or absolute preference over other applications:

Invitational Priority 1—Applications to support new ways of ensuring equal access to postsecondary education, and to improve rates of retention and program completion, especially for low-income and underrepresented minority students, whose retention and completion rates continue to lag disturbingly behind those of other groups.

Invitational Priority 2—Applications to create programs that prepare students for entering the workforce and that serve the continuing education and retraining needs of workers.

Invitational Priority 3—Applications to improve the campus climate by creating an environment that is safe, welcoming, and conducive to learning for all students.

Invitational Priority 4—Applications to restructure institutions in ways that reassert the primacy of teaching and learning; and to increase learning productivity—that is, to transform programs and teaching to promote more student learning relative to institutional resources expended.

Invitational Priority 5—Applications to promote cooperation between colleges and universities and elementary and secondary schools in order to improve students' preparation for, access to, and success in college. In particular, the Secretary seeks innovative school-college partnerships to improve articulation and develop new ways to improve both pre-service and in-service teacher education at both the elementary and secondary level.

Invitational Priority 6—Applications to support innovative reforms of undergraduate, graduate, and professional curricula that improve not only what students learn, but how they learn.

Invitational Priority 7—Applications to support the development of faculty as professionals by assessing and rewarding effective teaching; helping institutions and faculty find ways to increase their emphasis on teaching and other means of involvement with student learners; promoting new and more effective teaching methods; and improving the preparation—especially the teaching skills—of graduate students who will be future faculty members.

Invitational Priority 8—Recognizing that many innovative postsecondary educational programs have already been locally developed and implemented, the Secretary invites applicants to disseminate these programs to other institutions.

Selection Criteria

In evaluating applications for grants under this program competition, the Secretary uses the following selection criteria chosen from those listed in 34 CFR 630.32:

- (a) Significance for Postsecondary Education. The Secretary reviews each proposed project for its significance in improving postsecondary education by determining the extent to which it would—
- (1) Address an important problem or need;
- (2) Represent an improvement upon, or important departure from, existing practice;
- (3) Involve learner-centered improvements;
- (4) Achieve far-reaching impact through improvements that will be useful in a variety of ways and in a variety of settings; and
- (5) Increase the cost-effectiveness of services.
- (b) *Feasibility*. The Secretary reviews each proposed project for its feasibility by determining the extent to which—
- (1) The proposed project represents an appropriate response to the problem or need addressed;
- (2) The applicant is capable of carrying out the proposed project, as evidenced by, for example—
- (i) The applicant's understanding of the problem or need;
- (ii) The quality of the project design, including objectives, approaches, and evaluation plan;
- (iii) The adequacy of resources, including money, personnel, facilities, equipment, and supplies;
- (iv) The qualifications of key personnel who would conduct the project; and
- (v) The applicant's relevant prior experience;
- (3) The applicant and any other participating organizations are committed to the success of the proposed project, as evidenced by, for example—
- (i) Contribution of resources by the applicant and by participating organizations;
 - (ii) Their prior work in the area; and
- (iii) The potential for continuation of the proposed project beyond the period of funding (unless the project would be self-terminating); and
- (4) The proposed project demonstrates potential for dissemination to or adaptation by other organizations, and shows evidence of interest by potential users.
- (c) Appropriateness of Funding Projects. The Secretary reviews each application to determine whether

support of the proposed project by the Secretary is appropriate in terms of availability of other funding sources for the proposed activities.

Under 630.32, the Secretary determines the methods that will be used in applying the selection criteria.

For preapplications (preliminary applications), the Secretary will give greater weight to the selection criteria under Significance for Postsecondary Education. The Secretary will give equal weight to Feasibility, and Appropriateness of Funding Projects. For final applications (applications), all criteria are equally important. Within each of these criteria, the Secretary gives equal weight to each of the subcriteria. In applying the criteria, the Secretary first analyzes a preapplication or application in terms of each individual criterion and subcriterion. The Secretary then bases the final judgment of an application on an overall assessment of the degree to which the applicant addresses all section criteria.

For Applications or Information Contact: Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue SW., Room 3100, ROB-3, Washington, DC 20202-5175. Telephone: (202) 708-5750 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday, to order applications or for information. Individuals may also request applications by submitting the name of the competition, their name, and postal mailing address to the e-mail address FIPSE@ED.GOV. Individuals may obtain the application text from Internet address http://www.ed.gov/prog—info/ FIPSE/. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

Information about the Department's funding opportunities, including copies of application notices for discretionary grant competitions, can be viewed on the Department's electronic bulletin board (ED Board), telephone (202) 260–9950; or on the Internet Gopher Server at GOPHER.ED.GOV (under Announcements, Bulletins, and Press Releases). However, the official application notice for a discretionary grant competition is the notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1135–1135a–3.