

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education; Overview Information; Improving Literacy Through School Libraries Program; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2006

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.364A.

Dates: Applications Available: February 10, 2006. *Deadline for Transmittal of Applications:* April 11, 2006. *Deadline for Intergovernmental Review:* June 12, 2006.

Eligible Applicants: Local educational agencies (LEAs) in which at least 20 percent of the students served by the LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line based on the most recent satisfactory data available from the U.S. Census Bureau at the time this notice is published. These data are Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates for school districts for income year 2003. A list of LEAs with their family poverty rates (based on these Census Bureau data) is posted on our Web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/lsl/eligibility.html>.

Estimated Available Funds: \$18,901,586. Contingent upon the availability of funds and quality of applications, the Secretary may make additional awards in FY 2007 from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$30,000–\$300,000.

Note: Actual award amounts will be based on the number of schools and students served by the project.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$190,000.

Estimated Number of Awards: 100.

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

Project Period: Up to 12 months.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of this program is to improve student reading skills and academic achievement by providing students with increased access to up-to-date school library materials; well-equipped, technologically advanced school library media centers; and well-trained, professionally certified school library media specialists.

Priority: Under this competition we are particularly interested in applications that address the following priority.

Invitational Priority: For FY 2006 and any subsequent year in which we make

awards based on the list of unfunded applicants from this competition, this priority is an invitational priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give an application that meets this invitational priority a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

This priority is: Under this priority the Secretary strongly encourages applicants to focus their efforts on elementary schools in order to maximize the impact of the project on improving reading achievement.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 6383.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The notice of final clarification of eligible local activities, published in the **Federal Register** on April 5, 2004 (69 FR 17894).

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds:

\$18,901,586. Contingent upon the availability of funds and quality of applications, the Secretary may make additional awards in FY 2007 from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$30,000–\$300,000.

Note: Actual award amounts will be based on the number of schools and students served by the project.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$190,000.

Estimated Number of Awards: 100.

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

Project Period: Up to 12 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* LEAs in which at least 20 percent of the students served by the LEA are from families with incomes below the poverty line based on the most recent satisfactory data available from the U.S. Census Bureau at the time this notice is published. These data are Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates for school districts for income year 2003. A list of LEAs with their family poverty rates (based on these Census Bureau data) is posted on our Web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/lsl/eligibility.html>.

2. *Cost Sharing or Matching:* This program does not involve cost sharing or matching, but does involve supplement-not-supplant funding provisions. Funds made available under this program must be used to supplement, and not supplant, other

Federal, State, and local funds expended to carry out activities relating to library, technology, or professional development activities (20 U.S.C. 6383(i)).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package:* You may obtain an application package via the Internet or from the Education Publications Center (ED Pubs). To obtain a copy via the Internet use the following addresses: <http://www.grants.gov> or <http://www.ed.gov/programs/lsl/applicant.html>. To obtain a copy from ED Pubs, write or call the following: ED Pubs, P.O. Box 1398, Jessup, MD 20794–1398. Telephone (toll free): 1–877–433–7827. Fax: (301) 470–1244. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call (toll free): 1–877–576–7734.

You may also contact ED Pubs at its Web site: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html> or you may contact ED Pubs at its e-mail address: edpubs@inet.ed.gov.

If you request an application from ED Pubs, be sure to identify this competition as follows: CFDA number 84.364A.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) by contacting the program contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** in section VII of this notice.

2. *Content and Form of Application Submission:* Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for this program. An Eligibility Form is included in the application package. You must fill out the Eligibility Form, following the instructions provided in the application package.

Page Limit: The application narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. You must limit the narrative to the equivalent of no more than 15 pages, using the following standards:

- A “page” is 8.5” × 11”, on one side only, with 1” margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.
- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger.

The page limit does not apply to the forms, budget section, budget justification, assurances and certifications, one-page abstract, endnotes, or resumes. However, you must include all of the application narrative in the narrative section. Charter Schools and State Administered Schools must include some form of documentation from their State Educational Agency (SEA) confirming eligibility for this program. This documentation is not counted toward the page limit.

Our reviewers will not read any pages of your application that:

- Exceed the page limit if you apply these standards; or
- Exceed the equivalent of the page limit if you apply other standards.

Appendices to the narrative are not permitted, with the exception of resumes and endnotes. None of the material sent as appendices to the narrative, with the exception of resumes and endnotes, will be sent to the reviewers.

3. Submission Dates and Times:

Applications Available: February 10, 2006.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: April 11, 2006.

Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically or by mail or hand delivery if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, please refer to section IV. 6. *Other Submission Requirements in this notice.*

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: June 12, 2006.

4. *Intergovernmental Review:* This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this program.

5. *Funding Restrictions:* We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

6. *Other Submission Requirements:* Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section.

a. *Electronic Submission of Applications.* Applications for grants under the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program-CFDA Number 84.364A must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site at: <http://www.grants.gov>. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided later in this section under *Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement*.

You may access the electronic grant application for Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program at: <http://www.grants.gov>. You must search for the downloadable application package for this program by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search.

Please note the following:

- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.
- Applications received by Grants.gov are time and date stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted, and must be date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not consider your application if it is date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.
- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application

deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this competition to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov at <http://e-Grants.ed.gov/help/GrantsgovSubmissionProcedures.pdf>.

- To submit your application via Grants.gov, you must complete all of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process (see <http://www.Grants.gov/GetStarted>). These steps include (1) registering your organization, (2) registering yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), and (3) getting authorized as an AOR by your organization. Details on these steps are outlined in the Grants.gov 3-Step Registration Guide (see <http://www.grants.gov/assets/GrantsgovCoBrandBrochure8x11.pdf>). You also must provide on your application the same D-U-N-S Number used with this registration. Please note that the registration process may take five or more business days to complete, and you must have completed all registration steps to allow you to successfully submit an application via Grants.gov.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information typically included on the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424), Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications. You must attach any narrative sections of your application as files in a .DOC (document), .RTF (rich text), or .PDF (Portable Document) format. If you upload a file type other than the three file types specified above or submit a password protected file, we will not review that material.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page limit requirements described in this notice.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. The Department will retrieve your application from

Grants.gov and send you a second confirmation by e-mail that will include a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).

- We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues with the Grants.gov System: If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically, or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions as described elsewhere in this notice. If you submit an application after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the deadline date, please contact the person listed elsewhere in this notice under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number (if available). We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that that problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

Note: Extensions referred to in this section apply only to the unavailability of or technical problems with the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement: You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through the Grants.gov system because:

- You do not have access to the Internet; or
 - You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system;
- and
- No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days or, if the fourteenth calendar day before the application deadline date

falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the two grounds for an exception prevent you from using the Internet to submit your application. If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to: Irene Harwarth, U.S. Department of Education, room 3W227, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202-6200. Fax: (202) 260-8969.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

b. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail. If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier), your application to the Department. You must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the applicable following address:

By mail through the U.S. Postal Service:
U.S. Department of Education,
Application Control Center,
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.364A),
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.,
Washington, DC 20202-4260;

or

By mail through a commercial carrier:
U.S. Department of Education,
Application Control Center—Stop
4260, Attention: (CFDA Number
84.364A), 7100 Old Landover Road,
Landover, MD 20785-1506.

Regardless of which address you use, you must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark,
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service,
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier, or
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark, or
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

c. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery. If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.364A), 550 12th Street, SW., Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-4260.

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays and Federal holidays.

Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications: If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department:

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and—if not provided by the Department—in Item 4 of the Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424) the CFDA number—and suffix letter, if any—of the competition under which you are submitting your application.

(2) The Application Control Center will mail a grant application receipt acknowledgment to you. If you do not receive the grant application receipt acknowledgment within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: We use the following statutory selection criteria to evaluate applications for new grants under this competition. The maximum score for all of these criteria is 100 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses.

We evaluate an application by determining how well the proposed project meets the following criteria:

(a) *Meeting the purpose of the statute* (10 points). How well the proposed project addresses the intended outcome of the statute: To improve student reading skills and academic achievement by providing students with increased access to up-to-date school library materials; a well-equipped,

technologically advanced school library media center; and well-trained, professionally certified school library media specialists.

(b) *Need for school library resources* (10 points). How well the applicant demonstrates the need for school library media improvement, based on the age and condition of school library media resources, including book collections; access of school library media centers to advanced technology; and the availability of well-trained, professionally certified school library media specialists, in schools served by the applicant.

(c) *Use of funds* (50 points). How well the applicant will use the funds made available through the grant to carry out one or more of the following activities that meet its demonstrated needs:

(1) Acquiring up-to-date school library media resources, including books.

(2) Acquiring and using advanced technology, incorporated into the curricula of the school, to develop and enhance students' skills in retrieving and making use of information and in critical thinking.

(3) Facilitating Internet links and other resource-sharing networks among schools and school library media centers, and public and academic libraries.

(4) Providing professional development (as described in the notice of final clarification of eligible local activities published in the **Federal Register** on April 5, 2004 (69 FR 17894)) for school library media specialists that is designed to improve literacy in grades K–3, and for school library media specialists as described in section 1222(d)(2) of the ESEA and providing activities that foster increased collaboration between school library media specialists, teachers, and administrators.

(5) Providing students with access to school libraries during non-school hours, including the hours before and after school, during weekends, and during summer vacation periods.

(d) *Use of scientifically based research* (10 points). How well the applicant will use programs and materials that are grounded in scientifically based research, as defined in section 9101(37) of the ESEA, in carrying out one or more of the activities described under criterion (c).

(e) *Broad-based involvement and coordination* (10 points). How well the applicant will extensively involve

school library media specialists, teachers, administrators, and parents in the proposed project activities and effectively coordinate the funds and activities provided under this program with other literacy, library, technology, and professional development funds and activities.

(f) *Evaluation of quality and impact* (10 points). How well the applicant will collect and analyze data on the quality and impact of the proposed project activities, including the extent to which the availability of, the access to, and the use of up-to-date school library media resources in the elementary schools and secondary schools served by the applicant increase; and the impact of the project on the reading skills of students.

2. *Review and Selection Process*: An additional factor we consider in selecting an application for an award is the equitable distribution of grants across geographic regions and among LEAs serving urban and rural areas.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. *Award Notices*: If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN). We may also notify you informally.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements*: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. *Reporting*: At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary.

4. *Performance Measures*: In response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the Department developed two measures for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program. These measures gauge improvement in student achievement and resources in the

schools and districts served by the Improving Literacy Through School Libraries program by assessing increases in: (1) The percentage of participating schools and districts that exceed State adequate yearly progress targets under ESEA Title I for reading achievement for all students; and (2) The school library media collections at participating schools, compared to schools not participating in the program.

The Department will collect data for these measures from grantees' annual performance reports and other data sources.

VII. Agency Contact

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Irene Harwarth, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3W227, Washington, DC 20202–6200. Telephone: (202) 401–3751 or by e-mail: Irene.Harwarth@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1–800–877–8339.

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 in this section.

VIII. Other Information

Electronic Access to This Document: You may view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at the following site: <http://www.ed.gov/news/fedregister>.

To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at this site. If you have questions about using PDF, call the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), toll free, at 1–888–293–6498; or in the Washington, DC, area at (202) 512–1530.

Note: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. Free Internet access to the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations is available on GPO Access at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html>.

Dated: February 7, 2006.

Henry L. Johnson,

Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education.

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