

established in this notice apply only to the FY 2003 grant competition.

Discussion of Priorities

When inviting applications, we designate each priority as absolute or competitive preference. The effect of each type of priority follows:

Absolute priority: Under an absolute priority, we consider only applications that meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(3)).

Competitive preference priority: Under a competitive preference priority, we give competitive preference to an application by either (1) awarding additional points, depending on how well or the extent to which the application meets the competitive priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i)); or (2) selecting an application that meets the competitive priority over an application of comparable merit that does not meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(ii)).

Priorities: Applicants must meet both Absolute Priority 1 and Absolute Priority 2 to be considered for funding under this notice. Eligible applicants may be either State or local entities.

Absolute Priority 1: Each application must be submitted by an eligible applicant. In addition, each proposed project must include a partnership with a community-based organization and a local educational agency (or school). The application must clearly identify the partnering agencies and must include a detailed plan of their working relationship. Thus, under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute priority to projects in which the delivery of instructional services includes:

1. a Community-Based Organization (CBO), which may include a faith-based organization, and
2. a Local Educational Agency (LEA) (or school, including private, non-profit schools).

A CBO is not required to submit a joint application with an LEA or school when applying for funds; however, the proposed project must deliver the educational services in partnership with an LEA (or school).

Likewise, an LEA is not required to submit a joint application with a CBO when applying for funds; however, the proposed project must deliver the educational services in partnership with a CBO.

Applicants who are neither CBOs nor LEAs must enter into a partnership that includes a CBO and an LEA (or school) in the delivery of educational services.

The Secretary has determined that the participation of both CBOs and LEAs (or schools) is critical to the success of the projects that will be funded in this

competition. Many academic support programs for adolescents report that securing and maintaining a high level of student participation can be challenging. Involving CBOs in service delivery will help projects better master this challenge, such as by providing expanded outreach and support to students, joint programming, or alternative service sites that are in or near the neighborhoods where students live. Community-based and faith-based partners bring other important resources to the table as well, such as assistance in recruiting staff and volunteers. LEAs (or schools) are essential partners as well. Their involvement is needed to identify the students who are most in need of academic support and to ensure that the project's curriculum, assessment, and instructional practices are consistent with those of the schools the students attend.

Applications that do not show evidence of a partnership with a CBO and an LEA (or school) will be ineligible for funding.

Note: Applicants should bear in mind that LEAs are eligible applicants, but individual schools are not eligible applicants.

Absolute Priority 2: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary gives an absolute priority to projects that meet the following criteria:

Applicants in this program must state whether they are proposing a local or State project. A local project must include one or more CTCs; a State project must include two or more CTCs. In addition, the project must be carried out by or in partnership with one or more LEAs or secondary schools that provide supplementary instruction in the core academic subjects of reading or language arts, or mathematics, to low-achieving secondary school students. Projects must serve students who are entering or enrolled in grades 9 through 12 and who have academic skills significantly below grade level, or who have not attained proficiency on State academic assessments as established by NCLB. Supplementary instruction may be delivered before or after school or at other times when school is not in session. Instruction may also be provided while school is in session, provided that it increases the amount of time students receive instruction in core academic subjects and does not require their removal from regular academic classes. The instructional strategies used must be based on practices that have proven effective for improving the academic performance of low-achieving students. If these services are not provided directly by an LEA, they must

be provided in partnership with an LEA or secondary school.

Competitive Preference Priority—Low-Performing Secondary Schools

In addition to the points to be awarded under the selection criteria, the Secretary awards up to five (5) additional points to projects that serve students in secondary schools that have not met adequate yearly progress for two (2) or more consecutive years.

Selection Criteria

The following selection criteria will be used to evaluate applications submitted for grants. Please note:

(1) The maximum score is 105 points. Up to 100 points will be awarded in response to the selection criteria listed below. A maximum of 5 additional points may be awarded to those applicants that respond to the competitive preference priority described earlier in the notice.

(2) The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses.

(a) *Need for the Project (10 points):*

In evaluating the need for the proposed project, we consider the extent to which the proposed project will:

(1) Serve students from low-income families;

(2) Serve students entering or enrolled in secondary schools that are among the secondary schools in the State that have the highest numbers or percentages of students who have not achieved proficiency on the State academic assessments required by Title I of ESEA, or who have academic skills in reading or language arts, or mathematics, that are significantly below grade level;

(3) Serve students who have the greatest need for supplementary instruction, as indicated by their scores on State or local standardized assessments in reading or language arts, or mathematics, or some other local measure of performance in reading or language arts, or mathematics; and

(4) Create or expand access to information technology and related training for disadvantaged residents of distressed urban or rural communities.

(b) *Quality of the Project Design (35 points):*

In evaluating the quality of the proposed project, we consider the extent to which the proposed project will:

(1) Provide instructional services that will be of sufficient size, scope, and intensity to improve the academic performance of participating students;

(2) Incorporate strategies that have proven effective for improving the academic performance of low-achieving students;