

agencies (LEAs) to improve and strengthen emergency response and crisis management plans, including training school personnel, students, and parents in emergency response procedures and coordinating with local law enforcement, public safety, health, and mental health agencies.

**Eligible Applicants:** LEAs with a significant need for emergency preparedness improvements and a lack of fiscal capacity to implement these improvements.

**Applications Available:** May 16, 2003.

**Deadline for Transmittal of**

**Applications:** June 30, 2003.

**Deadline for Intergovernmental Review:** August 29, 2003.

**Estimated Available Funds:** \$38 million.

**Estimated Range of Awards:** \$100,000–\$500,000.

**Estimated Average Size of Awards:** We estimate that: A small school district (with 1–20 school facilities) will need up to \$100,000 for the 18-month period; a medium-size school district (with between 21 and 75 school facilities) will need a maximum of \$250,000 for the 18-month period; and a large-size school district (with 76 or more school facilities) will need a maximum of \$500,000 for the 18-month period.

Applicants requesting funds in excess of the recommended amounts will need to justify their need for those funds.

**Estimated Number of Awards:** 150.

**Note:** The Department is not bound by any estimate in this notice.

**Project Period:** Up to 18 months.

**Applicable Regulations:** (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The regulations in 34 CFR part 299.

**General:** Contingent upon the availability of funds, we may make additional awards in FY 2004 from the rank-ordered list of unfunded applications from this competition.

**Participation by Private-School Children and Teachers:** LEAs that receive a grant are required to provide for the equitable participation of eligible private-school children and their teachers or other educational personnel. In order to ensure that grant program activities address the needs of private-school children, timely and meaningful consultation with appropriate private school officials must occur during the design and development of the program. Administrative direction and control over grant funds must remain with the grantee.

**Maintenance of Effort:** LEAs may receive a grant only if the State

educational agency finds that the combined fiscal effort per student or the aggregate expenditures of the agency and the State with respect to the provision of free public education by the agency for the preceding fiscal year was not less than 90 percent of the combined effort or aggregate expenditures for the second preceding fiscal year.

**Absolute Priority:** We give an absolute preference to applications that meet the following priority, and fund under this competition only those applications that meet the following absolute priority: LEA projects to improve and strengthen emergency response and crisis management plans, including training school personnel, students and parents in emergency response procedures and coordinating with local law enforcement, public safety, health, and mental health agencies.

To be considered for a grant award, applications must include an agreement that details the participation of the LEA and the following five community-based partners from the local area: Law enforcement, public safety, health, mental health, and the head of your local government (for example your mayor, city manager, or county executive). The agreement must detail the roles and responsibilities each of the required partners will have in improving and strengthening the plan. The agreement must also reflect each partner's agreement to receive a final copy of the plan. Finally, your agreement must include an authorized signature representing the LEA and each community-based partner.

If one or more of these five partners is not present in your community, or cannot feasibly participate, the agreement must explain the absence of each missing partner. Every application must include signatures representing at least the LEA and two of the required five partners, and explanations for the absence any of the remaining required partners.

Applications that fail to include the required agreement (with signatures and explanations for missing signatures as specified) will not be read.

Although this program requires partnerships with other parties, administrative direction and fiscal control for the project must remain with the local educational agency.

**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 or factor under that criterion is indicated in parentheses.

(1) *Need for project.* (25 points)

In determining the need for the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The magnitude of the need for the services to be provided or the activities to be carried out by the proposed project (15 points).

**Note:** Under this factor we will look for a clear and convincing demonstration of significant need—such as a recent vulnerability and needs assessment—to improve and strengthen the LEA's emergency response and crisis management plan, as well as how the proposed plan will address need.

(b) The extent to which specific gaps and weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses (10 points).

**Note:** Under this factor we will look at the extent to which the applicant demonstrates a lack of fiscal capacity to implement needed improvements to its emergency response/crisis management plan.

(2) *Significance.* (25 points)

In determining the significance of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change and improvement (10 points).

(b) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population (15 points).

**Note:** Under the Significance criterion, we will look for the applicant's identification of the vulnerabilities to which its school facilities may be exposed and its comprehensive approach to addressing those vulnerabilities in the proposed emergency response/crisis management plan. We expect that applicants will propose comprehensive approaches that do not rely solely on equipment and technology purchases, and address the four phases of crisis planning—mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

(3) *Quality of the project design.* (35 points)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance (10 points).

**Note:** Under this factor we will look for the applicant's intent to develop a plan that will respond to emerging potential crises and is practiced, updated, and revised frequently.

(b) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date