

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**[CFDA No.: 84.341]****Community Technology Centers Program****AGENCY:** Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Department of Education.**ACTION:** Notice of final priority, program requirements, and selection criteria for Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 for novice applicants.**SUMMARY:** The Assistant Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education establishes a final priority, selection criteria, and program requirements under the Community Technology Centers (CTC) program for novice applicants. The Assistant Secretary will use this priority, selection criteria, and program requirements for the FY 2003 novice applicant competition.**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This priority, selection criteria, and program requirements are effective June 20, 2003.**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** If you have questions pertaining to the application, need further assistance, or need to speak with someone in the CTC program, you may contact Gisela Harkin, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Mary E. Switzer Building, Room 4324, Washington, DC 20202 7100, Telephone: (202) 205-4238 or via e-mail: commtech.center@ed.gov. Please type "CTC Notice Correspondence" as the subject line of your electronic message.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.**Note:** This notice does not solicit applications. A notice inviting applications under this competition is published elsewhere in this issue of the **Federal Register**. The notice inviting applications specifies the deadline date by which applications for an award must be received or hand-delivered to the Department if a waiver to the electronic submission requirement is granted.**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION****General**

As authorized by Title V, Part D, Subpart 11, Section 5511-13 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, the purpose of the CTC Program is to assist eligible applicants to create or expand community technology centers that will provide disadvantaged residents of economically distressed urban and rural communities with access to information technology and related training. 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, or community-based organization, including faith-based organizations), or consortia thereof, that also meet the definition of a "novice applicant," as that term is defined in 34 CFR 75.225(a)(1) (see the following section of this notice on *Novice Applicants* for more information on this requirement). 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.

The CTC program novice applicant competition gives absolute priority to those applicants who will focus on improving the academic achievement of low-achieving secondary 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 to evaluate the effectiveness of their projects. Funds may be used to provide services and activities that use technology to improve academic achievement, such as academic enrichment activities for children and youth, career development, adult education, and English language instruction for individuals with limited English proficiency. Other authorized activities include, among other things, support for personnel, equipment, networking capabilities, and other infrastructure costs. No funds may be used for construction.

Improving the academic achievement of our nation's secondary school students has become an urgent need. Current National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data indicate that, despite some slow and steady progress in secondary student achievement over the past few decades, many of our nation's secondary students are still not attaining the academic skills

and knowledge required for graduation, postsecondary education, or careers. This is particularly true among students who are entering secondary school, with two in ten scoring below basic levels in reading, over three in ten scoring below basic levels in math, and four in ten scoring below basic levels in science. Moreover, as students move through secondary school, their academic progress wanes. Except in the area of science, students actually make greater academic gains between grades four and eight than between grades eight and 12.

To support the goal of the NCLB that all students attain proficiency in challenging State academic achievement standards, the Assistant Secretary establishes a priority, selection criteria, and program requirements for the CTC program that will focus program resources on providing effective supplemental instruction to low-achieving students who are entering or enrolled in grades nine through 12 at high-poverty, low-performing secondary schools.

Novice Applicants

The Department encourages the participation of novice applicants in the Community Technology Centers program. Therefore, the Secretary has determined, under 34 CFR 75.225(c)(1), to give special consideration to novice applicants. As a result, up to 25 percent of available program funds will be reserved for grants to novice entities submitting high-quality applications.

This notice establishes a priority, selection criteria, and program requirements for the novice applicant competition of the FY 2003 CTC program. Notices inviting applications and establishing priorities, selection criteria, and program requirements for the general CTC competition—for which both novice and non-novice applicants may apply—previously have been published in the **Federal Register** on June 3, 2003 (FR 33318-33323).

An applicant is considered a "novice applicant" if it meets the following definition taken from 34 CFR 75.225(a)(1):

The applicant must—

- (i) Have never received a grant or a subgrant under the Community Technology Centers program;
- (ii) Have never been a member of a group application, submitted in accordance with 34 CFR 75.127-75.129, that received a grant under the Community Technology Centers program; and
- (iii) Have not had an active discretionary grant from the Federal government in the five (5) years before