

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Postsecondary Education

Washington, DC 20006-8510



**APPLICATION FOR GRANTS
UNDER THE
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
PROGRAM**

(CFDA NUMBER: 84.042A)

Form Approved

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Application for Grants Under the Student Support Services Program

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July 2004

Dear Student Support Services Program Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in applying for a grant under the Student Support Services (SSS) Program. This letter highlights a few items in the application package that will be important to you in applying for a grant. You should review the entire application package carefully before preparing and submitting your application.

We are requiring that applications for FY 2005 grants under the SSS Program be submitted electronically using e-Application available through the Department's e-Grants system. The e-Grants system is accessible through its portal page at:
<http://e-grants.ed.gov>

An applicant who is unable to submit an application through the e-Grants system may submit a written request for a waiver of the electronic submission requirement. Additional information about e-Application submission requirements is in the Notice Inviting Applications and in the transmittal instructions, which are included in this package.

In addressing the "Need for the Project" selection criterion, please provide only data that relates to students who may be assisted by your project, i.e., only students enrolled or accepted for enrollment at your institution. We will not consider demographic data of other students for the purpose of determining the extent to which you demonstrate need for the grant.

All applicants must include a core objective and discussion for **persistence**, **good academic standing**, and **graduation** (which includes transfer to a four-year institution in the case of a two-year school), as outlined in Part III, the Program Narrative section of the application. The objectives for persistence and graduation must be measured based upon cohorts and must address the need identified in the "Need for the Project" section. The measurement for two-year institutions should be over a three-year period and four-year institutions should measure over a six-year period. For example, an acceptable persistence objective for a two-year institution would measure the percentage of each cohort that remain enrolled in the institution and who transfer or graduate each year over the measurement period. A cohort is defined as all the students accepted into the SSS project during each project year. Multi-layered or compound objectives (those where the outcomes are dependent upon multiple conditions) are not acceptable.

All applicants must provide a detailed Budget Narrative for the first twelve-month budget period. It is not necessary to provide a budget summary for the total grant period requested, up to 5 years. The funding level for the first year is stipulated in the Notice Inviting Applications and the Department will determine the funding levels for each additional year of the grant award. Grants are awarded for four years with some applicants being eligible for a fifth year of funding. An annual performance report will be used to determine progress.

All applicants are required to adhere to the page limit of seventy-five (75) pages -- for the Budget Narrative and Program Narrative. This page limit will be strictly enforced. Applications that exceed the page limit will not be reviewed. The Notice Inviting Applications, published in the Federal Register, contains specific information governing page limits.

If you submit your application in hard copy, after requesting a waiver of the electronic submission requirement, please submit an original application and three copies. We would appreciate a disk copy of the application, also.

Currently funded SSS Program grantees should note that prior experience points will be assessed for Project Years 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04. You must submit the enclosed form (Prior Experience – Accomplishments to Date) to be considered for prior experience points for the 2003-2004 year.

The application must be submitted on or before the deadline date. Applications submitted late will not be accepted. We suggest that you submit your application at least one day before the deadline date. The Department is required to enforce the established deadline to ensure fairness to all applicants. No changes or additions to an application will be accepted after the deadline date.

If you have questions regarding the application package, please contact Deborah Walsh or Wendy Lawrence at the Federal TRIO Programs, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, N.W., suite 7000, Washington, DC 20006-8510, ATTN: CFDA 84.042A. Ms. Walsh and Mrs. Lawrence may be reached by telephone at (202) 502-7600, or by Internet at OPE_TRIO@ed.gov.

Best regards,

Wilbert Bryant
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Higher Education Programs

PLEASE NOTE

Student Support Services (SSS) Program

Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2005 is available at:

<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/2004-3/070804b.html>

Please read the Notice carefully before preparing your application for submission.

Authorizing Statute

Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended

CHAPTER 1—FEDERAL TRIO PROGRAMS SEC. 402A. 20 U.S.C. 1070a–11

PROGRAM AUTHORITY; AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

- (a) GRANTS AND CONTRACTS AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary shall, in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, carry out a program of making grants and contracts designed to identify qualified individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, to prepare them for a program of postsecondary education, to provide support services for such students who are pursuing programs of postsecondary education, to motivate and prepare students for doctoral programs, and to train individuals serving or preparing for service in programs and projects so designed.
- (b) RECIPIENTS, DURATION, AND SIZE. —
- (1) RECIPIENTS.—For the purposes described in subsection(a), the Secretary is authorized, without regard to section 3709of the Revised Statutes (41 U.S.C. 5), to make grants to, and contracts with, institutions of higher education, public and private agencies and organizations, combinations of such institutions, agencies and organizations, and in exceptional circumstances, secondary schools, for planning, developing, or carrying out one or more of the services assisted under this chapter.
- (2) DURATION.—Grants or contracts made under this chapter shall be awarded for a period of 4 years, except that—(A) the Secretary shall award such grants or contracts for 5 years to applicants whose peer review scores were in the highest 10 percent of scores of all applicants receiving grants or contracts in each program competition for the same award year;(B) grants made under section 402G shall be awarded for a period of 2 years; and(C) grants under section 402H shall be awarded for a period determined by the Secretary.
- (3) MINIMUM GRANTS.—Unless the institution or agency requests a smaller amount, individual grants under this chapter shall be no less than—
- (A) \$170,000 for programs authorized by sections 402D and 402G;
(B) \$180,000 for programs authorized by sections 402B and 402F; and
(C) \$190,000 for programs authorized by sections 402C and 402E
- (c) PROCEDURES FOR AWARDING GRANTS AND CONTRACTS.—
- (1) APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.—An eligible entity that desires to receive a grant or contract under this chapter shall submit an application to the Secretary in such manner and form, and containing such information and assurances, as the Secretary may reasonably require.
- (2) PRIOR EXPERIENCE.—In making grants under this chapter, the Secretary shall consider each applicant’s prior experience of service delivery under the particular program for which funds are sought. The level of consideration given the factor of prior experience shall not vary from the level of consideration given such factor during fiscal

years 1994 through 1997, except that grants made under section 402H shall not be given prior experience consideration.

(3) ORDER OF AWARDS; PROGRAM FRAUD.—

(A) Except with respect to grants made under sections 402G and 402H and as provided in subparagraph the Secretary shall award grants and contracts under this chapter in the order of the scores received by the application for such grant or contract in the peer review process required under paragraph (4) and adjusted for prior experience in accordance with paragraph (2) of this subsection.

(B) The Secretary is not required to provide assistance to a program otherwise eligible for assistance under this chapter, if the Secretary has determined that such program has involved the fraudulent use of funds under this chapter.

(4) PEER REVIEW PROCESS.—

(A) The Secretary shall ensure that, to the extent practicable, members of groups underrepresented in higher education, including African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, and Native American Pacific Islanders (including Native Hawaiians), are represented as readers of applications submitted under this chapter. The Secretary shall also ensure that persons from urban and rural backgrounds are represented as readers.

(B) The Secretary shall ensure that each application submitted under this chapter is read by at least three readers who are not employees of the Federal Government (other than as readers of applications)

(5) NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS AND CONTRACTS.—The Secretary shall not limit the number of applications submitted by an entity under any program authorized under this chapter if the additional applications describe programs serving different populations or campuses.

(6) COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS.—

The Secretary shall encourage coordination of programs assisted under this chapter with other programs for disadvantaged students operated by the sponsoring institution or agency, regardless of the funding source of such programs. The Secretary shall not limit an entity's eligibility to receive funds under this chapter because such entity sponsors a program similar to the program to be assisted under this chapter, regardless of the funding source of such program. The Secretary shall permit the Director of a program receiving funds under this chapter to administer one or more additional programs for disadvantaged students operated by the sponsoring institution or agency, regardless of the funding sources of such programs.

(7) APPLICATION STATUS.—The Secretary shall inform each entity operating programs under this chapter regarding the status of their application for continued funding at least 8 months prior to the expiration of the grant or contract. The Secretary, in the case of an entity that is continuing to operate a successful program under this chapter, shall ensure that the startup date for a new grant or contract for such program immediately follows the termination of the preceding grant or contract so that no interruption of funding occurs for such successful reapplicants. The Secretary shall inform each entity requesting assistance under this chapter for a new program regarding the status of their application at least 8 months prior to the proposed startup date of such program.

(d) OUTREACH.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct outreach activities to ensure that entities eligible for assistance under this chapter submit applications proposing programs that serve geographic areas and eligible populations which have been underserved by the programs assisted under this chapter.

(2) NOTICE.—In carrying out the provisions of paragraph(1), the Secretary shall notify the entities described in subsection(b) of the availability of assistance under this subsection not less

than 120 days prior to the deadline for submission of applications under this chapter and shall consult national, State, and regional organizations about candidates for notification.

(3) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall provide technical training to applicants for projects and programs authorized under this chapter. The Secretary shall give priority to serving programs and projects that serve geographic areas and eligible populations which have been underserved by the programs assisted under this chapter. Technical training activities shall include the provision of information on authorizing legislation, goals and objectives of the program, required activities, eligibility requirements, the application process and application deadlines, and assistance in the development of program proposals and the completion of program applications. Such training shall be furnished at conferences, seminars, and workshops to be conducted at not less than 10 sites throughout the United States to ensure that all areas of the United States with large concentrations of eligible participants are served.

(4) SPECIAL RULE.—The Secretary may contract with eligible entities to conduct the outreach activities described in this subsection.

(e) DOCUMENTATION OF STATUS AS A LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUAL.—

(1) Except in the case of an independent student, as defined in section 480(d), documentation of an individual's status pursuant to subsection (g)

(2) shall be made by providing the Secretary with—

- (A) A signed statement from the individual's parent or legal guardian;
- (B) Verification from another governmental source;
- (C) A signed financial aid application; or
- (D) A signed United States or Puerto Rico income tax return.

(2) In the case of an independent student, as defined in section 480(d), documentation of an individual's status pursuant to subsection (g)(2) shall be made by providing the Secretary with—

- (A) A signed statement from the individual;
- (B) Verification from another governmental source;
- (C) A signed financial aid application; or
- (D) A signed United States or Puerto Rico income tax return.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the purpose of making grants and contracts under this chapter, there are authorized to be appropriated \$700,000,000 for fiscal year 1999, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years. Of the amount appropriated under this chapter, the Secretary may use no more than one half of 1 percent of such amount to obtain additional qualified readers and additional staff to review applications, to increase the level of oversight monitoring, to support impact studies, program assessments and reviews, and to provide technical assistance to potential applicants and current grantees. In expending these funds, the Secretary shall give priority to the additional administrative requirements provided in the Higher Education Amendments of 1992, to outreach activities, and to obtaining additional readers. The Secretary shall report to Congress by October 1, 1994, on the use of these funds.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—For the purpose of this chapter:

(1) FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT.—The term “first-generation college student” means—

(A) An individual both of whose parents did not complete a baccalaureate degree;

or

(B) In the case of any individual who regularly resided with and received support from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree.

(2) **LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUAL.**—The term “low-income individual” means an individual from a family whose taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of an amount equal to the poverty level determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census.

(3) **VETERAN ELIGIBILITY.**—No veteran shall be deemed ineligible to participate in any program under this chapter by reason of such individual’s age who—

(A) served on active duty for a period of more than 180 days, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and was discharged or released there from under conditions other than dishonorable; or

(B) served on active duty after January 31, 1955, and was discharged or released there from because of a service connected disability.

(4) **WAIVER.**—The Secretary may waive the service requirements in subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (3) if the Secretary determines the application of the service requirements to a veteran will defeat the purpose of a program under this chapter.

Sec. 402D HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 SEC. 402D. 20 U.S.C. 1070a–14 STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES.

(a) **PROGRAM AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary shall carry out a program to be known as student support services which shall be designed—

(1) To increase college retention and graduation rates for eligible students;

(2) To increase the transfer rates of eligible students from 2-year to 4-year institutions; and

(3) To foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of low-income and first generation college students and individuals with disabilities.

(b) **PERMISSIBLE SERVICES.**—A student support services project assisted under this chapter may provide services such as—

(1) Instruction in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, and other subjects necessary for success beyond secondary school;

(2) Personal counseling;

(3) Academic advice and assistance in course selection;

(4) Tutorial services and counseling and peer counseling;

(5) Exposure to cultural events and academic programs not usually available to disadvantaged students;

(6) Activities designed to acquaint students participating in the project with the range of career options available to them;

(7) Activities designed to assist students participating in the project in securing admission and financial assistance for enrollment in graduate and professional programs;

(8) Activities designed to assist students currently enrolled in 2-year institutions in securing admission and financial assistance for enrollment in a four-year program of postsecondary education;

(9) Mentoring programs involving faculty or upper class students, or a combination thereof; and

(10) Programs and activities as described in paragraphs (1) through (9) which are specially designed for students of limited English proficiency.

(c) **SPECIAL RULE.**—

(1) **USE FOR STUDENT AID.**—A recipient of a grant that undertakes any of the permissible services identified in subsection

(b) may, in addition, use such funds to provide grant aid to students. A grant provided under this paragraph shall not exceed the maximum appropriated Pell Grant or, be less than the minimum appropriated Pell Grant, for the current academic year. In making grants to students under this subsection, an institution shall ensure that adequate consultation takes place between the student support service program office and the institution’s financial aid office.

(2) **ELIGIBLE STUDENTS.**—For purposes of receiving grant aid under this subsection, eligible students shall be current participants in the student support services program offered by the institution and be—

(A) students who are in their first 2 years of postsecondary education and who are receiving Federal Pell Grants under subpart 1; or

(B) students who have completed their first 2 years of postsecondary education and who are receiving Federal Pell Grants under subpart 1 if the institution demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that—

(i) these students are at high risk of dropping out; and

(ii) it will first meet the needs of all its eligible first- and second-year students for services under this paragraph.

(3) DETERMINATION OF NEED.—A grant provided to a student under paragraph (1) shall not be considered in determining that student's need for grant or work assistance under this title, except that in no case shall the total amount of student financial assistance awarded to a student under this title exceed that student's cost of attendance, as defined in section 472.

(4) MATCHING REQUIRED.—A recipient of a grant who uses such funds for the purpose described in paragraph (1) shall match the funds used for such purpose, in cash, from non-Federal funds, in an amount that is not less than 33 percent of the total amount of funds used for that purpose. This paragraph shall not apply to any grant recipient that is an institution of higher education eligible to receive funds under part A or B of title III or title V.

(5) RESERVATION.—In no event may a recipient use more than 20 percent of the funds received under this section for grant aid.

(6) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds received by a grant recipient that are used under this subsection shall be used to supplement, and not supplant, non-Federal funds expended for student support services programs.

(c) REQUIREMENTS FOR APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS.—In approving applications for student support services projects under this chapter for any fiscal year, the Secretary shall—

(1) Require an assurance that not less than two-thirds of the persons participating in the project proposed to be carried out under any application—

(A) be individuals with disabilities; or

(B) be low-income individuals who are first generation college students;

(2) Require an assurance that the remaining students participating in the project proposed to be carried out under any application be low-income individuals, first generation college students, or individuals with disabilities;

(3) Require an assurance that not less than one-third of the individuals with disabilities participating in the project be low-income individuals;

(4) Require that there be a determination by the institution, with respect to each participant in such project, that the participant has a need for academic support in order to pursue successfully a program of education beyond secondary school;

(5) Require that such participants be enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the institution which is the recipient of the grant or contract; and

(6) Consider, in addition to such other criteria as the Secretary may prescribe, the institution's effort, and where applicable past history, in—

(A) Providing sufficient financial assistance to meet the full financial need of each student in the project; and

(B) Maintaining the loan burden of each such student at a manageable level.

Student Support Services Program Regulations

[Code of Federal Regulations]

[Title 34, Volume 3]

[Revised as of July 1, 2003]

From the U.S. Government Printing Office via GPO Access

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TITLE 34--EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PART 646--STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

Subpart A--General

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Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 1070a-14, unless otherwise noted.

Source: 61 FR 38537, July 24, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A--General

Sec. 646.1 What is the Student Support Services Program?

The Student Support Services Program provides grants for projects designed to--

- (a) Increase the retention and graduation rates of eligible students;
- (b) Increase the transfer rate of eligible students from two-year to four-year institutions; and
- (c) Foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of low-income and first generation college students and individuals with disabilities through services such as those described in Sec. 646.4.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 1070a-14)

Sec. 646.2 Who is eligible to receive a grant?

An institution of higher education or a combination of institutions of higher education is eligible to receive a grant to carry out a Student Support Services project.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-14)

Sec. 646.3 Who is eligible to participate in a Student Support Services project?

A student is eligible to participate in a Student Support Services project if the student meets all of the following requirements:

- (a) Is a citizen or national of the United States or meets the residency requirements for Federal student financial assistance.
- (b) Is enrolled at the grantee institution or accepted for enrollment in the next academic term at that institution.
- (c) Has a need for academic support, as determined by the grantee, in order to pursue successfully a postsecondary educational program.
- (d) Is--
 - (1) A low-income individual;
 - (2) A first generation college student; or
 - (3) An individual with disabilities.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-14)

Sec. 646.4 What activities and services may a project provide?

A Student Support Services project may provide services such as:

- (a) Instruction in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, and other subjects necessary for success beyond secondary school.
- (b) Personal counseling.
- (c) Academic advice and assistance in course selection.
- (d) Tutorial services and counseling and peer counseling.
- (e) Exposure to cultural events and academic programs not usually available to disadvantaged students.
- (f) Activities designed to acquaint students participating in the project with the range of career options available.
- (g) Activities designed to secure admission and financial assistance for enrollment in graduate and professional programs.
- (h) Activities designed to assist students currently enrolled in two-year institutions in securing admission and financial assistance for enrollment in a four-year program of postsecondary education.
- (i) Mentoring programs involving faculty or upper class students, or any combination of faculty members and upper class students.
- (j) Programs and activities as described in paragraphs (a) through (i) of this section that are specifically designed for students of limited English proficiency.
- (k) Other activities designed to meet the purposes of the Student Support Services Program stated in Sec. 646.1.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-14)

Sec. 646.5 How long is a project period?

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, a project period under the Student Support Services Program is four years.

(b) The Secretary approves a project period of five years for applicants that score in the highest ten percent of all applicants approved for new grants under the criteria in Sec. 646.21.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11)

Sec. 646.6 What regulations apply?

The following regulations apply to the Student Support Services Program:

- (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 82, 85 and 86.
- (b) The regulations in this part 646.

Sec. 646.7 What definitions apply?

(a) *Definitions in the Act.* The following terms used in this part are defined in sections 402(A)(g), 481, or 1201(a) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, as amended:

First generation college student
Institution of higher education
Low-income individual

(b) *Definitions in EDGAR.* The following terms used in this part are defined in 34 CFR 77.1:

Applicant
Application
Award
Budget
Budget Period
Department
EDGAR
Equipment
Facilities
Fiscal year
Grant
Grant Period
Grantee
Project
Project period
Public
Secretary
Supplies

(c) *Other definitions.* The following definitions also apply to this part:

Academic need with reference to a student means a student whom the grantee determines needs one or more of the services stated under Sec. 646.4 to succeed in a postsecondary educational program.

Combination of institutions of higher education means two or more institutions of higher education that have entered into a cooperative agreement for the purpose of carrying out a common objective, or an entity designated or created by a group of institutions of higher education for the purpose of carrying out a common objective on their behalf.

Different Campus means an institutional site that is geographically apart from and independent of the main campus of the institution. The Secretary considers a location of an institution to be independent of the main campus if the location--

- (1) Is permanent in nature;
- (2) Offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential;
- (3) Has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and
- (4) Has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

Different population of participants means a group of--

- (1) Low-income, first-generation college students; or
- (2) Disabled students.

Individual with disabilities means a person who has a diagnosed physical or mental impairment that substantially limits that person's ability to participate in the educational experiences and opportunities offered by the grantee institution.

Limited English proficiency with reference to an individual, means a person whose native language is other than English and who has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to deny that individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms in which English is the language of instruction.

Participant means an individual who--

- (1) Is determined to be eligible to participate in the project under Sec. 646.3; and
- (2) Receives project services that the grantee has determined to be sufficient to increase the individual's chances for success in a postsecondary educational program.

Sufficient financial assistance means the amount of financial aid offered a Student Support Services student, inclusive of Federal, State, local, private, and institutional aid which, together with parent or student contributions, is equal to the cost of attendance as determined by a financial aid officer at the institution.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 1070a-14)

Subpart B--How Does One Apply for an Award?

Sec. 646.10 How many applications for a Student Support Services award may an eligible applicant submit?

The Secretary accepts more than one application from an eligible applicant so long as each additional application describes a project that serves a different campus, or a different population of participants who cannot readily be served by a single project.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 1070a-14)

Sec. 646.11 What assurances must an applicant include in an application?

An applicant shall assure in its application that--

- (a) At least two-thirds of the students it will serve in its Student Support Services project will be--
 - (1) Low-income individuals who are first generation college students; or
 - (2) Individuals with disabilities;
- (b) The remaining students it will serve will be low-income individuals, first generation college students, or individuals with disabilities;
- (c) Not less than one-third of the individuals with disabilities will be low-- income individuals; and
- (d) Each student participating in the project will be offered sufficient financial assistance to meet that student's full financial need.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1840-0017)

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-14)

Subpart C--How Does the Secretary Make a Grant?

Sec. 646.20 How does the Secretary decide which new grants to make?

- (a) The Secretary evaluates an application for a new grant as follows:
 - (1)(i) The Secretary evaluates the application on the basis of the selection criteria in Sec. 646.21.
 - (ii) The maximum score for all the criteria in Sec. 646.21 is 100 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses with the criterion.
 - (2)(i) If an application for a new grant proposes to continue to serve substantially the same population or campus that the applicant is serving under an expiring grant, the Secretary evaluates the applicant's prior experience in delivering services under the expiring grant on the basis of the criteria in Sec. 646.22.
 - (ii) The maximum score for all the criteria in Sec. 646.22 is 15 points. The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses with the criterion.
- (b) The Secretary makes new grants in rank order on the basis of the applications' total scores under paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this section.
- (c) If the total scores of two or more applications are the same and there is insufficient money available to fully fund them both after funding the higher-ranked applications, the Secretary chooses among the tied applications so as to serve geographic areas that have been underserved by the Student Support Services Program.
- (d) The Secretary does not make grants to applicants that carried out a Federal TRIO program project that involved the fraudulent use of funds.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-11 and 1070a-14)

Sec. 646.21 What selection criteria does the Secretary use to evaluate an application?

The Secretary uses the following criteria to evaluate an application for a new grant:

- (a) *Need for the project* (24 points). The Secretary evaluates the need for a Student Support Services project proposed at the applicant institution on the basis of the extent to which the application contains clear evidence of--
 - (1) (8 points) A high number or percentage, or both, of students enrolled or accepted for enrollment at the applicant institution who meet the eligibility requirements of Sec. 646.3;
 - (2) (8 points) The academic and other problems that eligible students encounter at the applicant institution; and
 - (3) (8 points) The differences between eligible Student Support Services students compared to an appropriate group, based on the following indicators:
 - (i) Retention and graduation rates.
 - (ii) Grade point averages.

- (iii) Graduate and professional school enrollment rates (four-year colleges only).
- (iv) Transfer rates from two-year to four-year institutions (two-year colleges only).
- (b) *Objectives* (8 points). The Secretary evaluates the quality of the applicant's proposed project objectives on the basis of the extent to which they--
 - (1) (2 points) Include performance, process and outcome objectives relating to each of the purposes of the Student Support Services Program stated in Sec. 646.1;
 - (2) (2 points) Address the identified needs of the proposed participants;
 - (3) (2 points) Are clearly described, specific, and measurable; and
 - (4) (2 points) Are ambitious but attainable within each budget period and the project period given the project budget and other resources.
- (c) *Plan of operation* (30 points). The Secretary evaluates the quality of the applicant's plan of operation on the basis of the following:
 - (1) (3 points) The plan to inform the institutional community (students, faculty, and staff) of the goals, objectives, and services of the project and the eligibility requirements for participation in the project.
 - (2) (3 points) The plan to identify, select, and retain project participants with academic need.
 - (3) (4 points) The plan for assessing each individual participant's need for specific services and monitoring his or her academic progress at the institution to ensure satisfactory academic progress.
 - (4) (10 points) The plan to provide services that address the goals and objectives of the project.
 - (5) (10 points) The applicant's plan to ensure proper and efficient administration of the project, including the organizational placement of the project; the time commitment of key project staff; the specific plans for financial management, student records management, and personnel management; and, where appropriate, its plan for coordination with other programs for disadvantaged students.
- (d) *Institutional commitment* (16 points). The Secretary evaluates the institutional commitment to the proposed project on the basis of the extent to which the applicant has--
 - (1) (6 points) Committed facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel, and other resources to supplement the grant and enhance project services;
 - (2) (6 points) Established administrative and academic policies that enhance participants' retention at the institution and improve their chances of graduating from the institution;
 - (3) (2 points) Demonstrated a commitment to minimize the dependence on student loans in developing financial aid packages for project participants by committing institutional resources to the extent possible; and
 - (4) (2 points) Assured the full cooperation and support of the Admissions, Student Aid, Registrar and data collection and analysis components of the institution.
- (e) *Quality of personnel* (9 points). To determine the quality of personnel the applicant plans to use, the Secretary looks for information that shows--
 - (1) (3 points) The qualifications required of the project director, including formal education and training in fields related to the objectives of the project, and experience in designing, managing, or implementing Student Support Services or similar projects;
 - (2) (3 points) The qualifications required of other personnel to be used in the project, including formal education, training, and work experience in fields related to the objectives of the project; and
 - (3) (3 points) The quality of the applicant's plan for employing personnel who have succeeded in overcoming barriers similar to those confronting the project's target population.
- (f) *Budget* (5 points). The Secretary evaluates the extent to which the project budget is reasonable, cost-effective, and adequate to support the project.
- (g) *Evaluation plan* (8 points). The Secretary evaluates the quality of the evaluation plan for the project on the basis of the extent to which--
 - (1) The applicant's methods for evaluation--
 - (i) (2 points) Are appropriate to the project and include both quantitative and qualitative evaluation measures; and
 - (ii) (2 points) Examine in specific and measurable ways, using appropriate baseline data, the success of the project in improving academic achievement, retention and graduation of project participants;
 - and
 - (2) (4 points) The applicant intends to use the results of an evaluation to make programmatic changes based upon the results of project evaluation.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1840-0017)

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-14)

Sec. 646.22 How does the Secretary evaluate prior experience?

(a) In the case of an application described in Sec. 646.20(a)(2)(i), the Secretary reviews information relating to an applicant's performance under its expiring Student Support Services project. This information may come from performance reports, site visit reports, project evaluation reports, and any other verifiable information submitted by the applicant.

Part III -- Program Narrative

The Secretary evaluates an application on the basis of the criteria in 34 CFR 646.21(a-g) of the SSS Program regulations. Applications should be written in a concise and clear manner.

Before preparing the Program Narrative, applicants should review the Notice, program statute, and program regulations for specific guidance and requirements. Note that applications will be evaluated according to the selection criteria specified in the Notice and this package.

A strong evaluation plan should be included in the Program Narrative and should be used, as appropriate, to shape the development of the project from the beginning of the grant period. The evaluation plan should include benchmarks to monitor progress toward specific project objectives and, also, program measures to assess the impact on teaching and learning or other important outcomes for project participants. More specifically, the plan should identify the individual and/or organization that has agreed to serve as evaluator for the project and describe the qualifications of the evaluator. The plan should describe the evaluation design, indicating: (1) what types of data will be collected, including the required GPRA indicators regarding postsecondary persistency and completion rates of SSS participants; (2) when various types of data will be collected; (3) what methods will be used; (4) what instruments will be developed and when; (5) how the data will be analyzed; (6) when reports and outcomes will be available; and (7) how the applicant will use the information collected through evaluation to monitor progress of the funded project and to provide accountability information both about success at the initial site and effective strategies for replication in other settings. Applicants are encouraged to devote an appropriate level of resources to project evaluation.

The Program Narrative should provide in detail the information that addresses each selection criteria. The program regulations, included in this package, contain detailed information on each selection criterion. The maximum possible score for each selection criterion is indicated in parenthesis.

1.	<u>Need</u> (34 CFR 646.21(a))	(24 points)
2.	<u>Objectives</u> (34 CFR 646.21(b))	(8 points)
3.	<u>Plan of Operation</u> (34 CFR 646.21(c))	(30 points)
4.	<u>Institutional Commitment</u> (34 CFR 646.21(d))	(16 points)
5.	<u>Quality of Personnel</u> (34 CFR 646.21(e))	(9 points)
6.	<u>Budget</u> (34 CFR 646.21(f))	(5 points)
7.	<u>Evaluation Plan</u> (34 CFR 646.21(g))	(8 points)

Total Maximum Score for Selection Criteria

100 points

In the Program Narrative, the applicant should address the selection criteria in the above order (1-5 and 7) because this is the order in which the Technical Review Form is organized: The Technical Review Form is used by the peer reviewers to evaluate applications.

Under Criterion 2-Objectives, applicants should address the proposed percent of participants who will:

- Persist toward completion of the academic programs in which they are enrolled, (which includes transfer to a four-year institution in the case of a two-year school).
- Meet academic performance levels required to stay in good academic standing at the applicant institution.
- Graduate each year, (which includes transfer to a four-year institution in the case of a two-year school).

The objectives for persistence and graduation must be measured based upon cohorts and must address the need identified in the “Need for the Project ” section. The measurement for two-year schools should be over a three-year period and four-year schools should measure over a six-year period. For example, an acceptable objective for a two-year school would be X percent of each cohort will graduate in three years. A similar measurement over six years is acceptable for four-year schools. A cohort is defined as all the students accepted into the SSS project during each project year. Multi-layered or compound objectives (those where the outcomes are dependent upon multiple conditions) are not acceptable.

Criterion 6 – Budget – should be addressed in the Budget Narrative.

Please note: The application Budget Narrative and Program Narrative, combined, cannot exceed 75 pages. The Notice contains specific instructions governing page limits.

Successful applicants will be required to report annually on the progress of the project, including the goals and objectives.

Additional Suggestions:

- Number each page of the application.
- The face sheet is the first page of the application. (ED 424).
- Do not include descriptive materials (appendices and attachments, including brochures, letters, reports, resumes, etc).
- Summarize the institutional commitments in the Narrative. Retain the actual letters of institutional commitment on file.

Part IV – Student Support Services Program ASSURANCES

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant will comply with the following statutory requirements:

1. The applicant assures that at least two-thirds (2/3) of the students that will participate in the project will be individuals with disabilities, and/or low-income individuals who also are first-generation college students; and that at least one-third (1/3) of the student participants who are individuals with disabilities also will be low-income individuals.
2. The applicant assures that the remaining students participating in the project be will either low-income individuals, first generation college students, or individuals with disabilities.
3. The person whose signature appears is authorized to sign this application and to commit the applicant to the above provisions.

Signature of Authorized Certifying Official

Title of Authorized Certifying Official

Application Organization

Date Signed

Part V -- Prior Experience

This part is to be completed only by those applicants that have been funded within the 2001 - 2004 grant cycle. This grant cycle began September 1, 2001, for four-year awards; September 1, 2002, for five-year awards; and September 1, 2003, and September 1, 2004, for all other grantees.

If an applicant for a new grant proposes to continue to serve substantially the same population or campus that the applicant is serving under the expiring grant, the Secretary evaluates the applicant's prior experience in delivering services under the expiring grant on the basis of the prior experience criteria in the SSS Program regulations (34 CFR 646.22). The applicant needs only to provide the information needed to evaluate the applicant's prior experience that is not covered by the performance reports. Based on the success of the applicant's prior experience, an applicant may receive up to fifteen (15) points.

Project Year 2003-2004:

The applicant **must submit the attached form** that details the project's accomplishments to date. The applicant should specifically report information, which addresses each of the prior experience criteria in the program regulations (34 CFR 646.22).

NOTE: Project Years 2001-2002 and 2002-2003. The due date for submitting performance reports for these years is now past. No changes or modifications to the information on file with the Department will be accepted.

Part V: Prior Experience – Accomplishments To Date -- For 2003-2004-ONLY -- no other data will be considered.

Name: _____ PR Award Number: P042A _____

Address: _____ Campus (es) _____

In this section state briefly your approved project objectives and report on the extent to which your project achieved each of these objectives. Provide specific data to support the accomplishment of each objective. Each of these objectives responds to the prior experience criteria contained in the program regulations (34 CFR 646.22) and appears on your approved Partnership Agreement if applicable.

CRITERIA	PROPOSED PERCENT	PROPOSED NUMBER	ACTUAL PERCENT	ACTUAL NUMBER	OBJECTIVES
Persistence					of eligible participants will persist toward completion of the academic programs in which they were enrolled.
Good Academic Standing					of eligible participants met academic performance levels required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee institution.
Graduation					of eligible participants will graduate each year.
Transfer					of eligible participants will transfer each year
Administration	100%				the extent to which the applicant has met the administrative requirements--including record keeping, reporting, and financial accountability. Provide the number of participants that were low-income and first-generation, _____ and individuals with disabilities _____ and low-income individuals with disabilities _____ to assure compliance with the 1/3 - 2/3 requirements. Low income only _____ first generation only _____.

Important Notice to Prospective Participants in U.S. Department of Education Contract and Grant Programs

Grants

Applicants for grants from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) have to compete for limited funds. Deadlines assure all applicants that they will be treated fairly and equally, without last minute haste. For these reasons, ED must set strict deadlines for all grant applications. Prospective applicants can avoid disappointment if they understand that:

Failure to meet a deadline will mean that an application will be rejected without consideration.

The rules, including the deadline, for applying for each grant are published, individually, in the *Federal Register*. A one-year subscription to the Register may be obtained by sending \$340.00 to: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9371. (Send check or money order only, no cash or stamps).

The instructions in the *Federal Register* must be used. Do not accept any other advice. No ED employee is authorized to extend any deadline published in the Register.

Questions regarding submission of applications may be addressed to:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Washington, DC 20202-4725

Contracts

Competitive procurement actions undertaken by ED are governed by the Federal Procurement Regulations and implementing ED Procurement Regulation.

Generally, prospective competitive procurement actions are synopsisized in the Commerce Business Daily (CBD). Prospective offers are therein advised of the nature of the procurement and where to apply for copies of the Request for Proposals (RFP).

Offers are advised to be guided solely by the contents of the CBD synopsis and the instructions contained in the RFP. Questions regarding the submission of offers should be addressed to the Contracts Specialist identified on the face page of the RFP.

Offers are judged in competition with others and failure to conform with any substantive requirements of the RFP will result in rejection of the offer without any consideration whatever.

Do not accept any advice you receive that is contrary to instructions contained in either the CBD synopsis or the RFP. No ED employee is authorized to consider a proposal which is non-responsive to the RFP.

A subscription to the CBD is available for \$208.00 per year via second class mailing of \$261.00 per year via first class mailing. Information included in the Federal Acquisition Regulation is contained in Title 48, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 1 (49.00). The foregoing publication may be obtained by sending your check or money order only, no cash or stamps, to:

Superintendent of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, DC 20402-9371

In an effort to be certain this important information is widely disseminated, this notice is being included in all ED mail to the public. You may, therefore, receive more than one notice. If you do, we apologize for any annoyance it may cause you.
