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Federal Communications Commission.

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Deputy Chief, Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau.

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FEDERAL MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION SERVICE

Labor-Management Cooperation Program; Application Solicitation

AGENCY: Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

ACTION: Request for public comment on draft Fiscal Year 2003 program Guidelines/Application Solicitation for Labor-Management Committees.

SUMMARY: The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) is publishing the draft Fiscal Year 2003 Program Guidelines/Application Solicitation for the Labor-Management Cooperation Program to inform the public. The program is supported by Federal funds authorized by the Labor-Management Cooperation Act of 1978, subject to annual appropriations. This Solicitation contains changes in the allocation of all grant funds returned to FMCS.

DATES: Comments must be submitted before February 26, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to: Jane A. Lorber, Director, Labor Management Grants Program, FMCS, 2100 K Street, NW., Washington, DC 20427.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jane A. Lorber, 202-606-8181.

Labor-Management Cooperation Program Application Solicitation for Labor-Management Committees FY2003

I. Introduction

The following is the draft solicitation for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 cycle of the Labor-Management Cooperation Program as it pertains to the support of labor-management committees. These guidelines represent the continuing efforts of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to implement the provisions of the Labor-Management Cooperation Act of 1978, which was initially implemented in FY81. The Act authorizes FMCS to provide assistance in the establishment and operation of

company/plant, area, public sector, and industry-wide labor-management committees which:

A. Have been organized jointly by employers and labor organizations representing employees in that company/plant, area, government agency, or industry; and

B. Are established for the purpose of improving labor-management relationships, job security, and organizational effectiveness; enhancing economic development; or involving workers in decisions affecting their working lives, including improving communication with respect to subjects of mutual interest and concern.

The Program Description and other sections that follow, as well as a separately published FMCS Financial and Administrative Grants Manual, make up the basic guidelines, criteria, and program elements a potential applicant for assistance under this program must know in order to develop an application for funding consideration for either a company/plant, area-wide industry, or public sector labor-management committee. Directions for obtaining an application kit may be found in Section H. A copy of the Labor-Management Cooperation Act of 1978, included in the application kit, should be reviewed in conjunction with this solicitation.

II. Program Description

Objectives

The Labor-Management Cooperation Act of 1978 identifies the following seven general areas for which financial assistance would be appropriate to:

A. Improve communication between representatives of labor and management;

B. Provide workers and employers with opportunities to study and explore new and innovative joint approaches to achieving organizational effectiveness;

C. Assist workers and employers in solving problems of mutual concern not susceptible to resolution within the collective bargaining process;

D. Study and explore ways of eliminating potential problems which reduce the competitiveness and inhibit the economic development of the company/plant, area, or industry;

E. Enhance the involvement of workers in making decisions that affect their working lives;

F. Expand and improve working relationships between workers and managers; and

G. Encourage free collective bargaining by establishing continuing mechanisms for communication between employers and their employees

through Federal assistance in the formation and operation of labor-management committees. The primary objective of this program is to encourage and support the establishment and operation of joint labor-management committees to carry out specific objectives that meet the fore mentioned general criteria. The term "labor" refers to employees represented by a labor organization and covered by a formal collective bargaining agreement. These committees may be found at the plant (company), area, industry, or public sector levels.

A plant or company committee is generally characterized as restricted to one or more organizational or productive units operated by a single employer. An area committee is generally composed of multiple employers of diverse industries as well as multiple labor unions operating within and focusing upon a particular city, county, contiguous multi-county, or statewide jurisdiction. An industry committee generally consists of a collection of agencies or enterprises and related labor union(s) producing a common product or service in the private sector on a local, state, regional, or nationwide level. A public sector committee consists of government employees and managers in one or more units of a local or state government, managers and employees of public institutions of higher education, or of employees and managers of public elementary and secondary schools. Those employees must be covered by a formal collective bargaining agreement or other enforceable labor-management agreement. In deciding whether an application is for an area or industry committee, consideration should be given to the above definitions as well as to the focus of the committee.

In FY 2003, competition will be open to company/plant, area, private industry, and public sector committees. Special consideration will be given to committee applications involving innovative or unique efforts. All application budget requests should focus directly on supporting the committee. Applicants should avoid seeking funds for activities that are clearly available under other Federal programs (e.g., job training, mediation of contract disputes, etc.)

Required Program Elements

A. *Problem Statement*—The application should have numbered pages and discuss in detail what specific problem(s) face the company/plant, area, government, or industry and its workforce that will be addressed by the committee. Applicants must