

(2) Increase utilization of research-based classroom practices that foster student achievement for low-income students; and

(3) Strengthen the alignment of pre-advanced placement and advanced placement curricula through "vertical team training" and other strategies.

In accordance with section 1705(f) of the authorizing statute, applicants approved for funding under this program will, for each advanced placement subject supported by the grant, be required to submit to the Secretary annual reports on, among other things, the number of students served by the grantee who are taking an advanced placement course in that subject; the number of advanced placement tests in that subject taken by students served by the grantee; and the number of students served by the grantee scoring at different levels on advanced placement tests in that subject. In addition, grantees must submit disaggregated data (by race, ethnicity, sex, English proficiency status, and socio-economic status) on individuals taking advanced placement courses and tests.

**Absolute Priority:** We have chosen the elements of the absolute priority from the authorized activities and priorities specified in sections 1705(c) and (d) of the ESEA. To implement the absolute priority, the Secretary will fund under this competition only applications from eligible applicants that meet both elements of the absolute priority.

Under section 75.105(c)(3) of EDGAR, the Secretary is establishing an absolute priority for applications that—

(1) Demonstrate an intent to carry out activities that target schools, or LEAs operating schools, with a high concentration of low-income students (if the applicant is an LEA, propose to serve schools with a high concentration of low-income students); and

(2) Propose to develop, enhance, or expand pre-advanced placement courses, in conjunction with advanced placement courses, in English, mathematics, science, and other core academic areas at the middle or high school level. Effective pre-advanced placement programs should enable low-income students to enroll and succeed in advanced placement courses and tests in core academic areas. Proposals may include vertical teams training, high-quality professional development for pre-advanced placement and advanced placement teachers, and coordination of curriculum design and development between middle and high school teachers.

## Notes

(1) Pre-advanced placement courses are intended to provide middle and high school students with the higher order thinking skills, content knowledge, and study habits necessary for successful participation in advanced placement courses. Applicants should explain why the courses supported by the proposed project qualify as pre-advanced placement or advanced placement.

(2) Applicants may submit free or reduced-price lunch data in order to verify that participating schools meet this priority. For the definitions of *low-income individual* (including a list of other types of data that may be used to verify low-income status) and *high concentration of low-income students*, see the Definitions section of this notice.

## Allowable Activities

Within this absolute priority, eligible entities implement programs designed to expand access for low-income individuals to pre-advanced placement and advanced placement programs through activities such as:

- (1) Teacher training;
- (2) Pre-advanced placement course development;
- (3) Coordination and articulation between grade levels to prepare students to enter and succeed in advanced placement courses;
- (4) Purchase of books and supplies;
- (5) Activities to increase the availability of, and participation in, on-line advanced placement courses; and
- (6) Any other activity directly related to expanding access to and participation in pre-advanced placement and advanced placement programs, particularly for low-income individuals.

**Note:** Applicants approved for funding under this competition may be required to attend a two-day Project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC during the first year of the grant. The cost of attending this meeting may be paid from API program grant funds or State or local resources.

**Selection Criteria:** The Secretary will use the following selection criteria to evaluate applications under this competition. These selection criteria apply to the absolute priority and allowable activities only. The maximum score for all of the selection criteria is 100 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parenthesis with the criterion. The criteria are as follows:

(a) *Significance* (20 points). The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project. In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system changes or improvements that provide greater access to pre-advanced placement and advanced placement courses and highly-trained teachers for low-income and other disadvantaged students.

(2) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.

(b) *Quality of the Project Design* (20 points). The Secretary considers the quality of the project design of the proposed project. In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach for meeting the objectives of the program and the priorities established for the competition.

(2) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population.

(c) *Quality of Project Services* (20 points). The Secretary considers the quality of project services to be provided by the proposed project. In determining the quality of the services to be provided, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and of effective practices.

(2) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

(d) *Quality of Project Personnel* (10 points). The Secretary considers the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project. In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and other key personnel;

(2) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors, if any.

(e) *Adequacy of Resources* (5 points). The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources. In determining the adequacy