

their efforts to fulfill their parental roles and provides for their involvement in implementing the Head Start program. Another goal of Head Start is to strengthen community supports for families with young children while they are working towards employment and self-sufficiency.

In an attempt to ensure high quality services to children and their families, Head Start has conducted many demonstration projects, provided grantees with training and technical assistance, and given grantees funds to implement their own training efforts. For example, Head Start supported the creation of the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential designed for early childhood development teaching staff, implemented the Head Start Teaching Centers, and developed other innovative projects.

Head Start-HBCU partnerships is closely aligned with the Head Start tradition of creating innovative programs of working with low-income children and their families. Since 1990, Head Start has worked with a number of HBCUs. In 1990, Alabama A & M and LeMoyne-Owen were funded. The University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, North Carolina Central University, Jackson State University, and Texas Southern University were funded in 1992. Thirty-two HBCUs were funded by the partnership grant between FY1997 and FY2001. (See Appendix A for a listing of these HBCUs).

In the 1998 reauthorization of the Head Start Act, a key priority of Congress and the Administration was to continue to improve Head Start program quality and accountability. A number of provisions were included in the new law to achieve these goals, including new education performance standards and measures, expansion of program monitoring to incorporate evidence of progress on outcomes-based measures, expanded funding to upgrade program quality and staff compensation, and higher education standards for Head Start teachers. Among these provisions is the requirement that, by September 30, 2003, at least half of all Head Start teachers in center-based programs must have an AA, BA or advanced degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or in a related field with preschool teaching experience.

The Head Start Bureau is providing a variety of forms of assistance to local Head Start programs to implement these legislative mandates. For example, to enhance the numbers of teachers with degrees in early childhood education, grantees received \$43,000,000 in funding in 1999 and an additional \$43,000,000 in 2000 to increase teacher

salaries and expand access to higher education courses and degree programs. Currently, Head Start-State Collaboration Offices and training and technical assistance providers help Head Start programs work with higher education institutions on challenges such as linking training obtained in conjunction with the Child Development Associate credential with academic credit and courses leading to AA and BA degrees in early childhood education.

In January 2001, the President signed into law the "No Child Left Behind Act" to make the education of every child in America one of the country's top priorities. The Act seeks to ensure that public schools teach children what they need to know to be successful in life and that they also set high education standards in the classroom. In his 2002 State of the Union address, the President indicated the need to prepare our children to read and succeed in school, including the improvement of Head Start and early childhood development programs. In response to these goals, the White House has developed an early childhood initiative, which is built on raising the bar for Head Start Education methods that create a better learning environment and improved outcomes for children. In his announcement of the Good Start, Grow Smart Early Childhood Initiative in April 2002, the President identified children's early literacy as a key focus for Head Start program improvement. In this initiative, the President presented three areas of focus for Head Start: (1) Strengthening Head Start programs; (2) partnering with states to improve early childhood education, and (3) providing information to teachers, caregivers, and parents. The Head Start Bureau quickly responded to the President's mandate by developing the Strategic Teacher Education Project (STEP) in June 2002. The purpose of Project STEP is to ensure that all Head Start teachers engage in research-based strategies to support children's early literacy and positive social and emotional development, which, in turn, will lead to positive child outcomes and school readiness.

All project applications must address one of the following priority areas:

1. Partnerships to increase the number of center-based teachers with two-year and four-year degrees in early childhood education and
2. Partnerships to increase the competency of Head Start staff in building quality Head Start programs, particularly enhancing language development and social-emotional

development, as well as early literacy and assessing child outcomes.

Part II. Program Information and Requirements

A. Statutory Authority

The Head Start Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 9801 *et seq.*

B. Eligible Applicants

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) as defined in the amended version of the Higher Education Act of 1965, codified at 20 U.S.C. 1061(2), are institutions established prior to 1964 whose principle mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans, and must satisfy section 322 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. Institutions which meet the definition of "Part B institution" in section 322 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 1061(2), shall be eligible for assistance under this announcement. Faith-based institutions planning to compete under this announcement must also meet the same eligibility criteria as other applicants. HBCUs that are currently funded under the Head Start Partnership with HBCUs and whose funding will end after 2003 (*i.e.*, 2004 and 2005) are not eligible to apply under this announcement. These institutions are listed in Appendix A.

Faith-based institutions are encouraged to submit with their applications the optional survey located under "Grant Manuals and Forms" at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofsf/forms.htm>.

C. Project Duration

Awards will be made on a competitive basis and will be for a one-year budget period. The total project period will be for five years. Applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the one-year budget period, but within the five-year project period, will be considered on a noncompetitive basis subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding is in the best interest of the Government.

D. Federal Share of Project Costs

It is anticipated that up to \$1,500,000 in ACF funds will be available annually. The maximum Federal share for each project is not to exceed \$150,000 per year per project.

E. Number of Projects To Be Funded

It is anticipated that up to 10 projects will be funded.