schoolwide improvement that incorporates every aspect of a school, including curriculum, instruction, school management, professional development, parental involvement, and assessment plans. The program requires LEAs and schools to draw together individual initiatives that focus on specific areas and weave them into a unified, coherent comprehensive school reform design that integrates the eleven statutory components delineated in section 1606(a) of the ESEA, as amended.

The intent of the CSR Quality Initiatives program is to support activities that will enhance the State-administered CSR program. Under the Quality Initiatives competition, the Secretary will award funds to support activities in two categories—(1) technical assistance in making informed decisions, and (2) model development and capacity building. Grantees under category 1 will assist States, LEAs, and schools in making informed decisions regarding approving or selecting providers of comprehensive school reform, in a manner that meets the requirements of section 1606(a) of the ESEA, as amended. The category 2 awards will encourage, facilitate, and support the development of comprehensive school reform models that schools may integrate into a program that meets the eleven statutory CSR components. These grants will also assist comprehensive school reform providers in building their capacity to expand their work in more schools, assure quality, and promote financial stability.

The category 1 and category 2 awards will be peer reviewed separately on the basis of selection criteria specific to each of the competitions. These selection criteria are included in this Notice. An applicant seeking funding under both categories must submit separate applications addressing the respective criteria for each category.

Absolute Priority for Category 1 Applicants: For category 1 grants (*i.e.*, technical assistance in making informed decisions), the legislation requires that the awards be matched by private organizations. In response to this requirement, the Secretary establishes the following absolute priority under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) and will fund under the Category 1 competition only those applicants that meet this priority:

The applicant demonstrates, in its grant application, that its Quality Initiative award will be matched with funds from one or more private organizations. During the first year of the project, the match, excluding any in-kind contributions, must total at least 20 percent of the grantee's initial CSR Quality Initiative award. During any subsequent year of the project, the match, excluding any in-kind contributions, must total at least 25 percent of the grantee's continuation award for that year.

Competitive Preferences for Category 1 Applicants: To help ensure that the activities supported under category 1 (*i.e.*, technical assistance in making informed decisions) of the CSR Quality Initiatives program best address the needs of States, districts and schools,