DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA No. 84.283A]

Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers Program

Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 1995.

Purpose of Program: The purpose of this program is to establish a networked system of 15 comprehensive regional assistance centers to provide comprehensive training and technical assistance related to the administration and implementation of programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), to States, local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, tribes, community-based organizations, and other recipients of funds under the Act.

This new approach will replace the Department's current method of developing technical assistance that involves more than 40 entities providing categorical and often fragmented technical assistance. A new national technical assistance system will aid in: implementing school reform programs in a manner that improves teaching and learning for all students; coordinating reform programs with other Federal, State, and local education plans and activities, so that all students, particularly students at risk of educational failure, are provided opportunities to meet challenging State content standards and challenging State student performance standards; and adopting, adapting, and implementing promising and proven practices for improving teaching and learning.

Eligible Applicants: (1) For regions (I-V, VIII, XI, XII, XIV and XV), public or private nonprofit entities or consortia of these entities are eligible to apply. (2) For regions that serve a significant population of Indian or Alaska Native students (Regions VI, VII, IX, X, and XIII), eligible applicants are consortia of public or private entities that include a tribally controlled community college or other Indian organization.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: August 4, 1995. Deadline for Intergovernmental

Review: September 29, 1995. *Applications Available:* June 21, 1995.

Available Funds: The amount available for the first year is \$55 million. Since amounts for succeeding years depend on appropriations by Congress, budget estimates should assume level funding for 5 years.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$2.5 million–\$4.5 million per year.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$3.67 million. *Estimated Number of Awards:* 15 Cooperative Agreements (see Definitions section).

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

Project Period: Up to 60 months. Applicable Regulations: The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR Parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85 and 86.

Definitions

(a) "Grant" means an award of financial assistance in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, made by the Federal Government to an eligible recipient. The term includes a cooperative agreement except where otherwise provided by statute or regulation (see § 74.3 or § 80.3 of EDGAR).

(b) "Cooperative agreement" means a type of grant awarded by the Department when it anticipates having substantial involvement with the recipient during the performance of a funded project.

Selection Criteria

The Secretary will use the following criteria to evaluate applications for this competition. The maximum total score is 100. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses with the criterion.

1. Meeting the purposes of the authorizing statute (30 Points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine how well the project will meet the purposes of Title XIII of the ESEA, including consideration of—

(a) The objectives of the proposed Center;

(b) How the objectives of the proposed Center further the purposes of Title XIII of the ESEA.

Under section 13002 of ESEA, the purpose of Title XIII is to create a national technical assistance and dissemination system to make available to States, local educational agencies, tribes, schools, and other recipients of funds under ESEA technical assistance in—

(1) Administering and implementing programs under the ESEA;

(2) Implementing school reform programs in a manner that improves teaching and learning for all students;

(3) Coordinating reform programs with other Federal, State, and local education plans and activities, so that all students, particularly students at risk of educational failure, are provided opportunities to meet challenging State content standards and challenging State student performance standards; and (4) Adopting, adapting, and implementing promising and proven practices for improving teaching and learning.

Under section 13101, the specific purpose of Part A—Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers is to establish a networked system of 15 comprehensive regional assistance centers to provide comprehensive training and technical assistance, related to administration and implementation of programs under ESEA, to States, local educational agencies, schools, tribes, communitybased organizations, and other recipients of ESEA funds.

Section 13001 of ESEA further specifies that technical assistance efforts under Title XIII are intended to—

(1) Help schools and school systems focus on improving opportunities for all children to meet challenging State content standards and challenging State student performance standards, as those schools and systems implement programs under ESEA;

(2) Help States, LEAs, tribes, participating colleges and universities, and schools integrate Federal, State, and local education programs in ways that contribute to improving schools and entire school systems; and

(3) Coordinate technical assistance in support of ESEA programs with the Department's regional offices, the regional educational laboratories, the State Literacy Resource Centers, vocational resource centers, and other technical assistance efforts supported by the Department.

2. Extent of Need for the Center (20 Points). The Secretary reviews each application to determine the extent to which the project meets specific needs recognized in Title XIII of ESEA, including consideration of—

(a) The needs addressed by the proposed Center;

(b) How the applicant identified those needs;

(c) How those needs will be met by the proposed Center;

(d) The benefits to be gained by meeting those needs.

Section 13001 of ESEA enumerates several needs for technical assistance, including—

(1) The need of States, LEAs, tribes, and schools serving students with special needs, such as students with limited-English proficiency and students with disabilities, for comprehensive technical assistance in order to use funds under ESEA to provide those students with opportunities to learn to challenging State content standards and challenging