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Fiscal Year 2006

**Application for New Grants Under
the Smaller Learning Communities Program**

CFDA 84.215L



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If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s), suggestions for improving this form, or comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form please write directly to: Gregory Dennis, U.S. Department of Education, OESE/AITQ, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, FB-6, Room 3W243, Washington, DC, 20202-6200. Telephone: (202) 205-3784. Email: Gregory.Dennis@ed.gov.

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United States Department of Education
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT AND TEACHER QUALITY PROGRAMS

Dear Colleague:

Thank you for your interest in the Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) program, administered by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education. This information is for applicants seeking Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 funding under the SLC program, authorized under Title V, Part D, Subpart 4 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. 7249), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110). The SLC program awards discretionary grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) to support the implementation of SLCs and activities to improve student academic achievement in large public high schools with enrollments of 1,000 or more students.

Please take the time to review the applicable priorities, selection criteria, and all of the application instructions thoroughly. An application will not be evaluated for funding if the applicant does not comply with all of the procedural rules that govern the submission of the application or the application does not contain the information required under the program (EDGAR §75.216 (b) and (c)).

For this competition, the program has established a new **absolute priority** from the notice of final priority, requirements, and selection criteria for fiscal year (FY) 2006 and subsequent years' funds published in the Federal Register on May XX, 2007 and a new **competitive priority** from the notice of final priorities for discretionary grant programs published in the Federal Register on October 11, 2006 (71 FR 60045). Additional information can be found within the application package.

For this competition it is **mandatory** for applicants to use the new government-wide website, Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>), to apply. Please note that the Grants.gov site works differently than the U.S. Department of Education's e-Application System. We strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with Grants.gov and strongly recommend that you register early and submit early.

Using FY 2006 funds, the Department expects to award \$86,315,475 for new grants under this competition. We will award discretionary grants on a competitive basis for a project period of up to 60 months. Grants will be awarded in September.

Please visit our program website at www.ed.gov/programs/slcp for further information. If you have any questions about the program after reviewing the application package, please contact Gregory Dennis at (202) 205-3784 (e-mail: smallerlearningcommunities@ed.gov).

Joseph Conaty
Director

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible to receive a grant?

Local educational agencies (LEAs), including schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education (formerly the Bureau of Indian Affairs) and educational service agencies, applying on behalf of up to 8 large public high schools, are eligible to apply for a grant. An educational service agency is eligible if it can show in its application that the entity or entities with governing authority over the eligible high schools on whose behalf the educational service agency is applying supports the application.

In addition, we require that an LEA applying for a grant under this competition apply only on behalf of a high school or high schools for which it has governing authority, unless the LEA is an educational service agency that includes in its application evidence that the entity that has governing authority over the eligible high school supports the application. An LEA, however, may form a consortium with another LEA and submit a joint application for funds. The consortium must follow the procedures for group applications described in 34 CFR 75.127 through 75.129 in EDGAR. An LEA is eligible for only one grant, whether the LEA applies independently or as part of a consortium.

A “large high school” is a school that includes grades 11 and 12 and enrolls at least 1,000 students in grades 9 and above. Applicants may work independently or in partnership with other public agencies and/or private non-profit organizations. A group of LEAs is also eligible to apply, following procedures specified in 34 CFR 75.127-75.129 of EDGAR. For the purposes of this program, an individual LEA or group application may not request funding for more than 8 eligible schools. LEAs must include the name(s) of the eligible school(s) and the number of students enrolled in each school.

Applicants may provide eligibility data, based upon enrollment during the current school year or the most recently completed school year. We will not accept applications from LEAs applying on behalf of schools that are being constructed and do not have an active student enrollment at the time of application.

May an LEA apply on behalf of high schools that previously received SLC funds?

An LEA may apply only on behalf of a school or schools that is not included in an SLC implementation grant that has a performance period that extends beyond the current fiscal year (September 30, 2007).

High schools that are included in an active SLC implementation grant are not eligible to receive funds under this competition. This includes not only high schools included in grants awarded in 2005 and 2006, but also high schools included in grants awarded in 2004 if the grant recipient obtains a no-cost extension that extends the project period of the grant beyond September 30, 2007 under Part 74.25 of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).

What is the duration and maximum amount of the grant awards?

For a 60-month grant, an LEA may receive, on behalf of a single school, \$1,250,000 to \$1,750,000, depending upon the size of the school. An LEA applying on behalf of a group of eligible schools may request up to \$14,000,000 per grant depending on the size and number of schools. LEAs must stay within the maximum school allocations when determining their group award request. In order to ensure sufficient grant funds at the local level, an LEA may not request funds for more than 8 schools under a single application.

The following chart provides the ranges of awards per high school size for 60-month grants:

SLC Grant Award Ranges	
Student Enrollment	Award Ranges Per School
<i>1,000 - 2,000 Students</i>	<i>\$1,000,000 - \$1,250,000</i>
<i>2,001 - 3,000 Students</i>	<i>\$1,000,000 - \$1,500,000</i>
<i>3,001 and Up Students</i>	<i>\$1,000,000 - \$1,750,000</i>

The actual size of awards would be based on a number of factors, including the scope, quality, and comprehensiveness of the proposed project, and the range of awards indicated in the application.

Applications that request more funds than the maximum amounts specified for any school or for the total grant would not be read as part of the regular application process. However, if, after the Secretary selects applications to be funded, it appears that additional funds remain available, the Secretary may choose to read those additional applications that requested funds exceeding the maximum amounts specified. If the Secretary chooses to fund any of those additional applications, applicants will be required to work with the Department to revise their proposed budgets to fit within the appropriate funding range.

One of the large public high schools in our district is in corrective action and we want to reconstitute it as a set of new, autonomous small schools. Can SLC grant funds be used for this purpose?

Yes. Grant funds may be used to support the creation or expansion of an SLC or SLCs within a large public high school. This includes projects that propose to reconstitute a large public high school as a set of new, autonomous small schools. At the time of application and award, however, all schools included in the application must meet the definition of “large high school.” The reconstitution of the large school must take place after the award has been made.

We want to close a large public high school in our district and replace it with several new small schools. Can SLC grant funds be used for this purpose?

Yes. SLC grant funds may be used for projects that propose to close a large public high school and replace it with several new small schools. At the time of application and award, however, all schools included in the application must meet the definition of “large high school.”

Must the new small schools that we create be located in the same facility as the large public school that we reconstituted or closed?

No. The new small schools may be located on the same site as the large high school or in other locations.

You require projects to include all students by the fifth year of the grant. Does this mean that we must assign all students to academies, “houses,” or other smaller organizational units by the end of the grant period?

No. We have defined an SLC as an environment in which a group of teachers and other adults within the school knows the needs, interests, and aspirations of each student well, closely monitors each student's progress, and provides the academic and other support each student needs to succeed. We do not prescribe how an applicant creates the environment of strong academic and personal support described by the SLC definition, or how it provides this environment for all students.

While we expect that SLC projects will include a structural component, such as an academy, we do not require projects to assign all students to academies, “houses,” or other smaller organizational units. Depending upon the circumstances and needs of a particular school and its students, there may be a variety of ways to create an environment in which all students receive strong personal and academic support. Thus, for example, an applicant could propose a project that places all entering ninth graders in a freshman academy to support their transition to high school, and establish teacher advisories or mentoring programs to create an environment of academic and personal support for all students in the upper grades.

One of the selection criteria evaluates the extent to which an applicant has carried out sufficient planning and preparatory activities to enable it to implement the project during the 2007-08 school year. What kinds of implementation activities do you expect applicants to carry out during the 2007-08 school year?

Since it is likely that grants will be made after the start of the 2007-08 school year, we do not expect applicants to propose to implement immediately activities, such as creating freshman academies or other structures, that require changes in teacher assignments, student scheduling, and course offerings. Clearly, this is not feasible. However, there are a wide variety of other implementation activities that a grant recipient can carry out during the 2007-08 school year, such as professional development, piloting new curricula, and enhancing academic support services for students.

In designing their proposed projects, applicants should take the expected date of the grant award into account, and identify substantive activities that they will be able to carry out during the 2007-08 school year to support the implementation of their proposed projects.

Can our district use a portion of the grant for district-level activities, or must all of the funds be distributed to the high schools included in the application?

There is no limitation on the use of SLC grant funds for activities carried out at the district level, provided that these activities support the implementation of the project by the schools included in the application. While we use student enrollment in each high school included in an application to determine maximum grant award amounts, an LEA is not required to provide each school in an application with all of the funds that its enrollment generates.

Districts can play an important role in supporting the work of teachers and school administrators, and there are some activities that may be more appropriately or economically carried out at the district level. These activities could include, for example, implementing data and assessment systems and analytic tools that can be used by the staff of the schools included in the application to monitor student progress and improve instruction or providing curriculum pacing guides, sample lessons and other instructional supports. We leave to each applicant to decide how best to address the program requirements, priority, and selection criteria, including the amount of funds it proposes to use for

district-level activities that support the implementation of the project serving schools included in the application.

Funds may not be used, however, for district-level activities that serve schools that are not included in the application or for general, district-wide high school reform initiatives.

What priorities apply to this program?

There are two priorities for this program: an absolute priority from the notice of final priority, requirements, and selection criteria for fiscal year (FY) 2006 and subsequent years' funds published in the Federal Register on May XX, 2007 and a competitive priority from the notice of final priorities for discretionary grant programs published in the Federal Register on October 11, 2006 (71 FR 60045).

- **Absolute Priority.** For new awards made using FY 2006 funds and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet this priority. This priority is:

Preparing All Students to Succeed in Postsecondary Education and Careers. This priority supports projects that create or expand SLCs that are part of a comprehensive effort to prepare all students to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation. In order to meet this priority an applicant must demonstrate that, using SLC grant funds or other resources, it will:

- (1) Provide intensive interventions to assist students who enter high school with reading/language arts or mathematics skills that are significantly below grade level to “catch up” quickly and attain proficiency by the end of 10th grade;
 - (2) Enroll students in a coherent sequence of rigorous English language arts, mathematics, and science courses that will equip them with the skills and content knowledge needed to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation;
 - (3) Provide tutoring and other academic supports to help students succeed in rigorous academic courses;
 - (4) Deliver comprehensive guidance and academic advising to students and their parents that includes assistance in selecting courses and planning a program of study that will provide the academic preparation needed to succeed in postsecondary education, early and ongoing college awareness and planning activities, and help in identifying and applying for financial aid for postsecondary education; and
 - (5) Increase opportunities for students to earn postsecondary credit through Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, or dual credit programs.
- **Competitive Preference Priority.** Within this absolute priority, we give competitive preference to applications that address the following priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2) (i) we award an additional 4 points to an application that meets this priority. This priority is:

School Districts with Schools in Need of Improvement, Corrective Action, or Restructuring. Projects that help school districts implement academic and structural interventions in schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

What additional information must an applicant include with the application?

- *SLC Grant Application Summary Page*

Applicants must identify the schools included in the application, and their student enrollment.

- *Student Placement*

Applicants must include a description of how students will be selected or placed in an SLC and an assurance that students will not be placed according to ability or any other measure, but will be placed at random or by student/parent choice and not pursuant to testing or other judgments.

- *Performance Indicators*

Applicants must identify in their application specific performance indicators and annual performance objectives for each of these indicators. At a minimum, applicants must use the following performance indicators to measure the progress of each school:

1. The percentage of students who score at the proficient and advanced levels on the reading/language arts and mathematics assessments used by the State to determine whether a school has made adequate yearly progress under part A of title I of the ESEA, as well as these percentages disaggregated by subject matter and the following subgroups:
 - A. Major racial and ethnic groups.
 - B. Students with disabilities.
 - C. Students with limited English proficiency.
 - D. Economically disadvantaged students.
2. The school's graduation rate, as defined in the State's approved accountability plan for part A of title I of the ESEA.
3. The percentage of graduates who enroll in postsecondary education, advanced training, or a registered apprenticeship program in the semester following high school graduation.

In addition, applicants may identify other appropriate indicators it wishes to use to evaluate the progress of the project.

- *School Report Cards*

Applicants must provide, for each school included in the application, the most recent "report card" produced by the State or the LEA to inform the public about the characteristics of the school and its students, including information about student academic achievement and other student outcomes. These "report cards" must include, at a minimum, the following information that LEAs are required to report for each school under section 1111(h)(2)(B)(ii) of the ESEA:

1. Whether the school has been identified for school improvement; and
2. Information that shows how the academic assessments and other indicators of adequate yearly progress compare to those indicators for students in the LEA as a whole and also shows the performance of the school's students on statewide assessments.

- *Evaluation*
Applicants must provide an assurance that it will support an evaluation of the project that provides information to the project director and school personnel, and that will be useful in gauging the project's progress and in identifying areas for improvement. Each evaluation must include an annual report for each of the first four years of the project period and a final report that would be completed at the end of the fifth year of implementation and that will include information on implementation during the fifth year as well as information on the implementation of the project across the entire project period. In addition, we require that an independent third party whose role in the project is limited to conducting the evaluation conduct the evaluation.
- *Individual Resumes for Project Directors and Key Personnel*
Applicants must provide brief resumes or job descriptions for the project director and key personnel that describe their qualifications for the responsibilities they will carry out under the project.
- *Indirect Cost Agreement*
Applicants who propose to use SLC grant funds for indirect costs must include, as part of their applications, a copy of their approved indirect cost agreement.

What selection criteria apply to this competition?

The maximum score for all selection criteria is 100 points. The points or weights assigned to each criterion are indicated in parentheses.

Need for the Project (8)

In determining the need for the proposed project, we will consider the magnitude of the need for the services that will be provided and the activities that will be carried out by the proposed project.

Quality of the Project Design (25)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, we will consider the extent to which--

- (1) Teachers, school administrators, parents and community stakeholders support the proposed project and have been and will continue to be involved in its development and implementation;
- (2) The applicant has carried out sufficient planning and preparatory activities to enable it to implement the proposed project during the school year in which the grant award will be made;
- (3) School administrators, teachers, and other school employees will receive effective, ongoing technical assistance and support in implementing structural and instructional reforms;
- (4) The applicant will offer all students a coherent sequence of rigorous English language arts, mathematics, and science courses that will provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation; and
- (5) The proposed project is part of a districtwide strategy for high school redesign and strengthens the district's capacity to develop and implement smaller learning communities and improve student academic achievement as part of that strategy.

Quality of Project Services (45)

In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, we will consider the extent to which the proposed project is likely to be effective in--

(1) Creating an environment in which a core group of teachers and other adults within the school know the needs, interests, and aspirations of each student well, closely monitor each student's progress, and provide the academic and other support each student needs to succeed;

(2) Equipping all students with the reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science knowledge and skills they need to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation;

(3) Helping students who enter high school with reading/English language arts or mathematics skills that are significantly below grade-level "catch up" quickly and attain proficiency by the end of the 10th grade;

(4) Providing teachers with the professional development, coaching, regular opportunities for collaboration with peers, and other supports needed to implement a rigorous curriculum and provide high-quality instruction;

(5) Increasing the participation of students, particularly low-income students, in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual credit courses; and

(6) Increasing the percentage of students who enter postsecondary education in the semester following high school graduation.

Support for Implementation (17)

In determining the adequacy of the support the applicant will provide for implementation of the proposed project, we will consider the extent to which--

(1) The management plan is likely to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget and includes clearly defined responsibilities and detailed timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;

(2) The project director and other key personnel are qualified to carry out their responsibilities, and their time commitments are appropriate and adequate to implement the SLC project effectively;

(3) The applicant will support the proposed project with funds provided under other Federal or State programs and local cash or in-kind resources; and

(4) The requested grant amount and the project costs are sufficient to attain project goals and reasonable in relation to the objectives and design of the project.

Quality of the SLC Project Evaluation (5)

In determining the quality of the proposed project evaluation to be conducted by an independent, third-party evaluator, we consider the extent to which--

(1) The evaluation will provide timely, regular, and useful feedback to the LEA and the participating schools on the success and progress of implementation, and identify areas for needed improvement; and

(2) The independent evaluator is qualified to conduct the evaluation.

What regulations apply to this program?

The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 97, 98, and 99; the NFP published in the Federal Register on April 28, 2005 (70 FR 22233); the notice of final priorities published in the Federal Register on October 11, 2006 (71 FR 60045); and the notice of final priority, requirements, and selection criteria published in the **May xx,** 2007 issue of the Federal Register.

Who should I contact for more information?

Please contact Gregory Dennis at (202) 205-2784 or by e-mail at smallerlearningcommunities@ed.gov

By when must applications be submitted?

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 **July XX, 2007**.

Technical Assistance Workshops for Prospective Applicants

We will hold three technical assistance workshops to assist prospective applicants who are interested in submitting applications in this year's SLC grant competition. We will present information about the SLC program, the absolute and competitive priorities, selection criteria, program requirements, the submission of applications through Grants.gov, and other information.

Washington, DC

May 16, 2007, 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

George Mason University, Arlington Campus
3401 Fairfax Drive, Room 329
Arlington, Virginia 22201

Directions:

<http://www.gmu.edu/welcome/Directions-to-GMU.html#arlington>

Public transportation:

Virginia Square/George Mason University Metro station (Orange line).

Phoenix, Arizona

May 22, 2007, 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

El Mercado, Arizona State University downtown campus
502 East Monroe St., Building C, Room C340-50
Phoenix, Arizona 85004

Directions and public transportation:

<http://www.asu.edu/xed/asudt/generalinfo.html>

Chicago, Illinois

May 24, 2007, 9:00 am – 3:30 pm

University Center
525 South State Street
Loop and River Rooms
Chicago, Illinois 60605

Directions and public transportation:

<http://www.universitycenter.com/conferences/general/location-map.html>

For more information, contact: Fayra Teeters, (503) 275-9623, teetersf@nwrel.org

Bibliography

High School Improvement, Preparation for Postsecondary Education, and Smaller Learning Communities

Disclaimer: The resources listed below provide relevant information on high school improvement strategies, preparation for postsecondary education, the implementation of smaller learning communities, and related topics. They are provided for your convenience. These publications represent just a few examples of the numerous relevant reference materials currently available to the public that may be useful to you, and their inclusion is not intended to reflect their importance. The inclusion of these resources should not be construed or interpreted as an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any views expressed, or products and services offered by the individuals or entities that produced these resources, or of the organizations or businesses that may be cited in these resources. *You are not required to use these resources in preparing your application, nor will you be given additional points for using them.*

High school reform (general)

Achieve, Inc. (2004). *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts*. Washington, DC: Achieve, Inc.

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<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0502ACTIONAGENDA.pdf>

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High-achieving high schools

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<http://www.springboardschools.org/research/studies/HSBP-ES.pdf>

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http://www.just4kids.org/en/files/Publication-High_Quality_High_Schools-03-07-06.pdf

Implementing a district-wide strategy for high school redesign

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<http://www.jff.org/Documents/StrategicToolkit.pdf>

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Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and dual credit courses

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Smaller learning communities and other personalization strategies to support students

Smaller Learning Communities Tutorials

<http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sslc/tutorials/>

Produced by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, these tutorials are designed to address the needs of schools and districts planning to implement, and those in the midst of implementing, smaller learning communities. Five topics are featured: (1) Measurable Goals and Objectives; (2) Evaluation; (3) Parent Engagement; (4) Scheduling; and (5) Instructional Improvement Teams.

Smaller Learning Communities Resource Warehouse

<http://www.slresourcewarehouse.com/index.cfm>

The Smaller Learning Communities Resource Warehouse includes implementation tools, information, and how-to suggestions. Most of the resources have been created by SLCs during their implementation process and are being made available to all current and prospective grantees. It was developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in partnership with DTI Associates, a Haverstick Company, under contract with the U.S. Department of Education.

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Application Transmittal Instructions

Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted electronically, unless you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement in accordance with the instructions from the Federal Register found in this application.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this application, 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.

Attention Electronic Applicants

Please note that you must follow the Application Procedures as described in the Federal Register notice announcing the grant competition.

This program requires the electronic submission of applications--specific requirements and instructions can be found in the Federal Register notice. **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.**

Applications Submitted Electronically

You must submit your grant application through the Internet using the software provided on the Grants.gov Web site (<http://www.grants.gov>) by 4:30 p.m. (Washington, D.C. time) on the application deadline date. If you submit your application through the Internet via the Grants.gov Web site, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment when we receive your application.

For more information on using Grants.gov, please refer to the Notice Inviting Applications that was published in the Federal Register, the Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips document found in the application package instructions, and visit <http://www.grants.gov>.

According to the instructions found in the Federal Register notice, those requesting and qualifying for an Exception to the electronic submission requirement may submit an application via mail, commercial carrier or by hand delivery.

Applications Sent 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 84.215L)
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 84.215L)
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.

Applications Delivered by Hand:

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 84.215L)
550 12th Street, SW.
Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 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 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including 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.

Education Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants

Please note that the Grants.gov site works differently than the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) e-Application system. To facilitate your use of Grants.gov, this document includes important submission procedures you need to be aware of to ensure your application is received in a timely manner and accepted by the Department of Education.

- 1) **Register Early** – Grants.gov registration may take five or more business days to complete. You may begin working on your application while completing the registration process, but you cannot submit an application until all of the Registration steps are complete. For detailed information on the Registration Steps, please go to: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp. [Note: Your organization will need to update its Central Contractor Registry (CCR) registration annually.]
- 2) **Submit Early** – **We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the last day to submit your application. Grants.gov will put a date/time stamp on your application and then process it after it is fully uploaded.** The time it takes to upload an application will vary depending on a number of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection, and the time it takes Grants.gov to process the application will vary as well. If Grants.gov rejects your application (see step three below), you will need to resubmit successfully before 4:30 pm on the deadline date.

Note: To submit successfully, you must provide the DUNS number on your application that was used when your organization registered with the CCR (Central Contractor Registry).

- 3) **Verify Submission is OK** – You will want to verify that Grants.gov and the Department of Education receive your Grants.gov submission timely and that it was validated successfully. To see the date/time your application was received, login to Grants.gov and click on the Track My Application link. For a successful submission, the date/time received should be earlier than 4:30 p.m. on the deadline date, AND the application status should be: Validated, Received by Agency, or Agency Tracking Number Assigned.

If the date/time received is later than 4:30 p.m. Washington, D.C. time, on the closing date, your application is late. If your application has a status of "Received" it is still awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will either change to "Validated" or "Rejected with Errors." If the status is "Rejected with Errors," your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found on the Grants.gov site:

http://www.grants.gov/help/submit_application_faqs.jsp#10. For more detailed information on why an application may be rejected, you can review Application Error Tips

<http://www.grants.gov/section910/ApplicationErrorTips.pdf>. If you discover your application is late or has been rejected, please see the instructions below.

Note: You will receive a series of confirmations both online and via email about the status of your application. Please do not rely solely on e-mail to confirm whether your application has been received timely and validated successfully.

Submission Problems – What should you do?

You **must** submit an electronic application before 4:30 p.m., unless you follow the procedures in the Federal Register notice and 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. (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

If you have problems submitting to Grants.gov before the closing date, please contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 and obtain and keep a record of a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number or use the customer support available on the Web site: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_help.jsp.

If electronic submission is required, you must submit an electronic application before 4:30 p.m., unless you follow the procedures in the Federal Register notice and 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. (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

Helpful Hints When Working with Grants.gov

Please note, once you download an application from Grants.gov, you will be working offline and saving data on your computer. Please be sure to note where you are saving the Grants.gov file on your computer. You will need to logon to Grants.gov to upload and submit the application. **You must provide on your application the DUNS number that was used when your organization registered with the CCR.**

Please go to http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_help.jsp for help with Grants.gov. For additional tips related to submitting grant applications, please refer to the Grants.gov Submit Application FAQs found on the Grants.gov http://www.grants.gov/help/submit_application_faqs.jsp.

Dial-Up Internet Connections

When using a dial up connection to upload and submit your application, it can take significantly longer than when you are connected to the Internet with a high-speed connection, e.g. cable modem/DSL/T1. While times will vary depending upon the size of your application, it can take a few minutes to a few hours to complete your grant submission using a dial up connection. **If you do not have access to a high-speed connection and electronic submission is required, you may want to consider following the instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.** (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

MAC Users

If you do not have a Windows operating System, you will need to use the Citrix solution discussed on Grants.gov or a Windows Emulation program to submit an application using Grants.gov. For additional information, review the FAQs for non-windows users http://www.grants.gov/resources/download_software.jsp#non_window. Also, to view white paper for Macintosh users published by Pure Edge go to the following link: <http://www.grants.gov/section678/PureEdgeSupportforMacintosh.pdf>, and/or contact Grants.gov Customer Support (<http://www.grants.gov/contactus/contactus.jsp>) for more information. **If electronic submission is required and you are concerned about your ability to submit electronically as a non-windows user, please follow instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.** (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

Important Information for Microsoft Vista and Word Users

Please note that Grants.gov does not currently support the new Microsoft Vista Operating system. The PureEdge software used by Grants.gov for forms is not compatible with Vista.

In addition, the new version of Microsoft Word saves documents with the extension **.DOCX**. The Grants.gov system does not process Microsoft Word documents with the extension **.DOCX**. When submitting Microsoft Word attachments to Grants.gov, please use the version of Microsoft Word that ends in **.DOC**. If you have any questions regarding this matter please email the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.

Legal and Regulatory Information

Notice inviting applications for new awards using FY 2006 funds

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

Overview Information

Smaller Learning Communities Program

Notice inviting applications for new awards using fiscal year (FY) 2006 funds.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.215L.

Dates:

Applications Available: [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: [INSERT DATE 120 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) program awards discretionary grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) to support the implementation of SLCs and activities to improve student academic achievement in large public high schools with enrollments of 1,000 or more students. SLCs include structures such as freshman academies, multi-grade academies organized around career interests or other themes, “houses” in which small groups of students remain together throughout high school, and autonomous schools-within-a-school, as well as personalization strategies, such as student advisories, family advocate systems, and mentoring programs.

Priority: This priority is from the notice of final priority, requirements, and selection criteria for this program, published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register.

Absolute Priority: For new awards made using FY 2006 funds and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is:

Preparing All Students to Succeed in Postsecondary Education and Careers

This priority supports projects that create or expand SLCs that are part of a comprehensive effort to prepare all students to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation.

In order to meet this priority an applicant must demonstrate that, using SLC grant funds or other resources, it will:

(1) Provide intensive interventions to assist students who enter high school with reading/language arts or mathematics skills that are significantly below grade level to “catch up” quickly and attain proficiency by the end of 10th grade;

(2) Enroll students in a coherent sequence of rigorous English language arts, mathematics, and science courses that will equip them with the skills and content knowledge needed to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation;

(3) Provide tutoring and other academic supports to help students succeed in rigorous academic courses;

(4) Deliver comprehensive guidance and academic advising to students and their parents that includes assistance in selecting courses and planning a program of study that will provide the academic preparation needed to succeed in postsecondary education, early and ongoing college awareness and planning activities, and help in identifying and applying for financial aid for postsecondary education; and

(5) Increase opportunities for students to earn postsecondary credit through Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, or dual credit programs.

Competitive Preference Priority: Within this absolute priority, we give competitive preference to applications that address the following priority.

This priority is from the notice of final priorities published in the Federal Register on October 11, 2006 (71 FR 60045).

Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i) we award an additional 4 points to an application that meets this priority.

This priority is:

School Districts With Schools in Need of Improvement, Corrective Action, or Restructuring.

Projects that help school districts implement academic and structural interventions in schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Application Requirements: In the NFP published in the Federal Register on April 28, 2005 (70 FR 22233), we established application requirements in the following areas for competitions conducted under this program: Eligibility; School Report Cards; Consortium Applications and Educational Service Agencies; Student Placement; Including All Students; and Evaluation. In the notice of final priority, requirements, and selection criteria published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register, we established additional application requirements in the following areas: Types of Grants; Budget Information for Determination of Award; Indirect Costs; Performance Indicators; Required Meetings Sponsored by the Department; and Previous Grantees.

These requirements are in addition to the content that all SLC grant applicants must include in their applications as required by the program statute in title V, part D, subpart 4, section 5441(b) of the ESEA.

We have incorporated the terms of these requirements under appropriate sections of this notice (e.g., the Eligibility requirement is listed in section III. Eligibility Information, elsewhere in this notice).

Definitions: In addition to the definitions in the authorizing statute and 34 CFR 77.1, the following definitions apply to this program:

BIE School means a school operated or supported by the Bureau of Indian Education, formerly known as the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Large High School means a public school that includes grades 11 and 12 and has an enrollment of 1,000 or more students in grades 9 and above.

Smaller Learning Community means an environment in which a core group of teachers and other adults within the school knows the needs, interests, and aspirations of each student well, closely monitors each student's progress, and provides the academic and other support each student needs to succeed.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 7249.

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 NFP published in the Federal Register on April 28, 2005 (70 FR 22233). (c) The notice of final priorities published in the Federal Register on October 11, 2006 (71 FR 60045). (d) The notice of final priority, requirements, and selection criteria published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: \$86,315,475.

At the time of the initial award, the Department will provide funds for the first 36 months of the performance period. Funding to cover the remaining 24 months will be contingent on the availability of funds and each grantee's substantial progress toward accomplishing the goals and objectives of the project as described in its approved application. Contingent upon the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2008 from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$1,250,000-\$14,000,000.

The following chart provides the ranges of awards per high school size:

SLC Grant Award Ranges	
Student Enrollment	Award Ranges Per School
1,000 - 2,000 Students	\$1,000,000 - \$1,250,000
2,001 - 3,000 Students	\$1,000,000 - \$1,500,000
3,001 and Up	\$1,000,000 - \$1,750,000

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$4,500,000.

LEAs may receive, on behalf of a single school, up to \$1,750,000, depending upon student enrollment in the school, during the 60-month project period. To ensure that sufficient funds are available to support awards to LEAs of all sizes, and not only the largest LEAs, we limit to eight the number of schools that an LEA may include in a single application for a grant. LEAs applying on behalf of a group of eligible schools could receive up to \$14,000,000 per grant. The actual size of awards will be based on a number of factors, including the scope, quality, and comprehensiveness of the proposed project, and the range of awards indicated in the application.

Maximum Award: Applications that request more funds than the maximum amounts specified for any school or for the total grant will not be read as part of the regular application process. However, if, after the Secretary selects applications to be funded, it appears that additional funds remain available, the Secretary may choose to read those additional applications that requested funds exceeding the maximum amounts specified. If the Secretary chooses to fund any of those additional applications, applicants will be required to work with the Department to revise their proposed budgets to fit within the appropriate funding range.

Estimated Number of Awards: 45.

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

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: Local educational agencies (LEAs), including educational service agencies and schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), applying on behalf of one or more large high schools.

An LEA may apply only on behalf of a school or schools that is not included in an SLC implementation grant that has a performance period that extends beyond the current fiscal year (September 30, 2007).

To be considered for funding, LEAs must identify in their applications the name or names of the eligible large high school or schools and the number of students enrolled in each school. A large high school is defined as one having grades 11 and 12, with 1,000 or more students enrolled in grades 9 and above. Enrollment figures must be based upon data from the current school year or data from the most recently completed school year. We will not accept applications from LEAs applying on behalf of schools that are being constructed and do not have an active student enrollment at the time of application. LEAs may apply on behalf of no more than eight schools.

In an effort to encourage systemic, district-level reform efforts, we permit an individual LEA to submit only one grant application in a competition, specifying in each application which high schools the LEA intends to fund.

In addition, we require that an LEA applying for a grant under this competition apply only on behalf of a high school or high schools for which it has governing authority, unless the LEA is an educational service agency that includes in its application evidence that the entity that has governing authority over the eligible high school supports the application. An LEA, however, may form a consortium with another LEA and submit a joint application for funds. The consortium must follow the procedures for group applications described in 34 CFR 75.127 through 75.129 in EDGAR.

An LEA is eligible for only one grant whether the LEA applies independently or as part of a consortium.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: This program does not require cost sharing or matching.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package: You can 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: www.grants.gov or www.ed.gov/programs/slcp/applicant.html.

To obtain a copy from ED Pubs, write, fax, or call the following: Education Publications Center, 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), call, toll free: 1-877-576-7734.

You can contact ED Pubs at its Web site, also: www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html or 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 84.215L.

Individuals with disabilities can obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, or computer diskette) by contacting the person or team listed under Alternative Format in section VIII of this notice.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission: All applicants must include in their applications the information required by the program statute in title V, part D, subpart 4, section 5441(b) of the ESEA.

Applicants also must meet the following requirements:

(a) School Report Cards. We require that LEAs provide, for each school included in the application, the most recent "report card" produced by the State or the LEA to inform the public about the characteristics of the school and its students, including information about student academic achievement and other student outcomes. These "report cards" must include, at a minimum, the following information that LEAs are required to report for each school under section 1111(h)(2)(B)(ii) of the ESEA: (1) Whether the school has been identified for school improvement; and (2) Information that shows how the academic assessments and other indicators of adequate yearly progress compare to those indicators for students in the LEA as a whole and also shows the performance of the school's students on statewide assessments.

(b) Student Placement. We require applicants for SLC grants to include a description of how students will be selected or placed in an SLC and an assurance that students will not be placed according to ability or any other measure, but will be placed at random or by student/parent choice and not pursuant to testing or other judgments.

(c) Including All Students. We require applicants for grants to create or expand an SLC project that will include every student within the school by no later than the end of the fifth school year of implementation. Elsewhere in this notice, we define an SLC as an environment in which a group of teachers and other adults within the school knows the needs, interests, and aspirations of each student well, closely monitors each student's progress, and provides the academic and other support each student needs to succeed.

(d) Performance Indicators. We require applicants to identify in their application specific performance indicators and annual performance objectives for each of these indicators. Specifically, we require applicants to use the following performance indicators to measure the progress of each school:

(1) The percentage of students who score at the proficient and advanced levels on the reading/language arts and mathematics assessments used by the State to determine whether a school has made adequate yearly progress under part A of title I of the ESEA, as well as these percentages disaggregated by subject matter and the following subgroups:

- (A) Major racial and ethnic groups;
- (B) Students with disabilities;
- (C) Students with limited English proficiency; and
- (D) Economically disadvantaged students.

(2) The school's graduation rate, as defined in the State's approved accountability plan for part A of title I of the ESEA.

(3) The percentage of graduates who enroll in postsecondary education, advanced training, or a registered apprenticeship program in the semester following high school graduation.

Applicants must include in their applications baseline data for each of these indicators and identify performance objectives for each year of the project period. We further require recipients of grant funds to report annually on the extent to which each school achieves its performance objectives for each indicator during the preceding school year. We require grantees to include in these reports comparable data, if available, for the preceding three school years so that trends in performance will be more apparent.

Grantees must submit this additional data using the Department's SLC electronic reporting Web site within three months after awards are made.

(e) Evaluation. We require each applicant to provide assurances that it will support an evaluation of the project that provides information to the project director and school personnel, and that will be useful in gauging the project's progress and in identifying areas for improvement. Each evaluation must include an annual report for each of the first four years of the project period and a final report that would be completed at the end of the fifth year of implementation and that will include information on implementation during the fifth year as well as information on the implementation of the project across the entire project period. We require grantees to submit each of these reports to the Department.

In addition, we require that the evaluation be conducted by an independent third party, selected by the applicant, whose role in the project is limited to conducting the evaluation.

(f) Required Meetings Sponsored by the Department. Applicants must set aside adequate funds within their proposed budget to send their project director and at least two individuals from each school included in the application to a two-day technical assistance meeting in Washington, DC, in each year of the project period. The Department will host these meetings.

(g) Additional Requirements. Additional requirements concerning the content of an application for this program, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for this competition.

Page Limit: The application narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We encourage you to limit the narrative to the equivalent of no more than 30 pages and suggest that you use the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 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 or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The suggested page limit does not apply to the forms; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; the one-page abstract; the resumes; school report cards; indirect cost agreement; or letters of support. However, the suggested page limit does apply to all of the application narrative section.

3. Submission Dates and Times:

Applications Available: [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Notice of Intent to Apply: [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Applications for grants under this competition 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 in paper format 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.

Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process should contact the person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII in this notice. If the Department provides an accommodation or auxiliary aid to an individual with a disability in connection with the application process, the individual's application remains subject to all other requirements and limitations in this notice.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: [INSERT DATE 120 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

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 the application package for this competition.

5. Funding Restrictions: Eligible applicants that propose to use SLC grant funds for indirect costs must include, as part of their applications, a copy of their approved indirect cost agreement. We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section in this notice.

6. Other Submission Requirements: Applications for grants under this competition 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 Smaller Learning Communities Program, CFDA Number 84.215L, must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide 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 the Smaller Learning Communities Program at <http://www.Grants.gov>. You must search for the downloadable application package for this competition by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.215, not 84.215L).

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 date and time stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted and must be date and 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 and 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 and 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 steps in the Grants.gov registration process (see http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp). These steps include (1) registering your organization, a multi-part process that includes registration with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR); (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/section910/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.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 submit successfully an application via Grants.gov. In addition you will need to update your CCR registration on an annual basis. This may take three or more business days to complete.

- 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 you typically provide on the following forms: Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications. Please note that two of these forms--the SF 424 and the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424--have replaced the ED 424 (Application for Federal Education Assistance).

- 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 in this paragraph 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 from Grants.gov an automatic notification of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. (This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by the Department.) The Department then will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send a second notification to you by e-mail. This second notification indicates that the Department has received your application and has assigned your application 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 experiencing problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1-800-518-4726. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and must keep a record of it.

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 described elsewhere in this notice.

If you submit an application after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date, please contact the person listed under **For Further Information Contact** in section VII in this notice and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support

Desk Case Number. 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: The extensions to which we refer 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 application 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: Gregory Dennis, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3W243, FB6, Washington, DC 20202-6200.

FAX: (202) 205-4921.

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 84.215L)
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 84.215L)
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.

(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.

(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 84.215L)

550 12th Street, SW.

Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza

Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 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 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification 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: The following selection criteria will be used to evaluate applications for new grants under this program and are from the notice of final priority, requirements, and selection criteria published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register.

Note: The maximum score for all selection criteria is 100 points. The points or weights assigned to each criterion are indicated in parentheses.

Need for the Project (8)

In determining the need for the proposed project, we will consider the magnitude of the need for the services that will be provided and the activities that will be carried out by the proposed project.

Quality of the Project Design (25)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, we will consider the extent to which--

(1) Teachers, school administrators, parents and community stakeholders support the proposed project and have been and will continue to be involved in its development and implementation;

(2) The applicant has carried out sufficient planning and preparatory activities to enable it to implement the proposed project during the school year in which the grant award will be made;

(3) School administrators, teachers, and other school employees will receive effective, ongoing technical assistance and support in implementing structural and instructional reforms;

(4) The applicant will offer all students a coherent sequence of rigorous English language arts, mathematics, and science courses that will provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation; and

(5) The proposed project is part of a districtwide strategy for high school redesign and strengthens the district's capacity to develop and implement smaller learning communities and improve student academic achievement as part of that strategy.

Quality of Project Services (45)

In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, we will consider the extent to which the proposed project is likely to be effective in—

(1) Creating an environment in which a core group of teachers and other adults within the school know the needs, interests, and aspirations of each student well, closely monitor each student's progress, and provide the academic and other support each student needs to succeed;

(2) Equipping all students with the reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science knowledge and skills they need to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation;

(3) Helping students who enter high school with reading/English language arts or mathematics skills that are significantly below grade-level “catch up” quickly and attain proficiency by the end of the 10th grade;

(4) Providing teachers with the professional development, coaching, regular opportunities for collaboration with peers, and other supports needed to implement a rigorous curriculum and provide high-quality instruction;

(5) Increasing the participation of students, particularly low-income students, in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual credit courses; and

(6) Increasing the percentage of students who enter postsecondary education in the semester following high school graduation.

Support for Implementation (17)

In determining the adequacy of the support the applicant will provide for implementation of the proposed project, we will consider the extent to which--

(1) The management plan is likely to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget and includes clearly defined responsibilities and detailed timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;

(2) The project director and other key personnel are qualified to carry out their responsibilities, and their time commitments are appropriate and adequate to implement the SLC project effectively;

(3) The applicant will support the proposed project with funds provided under other Federal or State programs and local cash or in-kind resources; and

(4) The requested grant amount and the project costs are sufficient to attain project goals and reasonable in relation to the objectives and design of the project.

Quality of the SLC Project Evaluation (5)

In determining the quality of the proposed project evaluation to be conducted by an independent, third-party evaluator, we consider the extent to which--

(1) The evaluation will provide timely, regular, and useful feedback to the LEA and the participating schools on the success and progress of implementation, and identify areas for needed improvement; and

(2) The independent evaluator is qualified to conduct the evaluation.

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 notify you informally, also.

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 in this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations section in 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. If you receive a multi-year award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>

4. Performance Measures: The application requirements and other information related to performance indicators and objectives are described elsewhere in this notice under section IV. Application and Submission Information, 2. Content and Form of Application Submission.

VII. Agency Contact

For Further Information Contact: Gregory Dennis, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3W243, FB6, Washington, DC 20202-6200. Telephone: (202) 205-3784 or by e-mail: smallerlearningcommunities@ed.gov

If you use a TDD, call the FRS, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

VIII. Other Information

Alternative Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the program contact person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII in this notice.

Electronic Access to This Document: You can 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: 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: www.gpoaccess.gov/nara/index.html

Dated: [INSERT DATE SIGNED]

/s/

Kerri. L. Briggs,

Acting Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary
Education

Notice of final priority, requirements, and selection criteria for FY 2006 and subsequent years' funds

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Smaller Learning Communities Program

AGENCY: Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of final priority, requirements, and selection criteria for fiscal year (FY) 2006 and subsequent years' funds.

SUMMARY: The Acting Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education announces a priority, requirements, and selection criteria under the Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) program. The Acting Assistant Secretary will use the priority, requirements, and selection criteria, in addition to any other previously established priorities and requirements, for a competition using fiscal year (FY) 2006 funds and may use them in later years. We take this action to focus Federal financial assistance on an identified national need. We intend the priority, requirements, and selection criteria to enhance the effectiveness of SLC projects in improving academic achievement and the preparation of students for postsecondary education and careers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The priority, requirements, and selection criteria are effective (INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gregory Dennis, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3W243, Washington, DC 20202-6200. Telephone: (202) 205-3784 or via Internet: smallerlearningcommunities@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 contact person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

General

The SLC program is authorized under Title V, Part D, Subpart 4 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. 7249), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It awards discretionary grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) to support the implementation of SLCs and activities to improve student academic achievement in large public high schools with enrollments of 1,000 or more students. SLCs include structures such as freshman academies, multi-grade academies organized around career interests or other themes, "houses" in which small groups of students remain together throughout high school, and autonomous schools-within-a-school, as well as personalization strategies, such as student advisories, family advocate systems, and mentoring programs. As used in this notice, the terms smaller learning community, large high school, and BIE school have the meanings assigned to them in the notice of final priority, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria (NFP) for this program, published in the Federal Register on April 28, 2005 (70 FR 22233).

Evidence from recently completed evaluations suggests that SLCs are most likely to be successful in raising academic achievement and improving other student outcomes if their implementation is integrated closely with improvements in curriculum and instruction. Since earning a bachelor's degree or higher is now the goal of an overwhelming majority of high school students, regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity, or family income, the focus of these efforts should be on preparing all students to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation.

Currently, too many young people do not receive the academic preparation, guidance, and support they need to achieve their ambitious educational aspirations. Many students lack a clear understanding of the academic requirements for entrance to postsecondary education, how to apply for postsecondary education, or

options for financial aid. Most importantly, considerable numbers of young people are graduating from high school without the academic foundation needed to succeed in postsecondary education. Consequently, a significant number of students begin their postsecondary education by enrolling in one or more remedial reading, writing, or mathematics courses (NCES, 2004).

We published a notice of proposed priority, requirements, and selection criteria (NPP) for this program in the Federal Register on March 8, 2007 (72 FR 10502). We discussed our proposals for this program in the NPP on pages 10502-10506.

This notice of final priority, requirements, and selection criteria contains several changes from the NPP. We fully explain these changes in the Analysis of Comments and Changes section that follows.

Analysis of Comments and Changes

In response to our invitation in the NPP, 11 parties submitted comments. An analysis of the comments and of any changes in the priority, requirements, and selection criteria follows. We group major issues according to subject.

Generally, we do not address technical and other minor changes and suggested changes we are not authorized to make under the applicable statutory authority. We also do not address comments related to definitions, such as the definition of a large high school, and requirements that were established in the NPP for this program in the Federal Register on April 28, 2005 (70 FR 22233) because we did not seek public comment on these provisions.

Proposed Priority

Comment: One commenter contended that the priority is focused exclusively on academic preparation for postsecondary education and careers and recommended that it be amended to include activities related to career exploration and career and technical education, such as internships, school-based enterprises, and certificate programs that integrate technical and academic content.

Discussion: The priority focuses on academic preparation for postsecondary education and careers because many young people, including, particularly, low-income and minority youth, leave high school without the rigorous academic foundation they need to pursue these goals. In contrast, nearly every student who leaves high school has participated in career and technical education (National Assessment of Vocational Education, 2004). Moreover, paragraph (5) of the priority could include career academies or career and technical education courses that offer students the opportunity to earn postsecondary credit. For example, an agriculture-themed career academy could include Advanced Placement Biology, Chemistry, and Environmental Science courses. A dual credit pre-engineering course offered in conjunction with a local college or university also could be proposed under the priority.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter recommended that we establish a competitive priority for LEAs and schools that have been identified as in need of improvement under Title I of the ESEA.

Discussion: We agree that LEAs and schools that have been identified as in need of improvement merit special consideration in many of the Department's discretionary grant competitions. For this reason, we established a priority for LEAs with schools in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the Federal Register on October 11, 2006 (71 FR 60045). This priority may be used for any appropriate discretionary grant program, including the SLC program, in FY 2007 and FY 2008.

Changes: None.

Types of Grants

Comment: One commenter asked us to clarify whether an implementation grant could be awarded to support a project in which a large high school is closed and reconstituted as a set of autonomous SLCs.

Discussion: Implementation grants support the creation or expansion of an SLC or SLCs within a large high school. This includes projects in which a large high school will be closed and reconstituted during the performance period as a set of autonomous SLCs, which may be located on the same site as the large high school or in other locations. At the time of application and award, all large high schools to be served must meet

the definition of “large high school;” any closing and reconstitution as described above must happen after the award.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter noted that successful SLC implementation requires significant prior planning and recommended that we offer grants to LEAs to support planning activities.

Discussion: While we agree that significant prior planning is important, we do not agree that it is necessary for the Department to award grants for this purpose. We believe it is reasonable to expect that prospective applicants will carry out these planning activities using their own funds, or with funds from other sources. The Department administers many other discretionary grant programs that also require significant prior planning by applicants but that do not award planning grants to support these activities.

Changes: None.

Budget Information for Determination of Award

Comment: One commenter recommended that we limit the number of schools that may be included in an LEA’s application to five, rather than ten, as we had proposed. The commenter maintained that permitting LEAs to include as many as ten schools would give larger LEAs an unfair competitive advantage over smaller and medium-sized LEAs and would make it likely that all or most of the available grant funds would be awarded to LEAs that included ten schools in their applications. The commenter also expressed concern that a grant that included as many as ten schools would be difficult for an LEA to manage effectively.

Discussion: Permitting LEAs to include as many as ten schools in their applications has not given larger LEAs a competitive advantage over smaller and medium-sized LEAs in recent SLC grant competitions. Only eight of the 51 grants we awarded with FY 2005 funds included more than five schools, and only three of these included ten schools. Only four of the 70 grants we awarded with FY 2004 funds included more than five schools, and only two of these included ten schools. The average number of schools included in grants made in both years is three. However, the commenter’s concern that an LEA may have difficulty managing effectively a grant that includes as many as ten schools does have merit. The proposed priority promotes the integration of SLC implementation with comprehensive efforts to improve curriculum and instruction and student preparation for postsecondary education. This is challenging work, and ongoing support and technical assistance from an LEA will be critical to each school’s success. We also have proposed larger grant award amounts than we offered in previous SLC competitions. An LEA that includes ten schools in its application could receive up to \$17.5 million for a 60-month project period, nearly \$6 million more than it could have received in last year’s competition. For these reasons, we agree that reducing the number of schools that an LEA may include in its application is appropriate and prudent.

Changes: We have reduced the maximum number of schools an LEA may include in its application from ten to eight.

Comment: One commenter disagreed with our proposal to determine maximum award amounts on the basis of the number of students enrolled in each high school included in an application. The commenter recommended that our proposed maximum award amount of \$1,750,000 be available to every eligible high school, regardless of its enrollment.

Discussion: As we have in previous SLC competitions, we proposed to use student enrollment to determine maximum grant award amounts because there is a clear relationship between student enrollment and the costs of implementing SLC projects. All SLC projects, for example, typically include extensive professional development activities. During the 2004-05 school year, public high schools with enrollments between 1,000 to 2,000 students had an average of 83 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers, while public high schools with 2,001 to 3,000 students had an average of 120 FTE teachers (National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data). Providing professional development for 120 teachers is clearly more costly than serving 83 teachers. The relationship between student enrollment and the costs of curricula, assessments, external technical assistance, student guidance and support services, and other activities is similarly evident. Accordingly, we decline to make the change proposed by the commenter.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter objected to our proposal to award grants for up to a 60-month project period, with funding for the first 36 months provided in a single award from the FY 2006 appropriation and funding for the remaining 24 months provided in a second award in FY 2009, contingent upon the availability of appropriations and the grant recipient's demonstration of substantial progress in implementing its project objectives. The commenter was concerned that our proposal did not guarantee that grant recipients would receive continuation awards for the final 24 months of the 60-month project period and, for this reason, recommended that we award grants for a 36-month project period only.

Discussion: In 2005, we increased the project period for SLC grants from 36 to up to 60 months in response to recommendations we received from grant recipients and individuals with expertise in leading or supporting high school reform and improvement efforts. They argued persuasively that LEAs and schools needed a minimum of 60 months to implement systemic, sustainable reforms. Our proposal to condition continuation awards on the availability of appropriations and the grant recipient's progress in implementing the project is common among discretionary grant programs administered by the Department and ensures that multi-year grants do receive continued funding unless they can provide evidence that they are making sufficient progress.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter recommended that we permit an LEA to retain a portion of the SLC grant for district-level activities.

Discussion: We did not propose to prohibit or limit the use of SLC grant funds for activities carried out at the district level, provided that these activities support the implementation of the project by the schools included in the application. While we proposed using student enrollment in each high school included in an application to determine maximum grant award amounts, an LEA is not required to provide each school in an application with all of the funds that its enrollment generates. Districts can play an important role in supporting the work of teachers and school administrators, and there are some activities that may be more appropriately or economically carried out at the district level. These activities could include, for example, implementing data and assessment systems and analytic tools that can be used by the staff of the schools included in the application to monitor student progress and improve instruction or providing curriculum pacing guides, sample lessons and other instructional supports. We leave to each applicant to decide how best to address the program requirements, priority, and selection criteria, including the amount of funds it proposes to use for district-level activities that support the implementation of the project serving the schools included in the application. Funds may not be used, however, for district-level activities that serve schools that are not included in the application or for general, district-wide high school reform initiatives.

Changes: None.

Performance Indicators

Comment: One commenter recommended that we revise the proposed performance indicator for student enrollment in postsecondary education to include enrollment in advanced training and apprenticeships as well.

Discussion: We agree that enrollment in advanced training or a registered apprenticeship program is an outcome that is consistent with the purpose of this indicator. Registered apprenticeship programs, for example, combine structured on-the-job training with classroom instruction that is often offered by a community college and articulated with a postsecondary certificate or associate's degree program.

Change: We revised the indicator to include, in addition to student enrollment in postsecondary education, enrollment in advanced training or a registered apprenticeship program.

Comment: One commenter recommended that we require grant recipients to collect and report data for an indicator that measured student success in achieving employment- or career-related outcomes, such as placement in employment, attainment of a technical certificate, or participation in work-related experiences during high school.

Discussion: We agree that there are a variety of other indicators that may be useful to applicants in gauging their progress in implementing their projects. We encourage applicants to include in their applications

additional indicators that they consider appropriate. However, in the interests of limiting burden on applicants and grant recipients, we decline to establish any additional mandatory performance indicators.

Changes: None.

Required Meetings Sponsored by the Department

Comment: One commenter recommended that we require applicants to set aside funds within their proposed budgets to attend Department meetings in each year of the project period, rather than in the first and second years only, as we had proposed. The commenter indicated that meetings should be offered on an annual basis because they are helpful to project directors.

Discussion: We agree that annual meetings would be helpful to grant recipients in implementing their projects.

Change: We revised the requirement to direct applicants to set aside funding to attend annual meetings hosted by the Department.

Comment: None.

Discussion: We proposed requiring applicants to set aside funds in the first year of the project period to support the participation of five key staff in a two-day regional institute, in addition to a meeting for project directors. During intradepartmental review, we determined that this requirement is inconsistent with our intent, which is to include several staff from each high school included in a grant. Five staff will be insufficient if a grant includes six high schools. Similarly, five staff may be excessive for a grant that includes a single high school. We also determined that describing this meeting as a regional event was inaccurate because our current expectation is that these meetings will be held in Washington, DC.

Change: We revised the requirement to direct applicants to set aside funds to support the participation of at least two individuals from each high school included in an application in technical assistance meetings hosted by the Department in Washington, DC.

Previous Grantees

Comment: None.

Discussion: We proposed to allow an LEA to apply only on behalf of a school or schools that will not receive funds through an SLC implementation grant that has a performance period that extends beyond the current fiscal year. During intradepartmental review, we determined that our reference to a school's receipt of funds was ambiguous and could be interpreted in ways that are not consistent with our intent. An LEA can provide many services and supports to a school that is included in an application without transferring funds to the school. An LEA, for example, may purchase professional development services on behalf of a school, rather than provide the school with funds to purchase these services. In proposing this limitation, our intent was to exclude any high school that is included in an SLC grant with a performance period that extends beyond the current fiscal year, regardless of whether the high school actually receives grant funds from the LEA.

Change: We revised the limitation to permit an LEA to apply only on behalf of a school or schools that is not included in an SLC implementation grant that has a performance period that extends beyond the current fiscal year.

Selection Criteria

Comment: One commenter expressed concern about a proposed selection criterion under Quality of Project Design that evaluates an applicant's readiness to implement its proposed project during the school year in which the grant award is made. Noting that grant awards are likely to be made after the start of the 2007-08 school year, the commenter asked us to clarify the types of activities we expected grant recipients to undertake during the school year in which the grant is awarded.

Discussion: The commenter is correct that grant awards are likely to be made after the start of the 2007-08 school year. Given this, we do not expect grant recipients to implement immediately activities, such as creating freshman academies or other structures, that require changes in teacher assignments, student scheduling, and course offerings. However, there are a wide variety of other implementation activities that a grant recipient can carry out during the 2007-08 school year, such as professional development, piloting new curricula, and enhancing academic support services for students. In designing their proposed projects, applicants should take

the expected date of the grant award into account, and identify substantive activities that they will be able to implement during the 2007-08 school year. Applications in which first year activities are limited to planning only are unlikely to be rated highly on the selection criterion that evaluates implementation readiness.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter recommended that we require applicants to describe how students will be selected or placed in an SLC to assure that these placements are not made on the basis of students' test scores or perceptions of their ability. The commenter also recommended including this requirement in the selection criteria and awarding points to applicants on the basis of their responses.

Discussion: The description recommended by the commenter is one that, by statute, all applicants must provide. Since the statute prohibits projects from placing students in SLCs on the basis of their ability or pursuant to testing or other judgments, it is not appropriate to make this a selection criterion.

Changes: None.

Comments: One commenter recommended that we establish a selection criterion that evaluates the extent to which an applicant will place all students in an SLC by the end of the project period. Another commenter asked that we clarify whether projects are required to include all students in SLCs. A third commenter asked if the requirement that an SLC project include all students by the end of the fifth year of the project period means that projects must assign all students to academies or other smaller organizational units within a school.

Discussion: In the notice of final priority, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria (NFP) published in the Federal Register on April 28, 2005 (70 FR 22233), we established a requirement that SLC projects include all students by no later than the end of the fifth year of the project. We also defined an SLC as an environment in which a group of teachers and other adults within the school knows the needs, interests, and aspirations of each student well, closely monitors each student's progress, and provides the academic and other support each student needs to succeed. We did not propose any changes to the requirement or the SLC definition or seek public comment on them in the NPP. It is clear from the comments we received, however, that there is confusion about their meaning. We do not prescribe how an applicant creates the environment of strong academic and personal support described by the SLC definition, or how it provides this environment for all students. While we expect that SLC projects will include a structural component, such as an academy, we do not require projects to assign all students to academies, "houses," or other smaller organizational units. Depending upon the circumstances and needs of a particular school and its students, there may be a variety of ways to create an environment in which all students receive strong personal and academic support. Thus, for example, an applicant could propose a project that places all entering ninth graders in a freshman academy to support their transition to high school, and establish teacher advisories or mentoring programs to create an environment of academic and personal support for all students in the upper grades. Another applicant might decide to propose a project in which all students in a school are assigned to theme-based academies. In the NPP, we proposed a selection criterion under Quality of Project Services that evaluates the likely effectiveness of the proposed project in creating for all students the environment described in the SLC definition.

Changes: None.

Comment: One commenter urged us to revise the selection criteria to encourage applicants to align their proposed project with activities they carry out with funds provided under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act, which is authorized by Title IV of the ESEA.

Discussion: We agree that applicants should seek to utilize funds provided under Title IV of ESEA and other Federal programs in which they participate. For this reason, we proposed a selection criterion under Support for Implementation that evaluates the extent to which an applicant will support the proposed project with funds provided under Federal and State programs, as well as local cash and in-kind resources. We decline, however, to highlight specific Federal programs because there are numerous programs in which applicants may be participating.

Changes: None.

Note: This notice does not solicit applications. In any year in which we choose to use this priority, we invite applications through a notice in the Federal Register. A notice soliciting applications for new awards for the SLC program with fiscal year 2006 funds is published elsewhere in this issue of the Federal Register. When inviting applications we designate the priority as absolute, competitive preference, or invitational. The effect of each type of priority follows:

Absolute priority: Under an absolute priority we consider only applications that meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(3)).

Competitive preference priority: Under a competitive preference priority we give competitive preference to an application by either (1) awarding additional points, depending on how well or the extent to which the application meets the competitive priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i)); or (2) selecting an application that meets the competitive priority over an application of comparable merit that does not meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(ii)).

Invitational priority: Under an invitational priority we are particularly interested in applications that meet the invitational priority. However, we do not give an application that meets the invitational priority a competitive or absolute preference over other applications (34 CFR 75.105(c)(1)).

PRIORITY:

Preparing All Students to Succeed in Postsecondary Education and Careers

This priority supports projects that create or expand SLCs that are part of a comprehensive effort to prepare all students to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation.

In order to meet this priority an applicant must demonstrate that, using SLC grant funds or other resources, it will:

(1) Provide intensive interventions to assist students who enter high school with reading/language arts or mathematics skills that are significantly below grade level to “catch up” quickly and attain proficiency by the end of 10th grade;

(2) Enroll students in a coherent sequence of rigorous English language arts, mathematics, and science courses that will equip them with the skills and content knowledge needed to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation;

(3) Provide tutoring and other academic supports to help students succeed in rigorous academic courses;

(4) Deliver comprehensive guidance and academic advising to students and their parents that includes assistance in selecting courses and planning a program of study that will provide the academic preparation needed to succeed in postsecondary education, early and ongoing college awareness and planning activities, and help in identifying and applying for financial aid for postsecondary education; and

(5) Increase opportunities for students to earn postsecondary credit through Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, or dual credit programs.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

Application Requirements

The Acting Assistant Secretary announces the following application requirements for the SLC competition. These requirements are in addition to the content that all SLC grant applicants must include in their applications as required by the program statute under Title V, Part D, Subpart 4, Section 5441(b) of the ESEA, and the application requirements we established in the NFP for this program, published in the Federal Register on April 28, 2005 (70 FR 22233) in the following areas: Eligibility; School Report Cards; Consortium Applications and Educational Service Agencies; Student Placement; Including All Students; and Evaluation. LEAs, including BIE schools and educational service agencies, applying on behalf of large public high schools, are eligible to apply for a grant.

1. Types of Grants

We will award implementation grants to applicants to support the creation or expansion of an SLC or

SLCs within each targeted high school during the school year in which funds are first awarded.

Grants will be awarded for a period up to 60 months. We require applicants to provide detailed, yearly budget information for the total grant period requested. At the time of the initial award, the Department will provide funds for the first 36 months of the performance period. Funding for the remaining 24 months will be contingent on the availability of funds and each grantee's substantial progress toward accomplishing the goals and objectives of the project as described in its approved application.

2. Budget Information for Determination of Award

LEAs may receive, on behalf of a single school, up to \$1,750,000, depending upon student enrollment in the school, during the 60-month project period. To ensure that sufficient funds are available to support awards to LEAs of all sizes, and not only the largest LEAs, we limit to eight the number of schools that an LEA may include in a single application for a grant. LEAs applying on behalf of a group of eligible schools thus could receive up to \$14,000,000 per grant.

The following chart provides the ranges of awards per high school size:

SLC Grant Award Ranges	
Student Enrollment	Award Ranges Per School
1,000 - 2,000 Students	\$1,000,000 - \$1,250,000
2,001 - 3,000 Students	\$1,000,000 - \$1,500,000
3,001 and Up Students	\$1,000,000 - \$1,750,000

The actual size of awards would be based on a number of factors, including the scope, quality, and comprehensiveness of the proposed project, and the range of awards indicated in the application.

Applications that request more funds than the maximum amounts specified for any school or for the total grant will not be read as part of the regular application process. However, if, after the Secretary selects applications to be funded, it appears that additional funds remain available, the Secretary may choose to read those additional applications that requested funds exceeding the maximum amounts specified. If the Secretary chooses to fund any of those additional applications, applicants will be required to work with the Department to revise their proposed budgets to fit within the appropriate funding range.

3. Indirect Costs

Eligible applicants that propose to use SLC grant funds for indirect costs must include, as part of their applications, a copy of their approved indirect cost agreement.

4. Performance Indicators

We require applicants to identify in their application specific performance indicators and annual performance objectives for each of these indicators. Specifically, we require applicants to use the following performance indicators to measure the progress of each school:

(1) The percentage of students who score at or above the proficient level on the reading/language arts and mathematics assessments used by the State to determine whether a school has made adequate yearly progress under part A of Title I of the ESEA, as well as these percentages disaggregated by subject matter and the following subgroups:

- (A) Major racial and ethnic groups;
- (B) Students with disabilities;
- (C) Students with limited English proficiency; and
- (D) Economically disadvantaged students.

(2) The school's graduation rate, as defined in the State's approved accountability plan for Part A of Title I of the ESEA; and

- (3) The percentage of graduates who enroll in postsecondary education, advanced training, or a

registered apprenticeship program in the semester following high school graduation.

Applicants must include in their applications baseline data for each of these indicators and identify performance objectives for each year of the project period. We further require recipients of grant funds to report annually on the extent to which each school achieves its performance objectives for each indicator during the preceding school year. We require grantees to include in these reports comparable data, if available, for the preceding three school years so that trends in performance will be more apparent.

5. Required Meetings Sponsored by the Department

Applicants must set aside adequate funds within their proposed budget to send their project director and at least two individuals from each school included in the application to a two-day technical assistance meeting in Washington, DC, in each year of the project period. The Department will host these meetings.

Previous Grantees

An LEA may apply only on behalf of a school or schools that is not included in an SLC implementation grant that has a performance period that extends beyond the current fiscal year (September 30, 2007).

SELECTION CRITERIA:

The following selection criteria will be used to evaluate applications for new grants under this program. We may apply these selection criteria to any SLC competition in the future.

Need for the Project

In determining the need for the proposed project, we will consider the magnitude of the need for the services that will be provided and the activities that will be carried out by the proposed project.

Quality of the Project Design

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, we will consider the extent to which--

- (1) Teachers, school administrators, parents and community stakeholders support the proposed project and have been and will continue to be involved in its development and implementation;
- (2) The applicant has carried out sufficient planning and preparatory activities to enable it to implement the proposed project during the school year in which the grant award will be made;
- (3) School administrators, teachers, and other school employees will receive effective, ongoing technical assistance and support in implementing structural and instructional reforms;
- (4) The applicant will offer all students a coherent sequence of rigorous English language arts, mathematics, and science courses that will provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation; and
- (5) The proposed project is part of a districtwide strategy for high school redesign and strengthens the district's capacity to develop and implement smaller learning communities and improve student academic achievement as part of that strategy.

Quality of Project Services

In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, we will consider the extent to which the proposed project is likely to be effective in--

- (1) Creating an environment in which a core group of teachers and other adults within the school know the needs, interests, and aspirations of each student well, closely monitor each student's progress, and provide the academic and other support each student needs to succeed;
- (2) Equipping all students with the reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science knowledge and skills they need to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation;
- (3) Helping students who enter high school with reading/English language arts or mathematics skills that are significantly below grade-level "catch up" quickly and attain proficiency by the end of the 10th grade;
- (4) Providing teachers with the professional development, coaching, regular opportunities for collaboration with peers, and other supports needed to implement a rigorous curriculum and provide high-quality instruction;
- (5) Increasing the participation of students, particularly low-income students, in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual credit courses; and

(6) Increasing the percentage of students who enter postsecondary education in the semester following high school graduation.

Support for Implementation

In determining the adequacy of the support the applicant will provide for implementation of the proposed project, we will consider the extent to which--

(1) The management plan is likely to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget and includes clearly defined responsibilities and detailed timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;

(2) The project director and other key personnel are qualified to carry out their responsibilities, and their time commitments are appropriate and adequate to implement the SLC project effectively;

(3) The applicant will support the proposed project with funds provided under other Federal or State programs and local cash or in-kind resources; and

(4) The requested grant amount and the project costs are sufficient to attain project goals and reasonable in relation to the objectives and design of the project.

Quality of the SLC Project Evaluation

In determining the quality of the proposed project evaluation to be conducted by an independent, third-party evaluator, we consider the extent to which--

(1) The evaluation will provide timely, regular, and useful feedback to the LEA and the participating schools on the success and progress of implementation, and identify areas for needed improvement; and

(2) The independent evaluator is qualified to conduct the evaluation.

Executive Order 12866

This notice of final priority, requirements, and selection criteria has been reviewed in accordance with Executive Order 12866. Under the terms of the order, we have assessed the potential costs and benefits of this regulatory action.

The potential costs associated with this notice of final priority, requirements, and selection criteria are those resulting from statutory requirements and those we have determined as necessary for administering this program effectively and efficiently.

In assessing the potential costs and benefits--both quantitative and qualitative--of this notice of final priority, requirements, and selection criteria, we have determined that the benefits of the final priority, requirements, and selection criteria justify the costs.

We have also determined that this regulatory action does not unduly interfere with State, local, and tribal governments in the exercise of their governmental functions.

Intergovernmental Review

This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism. The Executive order relies on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

This document provides early notification of our specific plans and actions for this program.

Electronic Access to This Document

You may view this document, as well as all other Department of Education documents published in the Federal Register, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at the following site:

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>
(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.215L, Smaller Learning Communities Program)
PROGRAM AUTHORITY: 20 U.S.C. 7249.

Dated: [INSERT DATE SIGNED]

_____ /s/ _____
Kerri L. Briggs,
Acting Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary
Education

Program Statute

Electronic version of the statute available online:

<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg70.html>

Sec. 5441. Smaller Learning Communities.

(a) GRANT AUTHORITY- The Secretary is authorized to award grants to local educational agencies to enable the agencies to create a smaller learning community or communities.

(b) APPLICATION- Each local educational agency desiring a grant under this subpart shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require. The application shall include descriptions of the following:

- (1) Strategies and methods the local educational agency will use to create the smaller learning community or communities.
- (2) Curriculum and instructional practices, including any particular themes or emphases, to be used in the smaller learning environment.
- (3) The extent of involvement of teachers and other school personnel in investigating, designing, implementing, and sustaining the smaller learning community or communities.
- (4) The process to be used for involving students, parents, and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of the smaller learning community or communities.
- (5) Any cooperation or collaboration among community agencies, organizations, businesses, and others to develop or implement a plan to create the smaller learning community or communities.
- (6) The training and professional development activities that will be offered to teachers and others involved in the activities assisted under this subpart.
- (7) The objectives of the activities assisted under this subpart, including a description of how such activities will better enable all students to reach challenging State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.
- (8) The methods by which the local educational agency will assess progress in meeting the objectives described in paragraph (7).
- (9) If the smaller learning community or communities exist as a school-within-a-school, the relationship, including governance and administration, of the smaller learning community to the remainder of the school.
- (10) The administrative and managerial relationship between the local educational agency and the smaller learning community or communities, including how such agency will demonstrate a commitment to the continuity of the smaller learning community or communities (including the continuity of student and teacher assignment to a particular learning community).
- (11) How the local educational agency will coordinate or use funds provided under this subpart with other funds provided under this Act or other Federal laws.

(12) The grade levels or ages of students who will participate in the smaller learning community or communities.

(13) The method of placing students in the smaller learning community or communities, such that students are not placed according to ability or any other measure, but are placed at random or by their own choice, and not pursuant to testing or other judgments.

(c) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES- Funds under this section may be used for one or more of the following:

(1) To study—

(A) the feasibility of creating the smaller learning community or communities; and

(B) effective and innovative organizational and instructional strategies that will be used in the smaller learning community or communities.

(2) To research, develop, and implement—

(A) strategies for creating the smaller learning community or communities; and

(B) strategies for effective and innovative changes in curriculum and instruction, geared to challenging State academic content standards and State student academic achievement standards.

(3) To provide professional development for school staff in innovative teaching methods that—

(A) challenge and engage students; and

(B) will be used in the smaller learning community or communities.

(4) To develop and implement strategies to include parents, business representatives, local institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and other community members in the smaller learning communities as facilitators of activities that enable teachers to participate in professional development activities and provide links between students and their community.

Application Instructions

Electronic Application Format

Applications for grants under this competition must be submitted electronically, unless you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement in accordance with the instructions in this application package. **The deadline for submission of Smaller Learning Communities Program applications through Grants.gov is May XX, 2007.**

In accordance with EDGAR §75.216 (b) and (c), an application will not be evaluated for funding if the applicant does not comply with all of the procedural rules that govern the submission of the application or the application does not contain the information required under the program.

Electronic Application Submission Checklist

It is recommended that your electronic application be organized in the following manner and include the following parts in order to expedite the review process. To apply electronically via Grants.gov, you must download, complete and submit the Pure Edge application forms found on Grants.gov.

Instructions for all parts and forms of the application are found either on the following pages of the application package or individually for each form on Grants.gov.

Note: Please do not attach any narratives, supporting files, or application components to any forms unless it is specifically required by the instructions for the individual section of the application. Although several forms accept attachments, the Department of Education will only review materials/files attached in accordance with the instructions provided within this application package.

Review your electronic application to ensure you have completed the following forms and sections:

Part 1: Preliminary Documents

- Application for Federal Assistance (form SF 424)
- ED Supplemental Information for SF 424

Part 2: Budget Information

- ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524)

Part 3: ED Abstract Form

- Project Abstract

Part 4: Project Narrative Attachment Form

- Application Narrative

Part 5: Budget Narrative Attachment Form

- Budget Narrative

Part 6: Other Attachments Form

- SLC Grant Application Summary Page
- Competitive Preference Priority
- Student Placement
- Performance Indicators
- School Report Cards
- Individual Resumes for Project Directors & Key Personnel
- Copy of Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (if applicable)

Part 7: Assurances and Certifications

- Assurances – Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B Form)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Standard Form LLL)
- Grants.gov Lobbying Form
- Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion- Lower Tier Covered Transactions (form ED 80-0014)
- General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427 (ED GEPA427 form)

Part 1: Preliminary Documents

- Application for Federal Assistance (Form SF 424)
- ED Supplemental Information for SF 424

These forms require basic identifying information about the applicant and the application. Please provide all requested applicant information (including name, address, e-mail address and DUNS number).

When applying electronically via Grants.gov, you will need to ensure that the DUNS number you enter on your application is the same as the DUNS number your organization used when it registered with the Central Contractor Registry.

Applicants are advised to complete the Application for Federal Assistance (Form SF 424) first. Grants.gov will automatically insert the correct CFDA and program name automatically wherever needed on other forms.

NOTE: Please do not attach any narratives, supporting files, or application components to the Standard Form (SF 424). Although this form accepts attachments, the Department of Education will only review materials/files attached in accordance with the instructions provided within this application.

Part 2: Budget Information

ED Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (ED Form 524)

This part of your application contains information about the Federal funding you are requesting. Remember that you must provide all requested budget information for each year of the project (up to 60 months) and the total column in order to be considered for Federal funding. Specific instructions for completing the budget forms are provided within this application package.

Instructions for completing ED Form 524 Section A:

Name of Institution/Organization: Enter the name of the applicant in the space provided.

Personnel (line 1): Enter project personnel salaries and wages only. Include fees and expenses for consultants on line 6.

Fringe Benefits (line 2): The institution's normal fringe benefits contribution may be charged to the program. Leave this line blank if fringe benefits applicable to direct salaries and wages are treated as part of the indirect cost.

Travel (line 3): Indicate the travel costs of employees and participants only. Include travel of persons such as consultants on line 6. Applicants must set aside adequate funds within their proposed budget to send a project director and at least two individuals from each school included in the application to a two-day technical assistance meeting in Washington, DC, in each year of the project period.

Equipment (line 4): Indicate the cost of tangible, non-expendable personal property that has a usefulness greater than one year and acquisition costs that are the lesser of the capitalization level established by the applicant entity for financial statement purposes or \$5,000 per article. Lower limits may be established to maintain consistency with the applicant's policy.

Supplies (line 5): Show all tangible, expendable personal property. Direct supplies and materials differ from equipment in that they are consumable, expendable, and of a relatively low unit cost. *Supplies purchased with grant funds should directly benefit the grant project and be necessary for achieving the goals of the project.*

Contractual (line 6): The contractual category should include all costs specifically incurred with actions that the applicant takes in conjunction with an established internal procurement system. Include consultant fees, expenses, and travel costs in this category if the consultant's services are obtained through a written binding agreement or contract.

Construction (line 7): Not applicable.

Other (line 8): Indicate all direct costs not covered on lines 1-6. For example, include costs such as space rental, required fees, honoraria and travel (where a contract is not in place for services), training, and communication and printing costs. *Do not include costs that are included in the indirect cost rate.*

Total Direct Costs (line 9): The sum of lines 1-8.

Indirect Costs (line 10): Indicate the applicant's approved indirect cost rate, per sections 75.560 – 75.564 of EDGAR. If an applicant does not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement with a cognizant Federal agency, the applicant must apply to the Department for a temporary indirect cost rate if it wishes to charge indirect costs to the grant. For more information, go to the Department's website at: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/fipao/icgindex.html>.

Training Stipends (line 11): This line item is not applicable to this program. The training stipend line item only pertains to costs associated with long term training programs and college or university coursework, not workshops or short-term training supported by this program. *Salary stipends paid to teachers and other school personnel for participating in short-term professional development should be reported in Personnel (line 1).*

Total Cost (line 12): This should equal to sum of lines 9-11 (total direct costs + indirect + stipends). The sum for column one, labeled *Project Year 1 (a)*, should also be equal to item 15a on the application cover sheet (SF Form 424).

Part 3: ED Abstract Form

This section should be attached as a single document to the ED Abstract Form in accordance with the instructions found on Grants.gov and should be organized in the following manner and include the following parts in order to expedite the review process.

Project Abstract

- Applicants must submit a project abstract that briefly describes their proposed project.

Part 4: Project Narrative Attachment Form

This section should be attached as a single document to the Project Narrative Attachment Form in accordance with the instructions found on Grants.gov and should be organized in the following manner and include the following parts in order to expedite the review process.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents shows where and how the important sections of your proposal are organized and should not exceed **one** double spaced page.

Application Narrative

The application narrative responds to the selection criteria found in this application package and should follow the order of the selection criteria.

We encourage applicants to this section of the application to the equivalent of no more than **30** pages and adhere to the following guidelines:

- A “page” is 8.5" x 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, **except** titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, captions, and all text in charts, tables, and graphs.
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.
- Use size 12-point font.
- Begin numbering at the right bottom of the first page in Arabic numerals ("1") and number the pages consecutively throughout the document.
- Include all critical information in the program narrative.
- The recommended page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the budget narrative justification; the assurances and certifications; the table of contents; the project abstract; the proof of eligibility; the resumes; and the appendices.

Selection Criteria for Program Narrative

The maximum score for all selection criteria is 100 points. The points or weights assigned to each criterion are indicated in parentheses. Non-Federal peer reviewers will review each application. They will be asked to evaluate and score each program narrative against the following selection criteria:

A. Need for the Project (8).

In determining the need for the proposed project, we will consider the magnitude of the need for the services that will be provided and the activities that will be carried out by the proposed project.

B. Quality of the Project Design (25)

In determining the quality of the design of the proposed project, we will consider the extent to which—

- (1) Teachers, school administrators, parents and community stakeholders support the proposed project and have been and will continue to be involved in its development and implementation;
- (2) The applicant has carried out sufficient planning and preparatory activities to enable it to implement the proposed project during the school year in which the grant award will be made;

(3) School administrators, teachers, and other school employees will receive effective, ongoing technical assistance and support in implementing structural and instructional reforms;

(4) The applicant will offer all students a coherent sequence of rigorous English language arts, mathematics, and science courses that will provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation; and

(5) The proposed project is part of a districtwide strategy for high school redesign and strengthens the district's capacity to develop and implement smaller learning communities and improve student academic achievement as part of that strategy.

C. Quality of Project Services (45)

In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, we will consider the extent to which the proposed project is likely to be effective in--

(1) Creating an environment in which a core group of teachers and other adults within the school know the needs, interests, and aspirations of each student well, closely monitor each student's progress, and provide the academic and other support each student needs to succeed;

(2) Equipping all students with the reading/English language arts, mathematics, and science knowledge and skills they need to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without need for remediation;

(3) Helping students who enter high school with reading/English language arts or mathematics skills that are significantly below grade-level "catch up" quickly and attain proficiency by the end of the 10th grade;

(4) Providing teachers with the professional development, coaching, regular opportunities for collaboration with peers, and other supports needed to implement a rigorous curriculum and provide high-quality instruction;

(5) Increasing the participation of students, particularly low-income students, in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual credit courses; and

(6) Increasing the percentage of students who enter postsecondary education in the semester following high school graduation.

D. Support for Implementation (17)

In determining the adequacy of the support the applicant will provide for implementation of the proposed project, we will consider the extent to which--

(1) The management plan is likely to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget and includes clearly defined responsibilities and detailed timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;

- (2) The project director and other key personnel are qualified to carry out their responsibilities, and their time commitments are appropriate and adequate to implement the SLC project effectively;
- (3) The applicant will support the proposed project with funds provided under other Federal or State programs and local cash or in-kind resources; and
- (4) The requested grant amount and the project costs are sufficient to attain project goals and reasonable in relation to the objectives and design of the project.

E. Quality of the SLC Project Evaluation (5)

In determining the quality of the proposed project evaluation to be conducted by an independent, third-party evaluator, we consider the extent to which—

- (1) The evaluation will provide timely, regular, and useful feedback to the LEA and the participating schools on the success and progress of implementation, and identify areas for needed improvement; and
- (2) The independent evaluator is qualified to conduct the evaluation.

Part 5: Budget Narrative

This section should be attached as a single document to the Budget Narrative Attachment Form in accordance with the instructions found on Grants.gov. It should be organized in the following manner and include the following parts in order to expedite the review process.

Each application must also provide a Budget Narrative (which serves to meet the requirements of ED Form 524, Section C) for requested Federal funds. The Budget Narrative for requested Federal funds should provide a justification of how the money requested for each budget item will be spent.

This section requires an **itemized budget breakdown** for each project year and the **basis for estimating the costs** of personnel salaries, benefits, project staff travel, materials and supplies, consultants and subcontracts, indirect costs and any other projected expenditures. Be sure to complete an itemized budget breakdown and narrative for each year of the proposed project (up to 60 months).

The Budget Narrative provides an opportunity for the applicant to identify the nature and amount of the proposed expenditures. The applicant should provide sufficient detail to enable reviewers and project staff to understand how requested funds will be used, how much will be expended, and the relationship between the requested funds and project activities and outcomes.

Important Notes

- Applicants are encouraged to review OMB Circular A-187, *Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments*, in preparing their budget and budget narrative. Circular A-187 may be found at the following link:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a087/a87_2004.html

- Selection criterion D (4) asks reviewers to evaluate the extent to which “the requested grant amount and the project costs are sufficient to attain project goals and reasonable in relation to the objectives and design of the project.”

Suggested Guidelines for the Budget Narrative

In accordance with 34 CFR 75.232, Department of Education staff perform a cost analysis of the each recommended project to ensure that costs relate to the activities and objectives of the project, are reasonable, allowable and allocable. We may delete or reduce costs from the budget during this review. To facilitate the review of your Budget Narrative, we encourage each applicant to include the following information for each year of the project:

1. Personnel

- Provide the title and duties of each position to be compensated under this project.
- Provide the salary for each position under this project.
- Provide the amounts of time, such as hours or percentage of time to be expended by each position under this project.
- Explain the importance of each position to the success of the project.

- Provide the basis for cost estimates or computations.

2. Fringe Benefits

- Give the fringe benefit percentages of all personnel included under Personnel.
- Provide the rate and base on which fringe benefits are calculated.

3. Travel

- Explain the purpose of the travel, how it relates to project success, how it aligns with the project goals and objectives and which program participants or staff will participate.
- Submit an estimate for the number of trips, points of origin and destination, and purpose of travel.
- Submit an itemized estimate of transportation and/or subsistence costs for each trip.
- Provide the basis for cost estimates or computations.

1. Equipment

- Indicate the estimated unit cost for each item to be purchased.
- Identify each type of equipment.
- Provide adequate justification of the need for items of equipment to be purchased.
- Explain the purpose of the equipment, and how it relates to project success.
- Provide the basis for cost estimates or computations.

2. Supplies

- Provide an itemized estimate of materials and supplies by nature of expense or general category (e.g., instructional materials, office supplies, etc.).
- Explain the purpose of the supplies and how they relate to project success.
- Provide the basis for cost estimates or computations.

3. Contractual

- Provide the purpose and relation to project success.
- Describe the products to be acquired, and/or the professional services to be provided.
- Provide a brief justification for the use of the contractors selected.
- Identify the name(s) of the contracting party, including consultants, if available.
- Provide the cost per contractor.
- Provide the amount of time that the project will be working with the contractor(s).
- For professional services contracts, provide the amounts of time to be devoted to the project, including the costs to be charged to this proposed grant award.
- Provide a brief statement that you have followed the procedures for procurement under 34 CFR Parts 74.40 - 74.48 and Part 80.36.
- Provide the basis for cost estimates or computations.

4. Construction

- Not applicable.

5. Other

- List and identify items by major type or category (e.g., communications, printing, postage, equipment rental, etc.).
- Provide the cost per item (printing = \$500, postage = \$750).
- Provide the purpose for the expenditures and relation to project success.

- Provide the basis for cost estimates or computations.

6. Total Direct Costs

- The amount that is the sum of expenditures, per budget category, of lines 1-8.

7. Indirect Costs

- Identify indirect cost rate (if the applicant will charge indirect costs to the grant)
- *Note:* remember to provide a copy of the most recent approved indirect cost agreement in the Other Attachments form section of the application.

11. Training Stipends

- Not applicable.

12. Total Costs

- Sum total of direct costs, indirect costs, and stipends.
- Please provide total costs for each year of the project as well as grand total cost for the entire project period (up to 60 months)

Important Information Regarding Indirect Cost Rates

The Department of Education (ED) reimburses grantees for its portion of indirect costs that a grantee incurs in projects funded by the (Smaller Learning Communities Program, 84.215L). Any grantee charging indirect costs to a grant from this program must use the indirect cost rate (**ICR**), negotiated with its *cognizant agency*, i.e., either the Federal agency from which it has received the most direct funding, subject to indirect cost support, the particular agency specifically assigned cognizance by the Office of Management and Budget or the State agency that provides the most subgrant funds to the grantee.

Note: Applicants should pay special attention to specific questions on the application budget form (ED 524) about their cognizant agency and the ICR they are using in their budget.

If an applicant selected for funding under this program has not already established a current ICR with its cognizant agency as a result of current or previous funding, ED will require it to do so within 90 days after the date the grant was issued by ED. Applicants should be aware that ED is very often **not** the cognizant agency for its own grantees. Rather, ED accepts, for the purpose of funding its awards, the current ICR established by the appropriate cognizant agency.

An applicant that has not previously established an indirect cost rate with the Federal government or a State agency under a Federal program and that is selected for funding will not be allowed to charge its grant for indirect costs until it has negotiated a current indirect cost rate agreement with its cognizant agency.

Applicants are encouraged to use their accountant (or CPA) to calculate an indirect cost rate using information in the IRS Form 990, audited financial statements, actual cost data or a *cost policy statement* that such applicants are urged to prepare (but NOT submit to ED) during the application process.

Applicants should use this proposed rate in their application materials and indicate which of the above methods was used to calculate the rate

Part 6: Other Attachments Form

This section should be attached as a single document to the Other Attachments Form in accordance with the instructions found on Grants.gov.

- SLC Grant Application Summary Page** (High Schools Included in the Application)
- Competitive Preference Priority:** In order to receive the additional points under the competitive preference priority, an applicant must: (1) identify the school or schools included in the application that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; and (2) provide evidence to substantiate that the school or schools have been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring (e.g., a copy of a letter or other communication from a State Educational Agency. A general statement of an applicant's qualification for the competitive preference priority is **not** sufficient to meet this requirement.
- Student Placement:** A description of how students will be selected or placed in an SLC and an assurance that students will not be placed according to ability or any other measure, but will be placed at random or by student/parent choice and not pursuant to testing or other judgments.
- Performance Indicators:** Baseline data and annual performance objectives for each year of the project for each of the following:
 - The percentage of students who score at the proficient and advanced levels on the reading/language arts and mathematics assessments used by the State to determine whether a school has made adequate yearly progress under part A of title I of the ESEA, as well as these percentages disaggregated by subject matter and the following subgroups:
 - Major racial and ethnic groups.
 - Students with disabilities.
 - Students with limited English proficiency.
 - Economically disadvantaged students.
 - The school's graduation rate, as defined in the State's approved accountability plan for part A of title I of the ESEA.
 - The percentage of graduates who enroll in postsecondary education, advanced training, or a registered apprenticeship program in the semester following graduation.
- School Report Cards**
- Individual Resumes for Project Directors and Key Personnel**

Provide brief resumes or job descriptions that describe their qualifications for the responsibilities they will carry out under the project.

☐ Copy of Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

If an applicant decides to charge indirect costs to this program and there is an indirect cost rate in place, the applicant shall provide a copy of the most recent **approved** Indirect Cost Agreement in the Other Attachments form section of the application.

If an applicant decides to charge indirect costs to this program and there is a **no** indirect cost rate in place, the applicant must follow the instructions found in the Important Information Regarding Indirect Cost Rates section found in this application package.

Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) Program Summary Page

1. LEA Name and Address:

NCES District ID: (for help, please see http://www.nces.ed.gov/globallocator/)

2. Name and Address of Each School Named in the SLC Application:

Name of School	Address	Number of students enrolled
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Part 7: Assurances and Certifications

Be certain to complete all required assurances and certifications in Grants.gov, and include all required information in the appropriate place on each form. The assurances and certifications required for this application are:

- Assurances – Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B Form)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF LLL Form)
- Grants.gov Lobbying Form
- Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion- Lower Tier Covered Transactions (form ED 80-0014)
- General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Requirements – Section 427

Reporting and Accountability

Successful applicants with multi-year grants must submit an **annual performance report** demonstrating their progress in meeting approved project objectives. Grantees must also provide the most current financial and performance measure data for each year of the project.

At the end of the project period, applicants will also be required to submit a **final performance report**.

Under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the following performance indicators have been established to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the Smaller Learning Communities Program:

- The percentage of students who score at the proficient and advanced levels on the reading/language arts and mathematics assessments used by the State to determine whether a school has made adequate yearly progress under part A of title I of the ESEA, as well as these percentages disaggregated by subject matter and the following subgroups:
 - Major racial and ethnic groups.
 - Students with disabilities.
 - Students with limited English proficiency.
 - Economically disadvantaged students.
- The school's graduation rate, as defined in the State's approved accountability plan for part A of title I of the ESEA.
- The percentage of graduates who enroll in postsecondary education, advanced training, or registered apprenticeship programs in the semester following graduation.