

monitoring to incorporate evidence of progress on outcome-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 nationwide must have an AA, BA, or advanced degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE), or in a related field with pre-school teaching experience. A degree in a field related to early childhood education means a program of study that includes six or more courses in early childhood education and/or child development. Teachers who have degrees in related fields must also have experience teaching pre-school children.

The Head Start Bureau is providing a variety of forms of assistance to local Head Start programs to implement these new legislative mandates. For example, to support increasing the numbers of teachers with degrees in early childhood education, grantees received \$43,000,000 in funding in Fiscal Year 2000 to increase teacher salaries and expand access to higher education courses and degree programs. Additionally, all Head Start grantees are allowed to use a portion of program funds awarded to provide staff development training to all Head Start staff.

In addition to these efforts, Head Start-State Collaboration Offices and training and technical assistance providers will help Head Start programs work with institutions of higher education 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 standards. 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 through researched methods that create a better learning environment and improve 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.

Under this announcement, HEHLSPs must form a partnership with one or more Head Start/Migrant Head Start/Early Head Start grantees or delegate agencies, to develop age-appropriate and culturally appropriate curriculums and provide education and/or training to Head Start staff. The partnership agreements must be beneficial to both the HEHLSPs and the participating Head Start grantees.

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 in enhancing language development, early literacy, and social-emotional development, as well as assessing child outcomes. The area of early literacy includes supporting non-English speaking children in making progress in both the home language and English.

## **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**

Institutions, including faith-based institutions, of higher education with experience and capability in educating and preparing professionals to work effectively with Hispanic/Latino young children and families are eligible to apply. Institutions that are currently funded under the Head Start-Higher Education Hispanic/Latino Service

Partnerships are not eligible to apply under this announcement. These institutions are listed in Appendix A. Faith-based institutions planning to compete under this announcement must meet the same eligibility criteria as other applicants. Private, non-profit institutions are encouraged to submit with their applications the optional survey located under "Grant Manuals & Forms" at [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/forms.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/forms.htm).

### **C. Project Duration**

This announcement is soliciting applications for project periods of up to five (5) years. Awards, on a competitive basis, will be for a one (1) year budget period. Applications for continuation grants funded under these awards beyond the one-year budget, but within the five-year project period, will be reviewed in subsequent years on a non-competitive basis subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory performance by the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be 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.

### **F. Matching Requirement**

There are no matching funds requirements, however applicants are encouraged to provide non-Federal contributions to the project.

## **Part III. Application Requirements**

The following Uniform Project Description (UPD) has been approved by OMB under control number 0970-0139.

### **A. Purpose**

The project description provides a major means by which an application is evaluated and ranked to compete with other applications for available assistance. The project description should be concise and complete and should address the activity for which Federal funds are being requested. Supporting documents should be included where they can present information clearly and succinctly. In preparing your project description, all information requested through each specific evaluation criteria should be provided. Awarding offices use this and other information in making their