

Archived Information

FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Goal: To improve postsecondary education by making grants to institutions in support of reform and innovation. Legislation: Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, Title VII, Part B (20 U.S.C. 1138-1138d).	Funding History (\$ in millions)			
	Fiscal Year	Appropriation	Fiscal Year	Appropriation
	1985	\$13	2000	\$75*
	1990	\$12	2001	\$147**
	1995	\$18	2002 (Requested)	\$51

* \$44 million in earmarks
** \$116 million in earmarks

Program Description

The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) is “encouraging the reform, innovation, and improvement of postsecondary education, and providing equal educational opportunity for all.” (Section 741, Higher Education Act of 1965)

Through its grant competitions, FIPSE supports projects that provide innovative models to reform and improve postsecondary education. The goals of the FIPSE program are: (1) increasing participation and completion rates of students in postsecondary education; (2) facilitating advancements in institutional performance and improvements in the quality of teaching; and (3) encouraging international cooperation, student exchanges, and partnerships among higher education institutions and other organizations. FIPSE supports the following discretionary grant programs:

FIPSE Comprehensive Program—This program provides funds for projects focusing on finding solutions to common problems and promoting quality education. The program supplies seed capital for projects designed to foster educational reform and innovation in areas such as student access, retention, and completion; curricular reform; controlling the costs of postsecondary education; faculty development; and dissemination of successful postsecondary innovations. Each year, FIPSE staff and the education community target areas for reform and improvement.

Annual priorities for the Comprehensive Program are set by FIPSE with the advice of the FIPSE National Board. The FY 2001 award priorities for the Comprehensive Program include access, retention, and completion; improving campus climates for learning; curricular and pedagogical reform; making more productive use of resources to improve teaching and learning; faculty development; improving K-12 teaching and school; and dissemination of successful innovations.

FIPSE Special Focus Programs— These competitions fund a variety of projects that address a given problem area or “special focus” in postsecondary education. Currently, FIPSE administers three international consortia programs focusing on curricular development and student mobility. These programs are funded cooperatively by FIPSE and foreign government partners, and include the European Community (E.C.)/U.S., U.S./Canada/Mexico, and U.S./Brazil programs. The purpose of these programs is to foster student exchange within the context of multilateral curricular development and to encourage the exchange of expertise in new developments in higher education.

FIPSE disseminates information on its programs, current publications, guidelines, and technical assistance on its Web page, <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/FIPSE> and through publications. Four volumes of Lessons Learned highlight the most promising outcomes of FIPSE-funded projects. The *Current Project Descriptions* annual volumes provide abstracts of all FIPSE-funded projects.

Program Performance

OBJECTIVE 1: PROMOTE REFORMS THAT IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING AT POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS.

Indicator 1.1 Quality of postsecondary reforms: The percentage of innovative educational reforms that are tested and implemented will increase.				
Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>FIPSE projects scoring A or B</i>		<p>Status: Unable to judge. Target adjusted. The 2000 target of 100% was based on 100% of projects scoring an A, B, or C in 1999. The data now reflects projects scoring an A or B only.</p> <p>Explanation: Reflects quality of FIPSE's grant awards and improved monitoring systems. Expect project quality to remain at approximately this level, but will try to raise further.</p> <p>Final Score Card: 82 percent of projects scored "A" or "B" on the <u>final</u> score card for project <u>outcomes</u>, up 9 percent from last year. Special attention is being given to raising this number by improving the quality of "C" graded projects.</p> <p>Performance Score Card: 86 percent scored "A" or "B" on the <u>performance</u> score card for project <u>progress</u>.</p>	<p>Source: Final Report ScoreCard, Performance Report ScoreCard <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next collection update:</i> 2001. <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2002.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Data supplied by FIPSE program officers upon review of project final and annual reports.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Have revised form to match indicators more closely. Constructing new site visit instrument to collect on-site data on quality of reforms. Trial period for new virtual site visits (to be compared to traditional visits).</p>	
Year	Actual Performance			Performance Targets
1997:	84%			NA
1998:	88%			NA
1999:	73%			NA
2000:	82%-86% on two measures			100%
2001:				90%
2002:		90%		
Indicator 1.2 Replication of projects: The number of projects that are adapted in full or in part, or whose materials are used by other institutions, will increase over the number in previous years.				
Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>FIPSE grantees reporting full project dissemination to others</i>		<p>Status: Target not met. The 2000 target was based on 100% of projects with full or partial dissemination in 1999. The data now reflects full dissemination only.</p> <p>Explanation: FIPSE considers itself successful on this measure if 8.5 of every 10 projects result in project models being adapted on other campuses. A second measure shows that 61 percent of current grantees already have adoptions at other sites, even before the grants end.</p>	<p>Source: Final Report ScoreCard, Performance Report ScoreCard. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next collection update:</i> 2001 <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2002</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Visits by external evaluators. Same or similar questions in two score cards yield similar results.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Self-reported data. Data supplied by project directors in response to survey instruments. Have revised form to match indicators more closely. E-mail survey not used for 2000 indicators; need to revise to obtain a more representative sample of grantees for 2001 data. Planning an external evaluation of the Comprehensive Program through PES around these indicators.</p>	
Year	Actual Performance			Performance Targets
1998:	92%			NA
1999:	100%			NA
2000:	83% full adoptions at grant end			100%
2001:				85%
2002:				90%

OBJECTIVE 2: INCREASE PARTICIPATION AND COMPLETION RATES OF STUDENTS IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>Percentage of retention/completion projects reporting improved student persistence rates</i>			<p>Status: Target met.</p> <p>Explanation: Projects addressing persistence issues face numerous difficulties in implementation. Past experience suggests that a 75 percent success rate would be extraordinary. The 100 percent figure for 2000 was unexpected and is unlikely to be repeated. Sample is somewhat small because most grants include persistence in their grant goals but few are absolutely focused on persistence as the solitary goal.</p>	<p>Source: Final Report ScoreCard. <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next collection update:</i> 2001. <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2002.</p> <p>Validation Procedure:</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Data are self-reported. Data reported by directors of retention projects. Small sample size. Have revised form to match indicators more closely. Will amplify this data from The Pathways to College Network.</p>
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
1997:	48%	NA		
1998:	35%	NA		
1999:	62%	NA		
2000:	100% persistence	75%		
2001:		80%		
2002:		80%		

OBJECTIVE 3: INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF FIPSE PROGRAMS.

Targets and Performance Data			Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality
<i>Projects reporting full or partial institutionalization on their home campuses</i>			<p>Status: Target not met.</p> <p>Explanation: FIPSE's emphasis on institutional contributions to projects and development of long-term continuation plans are designed to embed projects within campus structures. Expect the rate of institutionalization to remain at this level, but will try to raise further.</p>	<p>Source: Final Report Score Card <i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next collection update:</i> 2001. <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2002.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Self-reports and campus visits by program officers. New common site visit evaluation form is being developed to validate narrative reports and furnish additional cross-project data. Difficult to quantify descriptive site visit reports without an accompanying evaluation data form requesting common data. Virtual site visits are being used on a trial basis.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Have revised form to match indicators more closely. Planning an external evaluation of the Comprehensive Program through PES around these indicators.</p>
Year	Actual Performance	Performance Targets		
1998:	93%	NA		
1999:	96%	NA		
2000:	94%	100%		
2001:		95%		
2002:		95%		

OBJECTIVE 4: IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FOR FIPSE PROGRAMS.

Indicator 4.1 Project directors, overall satisfaction with FIPSE programs and services: Satisfaction levels from previous year will be met or exceeded.				
Targets and Performance Data		Assessment of Progress	Sources and Data Quality	
<i>Percentage of grantees reporting that FIPSE staff provides full support</i>		<p>Status: Positive movement towards target.</p> <p>Explanation: A comprehensive set of monitoring procedures is being developed. <u>Annual</u> report guidelines have been approved by OMB, and we plan to revise <u>final</u> report guidelines this year to more closely focus on indicator variables.</p> <p>Project Survey: 84 percent of grantees report they have all the services they need.</p> <p>Meeting Evaluation: 90 percent of grantees rated 2000 Annual Meeting from good to outstanding. All 4 technical assistance sessions on grant and evaluation services were rated 95 percent or higher in satisfaction.</p> <p>Final Report Score Card: 92 percent satisfaction with support services.</p> <p>Performance Report Score Card: 98 percent satisfaction with support services.</p>	<p>Source: Annual project survey, 2000; evaluation survey of project directors at annual meeting, 2000; Final Report Score Card, annual, 2000; Performance Score Card, annual, 2000.</p> <p><i>Frequency:</i> Annually. <i>Next collection update:</i> 2001. <i>Date to be reported:</i> 2002.</p> <p>Validation Procedure: Triangulation of four measures noted above, all yielding similar results. Analysis of outreach workshops confirmed this data.</p> <p>Limitations of Data and Planned Improvements: Score Card revisions completed; E-mail survey, a fifth source, is being revised to obtain more representative sample from grantees. Also adding a grantee online database of our entire grant portfolio to serve grantees more efficiently.</p>	
Year	Actual Performance			Performance Targets
1997:	98%			NA
1998:	98%			NA
1999:	100%			NA
2000:	84-98% on 4 measures			100%
2001:				100%
2002:		100%		