

applicant must also have the capacity to expand significantly access to computers and related services for disadvantaged residents of economically distressed urban and rural communities who would otherwise be denied such access.

The focus of the CTC program competition has changed to give absolute priority to those applicants who will focus on improving the academic achievement of low-achieving high school students while continuing to provide a community technology center for all members of their community. Thus, grant recipients must meet this priority as they use grant funds to create or expand community technology centers that expand access to information technology and related training for disadvantaged residents of distressed urban or rural communities and evaluate the effectiveness of this project.

**Eligible Applicants:** Eligible applicants shall be an institution of higher education, a State Education Agency, a Local Educational Agency, an entity (such as a foundation, museum, library, for-profit business, public or private nonprofit organization, or community based organization, including faith based organizations), or a consortium thereof. In addition, eligible applicants shall have the capacity to significantly expand access to computers and related services for disadvantaged residents of economically distressed urban and rural communities who would otherwise be denied such access.

**Applications Available:** May 30, 2003.

### Application Procedures

The Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-277) and the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999 (Pub. L. 106-107) encourage us to undertake initiatives to improve our grant processes. Enhancing the ability of individuals and entities to conduct business with us electronically is a major part of our response to these Acts. Therefore, the Department is taking steps to adopt the Internet as our chief means of conducting transactions in order to improve services to our customers and to simplify and expedite our processes.

The Department is requiring that applications for the FY 2003 Community Technology Centers Program competition for new awards be submitted electronically using e-APPLICATION through the U.S. Department of Education's e-GRANTS system. The e-GRANTS system is

accessible through its portal page at <http://e-grants.ed.gov>.

Applicants who are unable to submit an application through the e-GRANTS systems may apply for a waiver to the electronic submission requirement. To apply for a waiver, applicants must explain the reason(s) that prevent(s) them from using the Internet to submit their applications. The reason(s) must be outlined in a letter addressed to: Gisela Harkin, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, 330 "C" Street, SW., Washington, DC 20202-7100. Please mark your envelope "CTC competition waiver request." The letter requesting the waiver is to be submitted no later than two (2) weeks before the deadline for transmittal of applications; last minute requests will not be considered.

Any application that receives a waiver to the electronic submission requirement will be given the same consideration in the review process as an electronic application.

### Pilot Project for Electronic Submission of Applications

In FY 2003, the U.S. Department of Education is continuing to expand its pilot project of electronic submission of applications to include additional formula programs and additional discretionary grant competitions. The Community Technology Centers (CTC) program (CFDA 84.341) is one of the programs included in the pilot project. If you are an applicant under the CTC program, you must submit your application to us in electronic format or receive a waiver.

The pilot project involves the use of the Electronic Grant Application System (e-APPLICATION, formerly e-GAPS) portion of the Grant Administration and Payment System (GAPS). We shall continue to evaluate its success and solicit suggestions for improvement.

Please note the following:

- Do not wait until the deadline date for the transmittal of applications to submit your application electronically. If you wait until the deadline date to submit your application electronically and you are unable to access the e-APPLICATION system, you must contact the Help Desk by 4:30 p.m. EST on the deadline date.
- Keep in mind that e-APPLICATIONS is not operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Click on "Hours of Web Site Operation" for specific hours of access during the week.
- You will have access to the e-APPLICATION Help Desk for technical support: 1 (888) 336-8930 (TTY: 1-[866] 697-2696, local [202]

401-8363). The Help Desk hours of operation are limited to 8 a.m.-6 p.m. EST Monday through Friday.

You must submit all documents electronically, including the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED424), Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED524), and assurances, certifications, and appendices, as appropriate.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an acknowledgement, which will include a PR/Award number (an identifying number unique to your application).
- Within three (3) working days after submitting your electronic application, fax a signed copy of the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED424) to the Application Control Center after following these steps: (1) Print the ED424 from the e-Application system. (2) The institution's Authorizing Representative must sign this form. (3) Place the PR/Award number in the upper right hand corner of the hard copy signature page of the ED424. (4) Fax the signed ED424 to the Application Control Center at (202) 260-1349.
- The Department may request that you give us original signatures on all other forms at a later date.

### Closing Date Extension in Case of System Unavailability

If you are prevented from submitting an application on the closing date because the e-APPLICATION system is unavailable, we will grant you an extension of one (1) business day in order to transmit your application electronically, by mail, or by hand delivery.

For us to grant this extension:

(1) You must be a registered user of e-APPLICATION and have initiated an e-APPLICATION for this competition; and

(2) (a) The e-APPLICATION system must be unavailable for 60 minutes or more between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. EST, on the deadline date; or

(b) The e-APPLICATION system must be unavailable for any period of time during the last hours of operation (that is, for any period of time between 3:30 and 4:30 p.m. EST) on the deadline date. The Department must acknowledge and confirm these periods of unavailability before granting you an extension. To request this extension, you must contact the e-Grants Help Desk at 1 (888) 336-8930.

You may access the electronic grant application for CFDA No. 84.341 at <http://e-grants.ed.gov>.