

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**[CFDA No.: 84.902A]****The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Redesign Program; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 1997**

Purpose of Program: NAEP provides information on the educational achievement of school children. For FY 1997, the Secretary encourages applicants to propose ideas for its redesign that focus on innovative methods for conducting the state and national components of NAEP for the year 2000 and beyond.

Eligible Applicants: Public, private, for-profit, and non-profit institutions, agencies, and other qualified organizations or consortia of such institutions, agencies, and organizations.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: February 6, 1997.

Applications Available: December 20, 1996.

Available Funds: Up to \$750,000 can be made available in fiscal year 1997 for these projects.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$50,000 to \$150,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$125,000.

Estimated Number of Awards: 6.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: 3 months.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) 34 CFR Parts 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86; (b) The regulations in 34 CFR Part 700 (Standards for the Conduct and Evaluation of Activities Carried out by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)—Evaluation of Applications for Grants and Cooperative Agreements and Proposals for Contracts); and (c) The regulations in 34 CFR Part 98 (Students Rights in Research, Experimental Activities, and Testing).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Assessment of Educational Progress is authorized by Section 411 of the National Education Statistics Act of 1994, Title IV of the Improving

America's Schools Act (20 U.S.C. 9010). Section 412 (20 U.S.C. sections 9011) provides for the establishment of the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). The law requires NAGB, among other responsibilities, to formulate the policy guidelines for NAEP and select the assessment methodology used. Copies of these guidelines are available from the Department.

NAGB policy guidelines require a redesign of the NAEP for the year 2000. This grant announcement is soliciting applications for the development of innovative ideas to improve the NAEP design in any or all of the seven areas listed under the priorities section of this notice.

Priorities: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) and 20 U.S.C. sections 9010–9011, the Secretary is particularly interested in applications that meet one or more of the seven invitational priorities listed in this notice. However, under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1), an application that meets one or more of these invitational priorities does not receive competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

Invitational Priorities. The Secretary encourages projects that will contribute to the redesign of NAEP by proposing new strategies for conducting the state and national components of NAEP for the year 2000 and beyond. The Secretary is particularly interested in projects that focus on innovative methods in one or more of the following priority areas:

Invitational Priority 1—Sampling schemes that minimize school sample size and maximize efficiency.

Invitational Priority 2—Data collection procedures that minimize burden on students, teachers, and schools while maximizing the information available to the public on the performance and related contextual data of school children.

Invitational Priority 3—Scoring procedures for open-ended and constructed response items that are cost-effective, utilizing the latest technologies while maintaining high scorer reliability.

Invitational Priority 4—Psychometric procedures that maximize test reliability while minimizing analytic complexity and processing time.

Invitational Priority 5—Reporting techniques that inform educators, parents and leaders to take actions to improve their schools using creative analytic procedures.

Invitational Priority 6—Development of methods to improve the collection of contextual information (such as socioeconomic status and home and community educational emphasis) to explain the results of educational attainment for nations, regions, and jurisdictions.

Invitational Priority 7—Development of innovative means to measure cognitive skills related to subject matter.

Selection Criteria: The Secretary selects from the criteria in 34 CFR 700.30(e) to evaluate applications for new grants under this competition. Under 34 CFR 700.30(a), the Secretary will announce in the application package the evaluation criteria selected for this competition and the maximum weight assigned to each criterion.

For Applications or Information Contact: Steven Gorman, U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW., Room 404G, Washington, D.C. 20208–5653. Telephone: (202) 219–1761, Internet: (sgorman@inet.ed.gov). Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

Information about the Department's funding opportunities, including copies of application notices for discretionary grant competitions, can be viewed on the Department's electronic bulletin board (ED Board), telephone (202) 260–9950; on the Internet Gopher Server (at gopher://gcs.ed.gov); or on the World Wide Web (at <http://gcs.ed.gov>). However, the official application notice for a discretionary grant competition is the notice published in the Federal Register.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 9010–9011.

Dated: December 3, 1996.

Charles E. Hansen,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement.

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