

contributions to the scientific community; and

4. Support the active communication, networking and collaboration among graduate students, their mentors and other prominent researchers in the field, both during their graduate training, as well as into the early stages of their research careers.

While the specific topics addressed under these Graduate Student Research Grants are intended to be field-initiated, applicants who address issues of both local and national significance will be most likely to succeed. Some illustrative examples of such topics include, but are not limited to the areas of school readiness, children's mental health, serving an increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse population of children and families and promoting child well-being by strengthening responsible fatherhood and healthy marriages in Head Start families.

C. Statutory Authority and Other Citations

Statutory authority: Section 649 of the Head Start Act, as amended by the Coats Human Services Reauthorization Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-285) and 42 U.S.C. 9844.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13): Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to average 40 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data needed and reviewing the collection of information.

The project description is approved under OMB control Number 0970-0139 which expires 12/31/03.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

D. Priority Areas, Number of Awards, Project Duration, and Funding Levels

In Fiscal Year 2003, ACF anticipates funding between 5 and 10 new projects in Priority Area 1.01 and between 2 and 8 new projects in Priority Area 1.02, pending availability of funds and receipt of satisfactory applications. ACF intends to commit up to \$200,000 per year to fund new grants in response to both priority areas within this announcement. It is unlikely that any individual mentor will be funded for more than one graduate student research grant if there are at least 10 applications from different mentors/institutions that qualify for support.

Any application that exceeds the maximum dollar range will be considered "non-responsive" and

subsequently returned to the applicant without further review.

Matching Requirement: There is no matching requirement.

Priority Area 1.01. Head Start Graduate Student Research Grants: The maximum Federal share will range between \$10,000-\$20,000 for the first 12-month budget period or a maximum of \$40,000 for a 2-year project period.

For Priority Area 1.01, requests for a second year of funding within the project period should be identified in the current application (on SF-424A), but such requests will be considered at a later date on a noncompetitive basis, subject to the graduate student's eligibility status, the availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Government.

Priority Area 1.02. Head Start Graduate Student Partnership Grants: The maximum Federal share will range between \$2,500-\$5,000 for the 12-month budget period.

E. Application Process

This announcement includes all of the information needed to apply for funding in each of the priority areas. Detailed instructions for preparing and submitting applications are contained in the appendices. Applicants are cautioned to follow the prescribed content and format in preparing their application packages. Each priority area describes the purpose, goals, technical requirements and evaluation criteria against which proposals will be reviewed. The Standard Federal Forms that must be included in applications can be downloaded from the Internet at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/>.

F. Proposal Review, Selection and Award

1. Each application will be screened to determine whether the applicant organization is eligible as specified in each of the priority areas. Applications from ineligible organizations will be excluded from the review.

1. The review will be conducted in Washington, DC. Expert reviewers will include researchers, Federal or State staff, and other individuals experienced in Head Start or related research and evaluation. A panel of at least three reviewers will evaluate each application to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal in terms of the Head Start's research goals and expectations, requirements for the Project Narrative Statement, and evaluation criteria for the priority area under consideration.

3. Given the involvement of non-Federal reviewers, applicants have the option of omitting from the application copies (but not the original), specific salary rates or amounts for individuals specified in the application budget and Social Security Numbers, if otherwise required for individuals. If the applicant omits individual salary information on application copies, the copies must include summary salary information.

4. Panelists will provide written comments and assign numerical scores for each application. The indicated point value for each criterion is the maximum numerical score for that criterion. The assigned scores for each criterion will be summed to yield a total evaluation score for the proposal.

5. In addition to the panel review, ACF may solicit comments from other Federal offices and agencies, States, non-governmental organizations, and individuals whose particular expertise is identified as necessary for the consideration of technical issues arising during the review. ACF will consider their comments, along with those of the panelists, when making funding decisions. ACF will also take into account the best combination of proposed projects to meet overall research goals.

6. The Director of the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) will make the final selection of the applicants to be funded. Applications may be funded in whole or in part depending on: (1) The rank order of applicants resulting from the competitive review; (2) staff review and consultations; (3) the combination of projects which best meets the Bureau's research objectives; (4) the funds available; and (5) other relevant considerations.

7. Selected applicants will be notified through the issuance of a Financial Assistance Award. That document establishes the funding level, terms and conditions of the award, reporting requirements, effective date of the award, budget period for which support is given, and total project period for which support is provided.

8. Grants to successful applications will be awarded by September 30, 2003.

G. Type and Frequency of Post-Award Reporting Requirements

All grantees will be required to submit semi-annual progress and fiscal reports as well as a final report.

Part II: Priority Area 1.01 Head Start Graduate Student Research Grants

Eligible Applicants: Institutions of higher education on behalf of *doctoral-*