

Evaluations using an experimental design are the strongest for determining program effectiveness. Thus, the project preferably uses an experimental design. An evaluation using an experimental design is one where subjects (students, teachers, classrooms, or schools) are randomly assigned to receive the program being evaluated or to be in a control group that does not receive the program.

If random assignment is not feasible, the project may employ a quasi-experimental design with carefully matched comparison conditions. This alternative design attempts to approximate a randomly assigned control group by matching subjects (students, teachers, classrooms, or schools) with non-participants possessing similar pre-program characteristics.

Data from reliable and valid measures of the intervention that the program intends to implement and of the outcomes that the program intends to affect, should be collected before and after participation in the program or the comparison condition.

Points awarded under this priority will be determined by the quality of the proposed evaluation. In determining the quality of the evaluation, we will consider the extent to which the applicant presents a feasible, credible plan that includes:

- (1) The type of design to be used (random assignment or matched comparison);
- (2) Outcomes to be measured;
- (3) A discussion of how students, teachers, classrooms, or schools will be assigned to the program or matched for comparison with other students, teachers, classrooms, or schools; and
- (4) A proposed evaluator, preferably independent, with the necessary background and technical expertise to carry out the proposed evaluation.

Applicants who apply for the competitive preference will have their applications reviewed separately by a panel of non-federal experts that includes at least one evaluation expert.

Performance Measures

The Secretary has established the following key performance measure for assessing the effectiveness of the Demonstration Grants for Student Drug Testing Program: The reduction of the incidence of drug use in the past month and past year. The Secretary has set an overall performance target that calls for the incidence of drug use by students in the target population to decline by five percent annually.

In applying the selection criteria that follow for "Quality of project design"

and "Quality of the project evaluation," the Secretary will take into consideration the extent to which the applicant demonstrates a strong capacity (1) To help achieve this target, and (2) to provide reliable data on this indicator.

Selection Criteria

The following selection criteria are used to evaluate applications for new grants under this competition. Together with the competitive preference priority, the maximum number of points that may be awarded is 110. The maximum score for each criterion or factor under that criterion is indicated in parentheses.

(1) *Need for project.* (20 points)

In determining the need for the proposed project, the following factor is considered:

The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project. (20 points)

Note: Under this criterion we will look for evidence that the applicant has conducted a student drug use survey or other needs assessment that demonstrates a significant need for drug testing in the target population.

(2) *Significance.* (20 points)

In determining the significance of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The potential contribution of the proposed project to the development and advancement of theory, knowledge, and practices in the field of study. (10 points)

(b) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies. (5 points)

(c) The potential for generalizing from the findings or results of the proposed project. (5 points)

(3) *Quality of the project design.* (30 points)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, the following factors are considered:

(a) The extent to which the design of the proposed project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice. (10 points)

(b) The extent to which the proposed project will establish linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations providing services to the target population. (5 points)

(c) The quality of the proposed demonstration design and procedures for documenting project activities and results. (10 points)

(d) The extent to which the project demonstrates an exceptional approach

to the priority established for the competition. (5 points)

(Note: Under this criterion we will look at the likelihood that the applicant's plan will lead to reductions in the incidence of drug use by students in the target population.)

(4) *Management plan.* (10 points)

In determining the quality of the management plan, the following factor is considered:

How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate. (10 points)

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

In determining the quality of the evaluation, the following factors are considered:

(a) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies. (10 points)

(b) 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. (10 points)

(Note: Under this criterion, we will look for the applicant's plan to provide reliable data that measures declines in the incidence of drug use by students in the target population in the past month and in the past year.)

FOR APPLICATIONS AND FURTHER

INFORMATION CONTACT: Heather Carkuff, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Room 3E250, Washington, DC 20202-6450. E-mail: heather.carkuff@ed.gov. To download a copy of the application, visit the Web site for the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSDFS>.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 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 program contact person listed under **FOR APPLICATIONS AND FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.**

Individuals with disabilities also may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format by contacting that person. However, the Department is not able to reproduce in an alternative