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Background

In FY 2003, the Congress appropriated more funds than the Administration requested for the Federal TRIO Programs. In examining the options available to the Secretary for allocating these additional funds, the Secretary determined that a portion of the funds should be used to increase support to the Upward Bound Program. The Upward Bound Program, authorized under section 402C of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended (HEA), 20 U.S.C. 1070a-13, helps low-income, potential first-generation, college students acquire the skills and motivation necessary for success in education beyond secondary school.

The purpose of this proposed supplement is to help the Upward Bound Program achieve one of its key performance goals: increasing the college enrollment rate of low-income, first generation college students. A recent evaluation of the Upward Bound Program found it has not been effective in increasing college preparation and enrollment of its program participants. The evaluation did find that the program has significant effects on higher risk students, but that the program was inadequately targeted to these students.

Under the absolute priority, the Upward Bound Program will increase the number of eligible students with the greatest need who are served by the Upward Bound Program. The students with the greatest need are generally those from the lowest income levels who have potential for college but are not performing successfully in high school. The Secretary believes that limiting supplemental funds to projects that serve the above described target schools is a good way to ensure that projects serve the lowest income students because the free lunch is limited to students from families with the lowest family income. An estimated 150 current Upward Bound projects could receive supplemental funds to serve at least twenty (20) additional students.

Proposed Absolute Priority

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c), the Secretary proposes to give an absolute preference to applications that meet the following absolute priority.

The Secretary will provide supplemental funds of up to \$100,000 to regular Upward Bound Program projects that:

1. Are selected for funding under the FY 2003 Upward Bound Program funding competition;

2. Serve a target high school in which at least 50 percent of the students were eligible to receive free lunch under the National School Lunch Act during the 2001-2002 school year;

3. Received supplemental funds in FY 2000 under the Notice of Final Priority dated July 24, 2000 (65 FR 45698-45699); and

4. Agree to select at least 20 students who attend a target high school in which at least 50 percent of the students were eligible to receive free lunches under the National School Lunch Act during the 2001-2002 school year and have the greatest need for project services. Students who have the greatest need for project services are those students who:

a. Have not met the State academic achievement standard for grade eight in reading/language arts;

b. Have not met the State academic achievement standard for grade eight in math; or

c. Have a grade point average of 2.5 or less (on a 4.0 scale) for the most recent school year for which grade point averages are available.

Veteran Upward Bound projects and Upward Bound Math/Science projects are not eligible to participate in this initiative.

The Secretary proposes to fund applications in the following order:

1. Applications that meet the absolute priority.

2. All other applications.

If funds are available after funding all applications that meet the absolute priority, the Secretary will select from among the remaining applicants based upon the highest scores received (including prior experience points) in the Upward Bound FY 2003 Funding Competition.

Upward Bound projects that wish to receive supplemental funds will be required to submit:

- The identity of the target schools to be served by the project.

- The number of students who were eligible for free lunch under the National School Lunch Act at each of the target high schools to be served by the project in the 2001-2002 school year and the total number of students enrolled at those target schools in that year,

- The number of additional students, not less than 20, that the project plans to serve,

- A revised budget; and

- A narrative describing how the supplemental funds will be used to address each participant's greatest need.

Performance Measures: The effectiveness of the Upward Bound Program Participant Expansion Initiative will be measured by the college enrollment rate of higher-risk low-income first generation college students who are program participants. All grantees will be expected to provide documentation of educational outcomes of participating students for the purposes of assessing the effectiveness of individual projects and the initiative overall.

Intergovernmental Review

This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism. The Executive order relies on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

This document provides early notification of our specific plans and action for this program.

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR part 645.

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