

maximum score of an application is 130 points (100 points under the selection criteria and an additional 30 points under the competitive preferences).

The Secretary will use the following selection criteria to evaluate applications for PIRC projects under this competition:

(a) *Need for project* (15 points).

In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the proposed project will focus on serving or otherwise addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals; and

(2) The extent to which specific gaps or 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.

(b) *Quality of the project design* (25 points).

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable;

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

(3) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice;

(4) The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to meeting statutory purposes and requirements; and

(5) The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.

(c) *Quality of project services* (15 points).

In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services; and

(2) The likelihood that the services to be provided by the proposed project will lead to improvements in the achievement of students as measured against rigorous academic standards.

(d) *Quality of project personnel* (10 points).

In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the following factors:

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

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

(e) *Adequacy of resources* (5 points).

In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization; and

(2) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits.

(f) *Quality of management plan* (10 points).

In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks; and

(2) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project.

(g) *Quality of the project evaluation* (20 points).

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible; and

(2) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide for performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes. *Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking:* It is the Secretary's practice, in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553) to offer interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed rules that are not taken directly from statute. Ordinarily, this practice would have applied to the competitive priority and selection criteria in this notice. Section 437(d)(2) of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), however, exempts from this rulemaking

requirement those rules where the Secretary determines it would cause extreme hardship to the intended beneficiaries of the program that would be affected by those rules. The Secretary, in accordance with section 437(d)(2) of GEPA, has decided to forgo public comment with respect to the competitive priority in this grant competition in order to ensure timely and high-quality awards. These rules will apply only to the FY 2003 grant competition.

**FOR APPLICATIONS AND FURTHER**

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Dated: May 29, 2003.

**Nina S. Rees,**

*Deputy Under Secretary for Innovation and Improvement.*

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