



Smaller Learning Communities

FY 2007 Notice Inviting Applications

Angela Hernandez-Marshall

High School Programs

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

United States Department of Education





Smaller Learning Communities

Overview

- \$88,323,609 in available funds.
 - An estimated 40 grants will be made.
 - Awards made in June 2008.
- Notice inviting applications
 - November 26, 2007 *Federal Register*.
- Application package:
 - Grants.gov: *search CFDA #84.215*
- Deadlines:
 - January 10, 2008: Notice of intent to apply (optional).
 - February 25, 2008: Application submission.



Smaller Learning Communities

What's new?

- The priorities, requirements, and selection criteria are the same as those used in the July 17, 2007 competition.
- We changed some of the point values of the selection criteria.
- Applicants may not include high schools that are included in grants that extend beyond **September 30, 2008**.



Topics for Discussion

- Eligibility.
- Grant award and duration.
- Priorities.
- Program and application requirements.
- Selection criteria.
- Budget narrative.



Eligibility

Local educational agency

- Local educational agency (LEA)
 - with governing authority over schools in application;
OR
 - educational service agency, with support from LEA with governing authority over schools in application.
- Educational service agency
 - “A regional public multiservice agency authorized by State statute to develop, manage, and provide services or programs to local educational agencies.”
[sec. 9101(17) of ESEA]
- Includes charter school LEAs and schools funded by Bureau of Indian Education.



Eligibility

Consortium Applications

- A consortium of LEAs may apply as a group.
- Must include a consortium agreement that--
 - Details the activities that each member of the group plans to perform; and
 - Binds each member of the group to every statement and assurance made by the applicant in the application.
- Agreement must be signed by LEA official with authority to make legal commitments on behalf of LEA.
- An LEA may submit only one application.
 - Independently or as a member of a consortium.



Eligibility

Large public high school

- Apply on behalf of a large public high school that:
 - Includes grades 11 and 12; and
 - Has 1,000 or more students enrolled in grades 9 and above during most recent school year.
- Up to **8** high schools may be included in an application.
- High schools included in SLC grants that are active beyond September 30, 2008 **may not** be included.



Grant Award

Duration and Amount

- Grant awarded for up to 60 months.
- First 36 months: FY 07 award.
- Remaining 24 months: FY 09 award.
 - Grantee must demonstrate it has made substantial progress in achieving its goals.
- Maximum award amount = up to \$1.75 million per school over 60 months (not per year).
 - Amount determined by school enrollment.
 - Applications that exceed maximum amount *will not* be read as part of the regular review.



Grant Award

Amount (cont'd)

Grant Award Ranges

Student Enrollment	Award Ranges Per School (60 months)
1,000 – 2,000 Students	\$1 - \$1.25 million
2,001 – 3,000 Students	\$1 – \$1.5 million
3,000 Students and Up	\$1 - \$1.75 million



Priorities

Absolute priority (required)

- Preparing all students to succeed in postsecondary education and careers.
 - Projects that are part of a comprehensive effort to prepare all students to succeed in postsecondary education and careers without remediation.
- Use SLC grant funds *or* own funds to meet the absolute priority.
- Includes five required components.



Priorities

Absolute priority (cont'd)

1. Provide intensive interventions to assist students who enter high school with reading/language arts or math 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;



Priorities

Absolute priority (cont'd)

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;



Priorities

Absolute priority (cont'd)

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



Priorities

Competitive priority

- School districts with schools in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.
 - Projects that help LEAs implement academic and structural interventions in schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under ESEA, as amended by NCLB.
- *Note:* Only applies to schools that receive Title I funds.
- Four (4) additional points awarded to applications that meet this priority.



Priorities

Competitive priority

- 4 points are awarded if the application includes *at least one* Title I school that has been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.
 - NOT 4 points for *each* school.
- If you seek the preference points, you must provide evidence that you meet the priority in your application.
 - Copy of letter from State education agency or published list from State education agency.



Priorities

Invitational priority

- Applications that propose to engage faith-based and community organizations in the delivery of services under this program.
 - Applicants are not required to address this priority.
 - We do not award additional points to applicants that address this priority.



Definitions

Smaller learning community

- “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.”
 - Freshman academies, “houses,” career academies, and other structures.
 - Student advisories, mentoring programs, and other personalization strategies.



Requirements

Including all students

- Projects must include every student within the school by no later than the end of the 5th school year of implementation.
 - Does not require assignment of all students to academies or other smaller organizational units.
 - While we expect projects to include a structural component, applicants determine how to create the environment of strong personal and academic support described by the SLC definition.
 - One of the selection criteria evaluates the extent to which project is likely to be effective in creating this environment for “each student.”



Requirements

Student placement

- Students may not be placed in an SLC structure according to ability or any other measure (e.g., test scores, grades).
- Placement must be random or by student or parent choice.
- Prohibited uses of funds:
 - “Newcomers’ Academy,” in which all students with limited English proficiency are placed in a single structure.
 - “Honors Academy,” in which students with high test scores or GPAs are placed in a single structure.



Requirements

Student placement (cont'd)

- What if the school already hosts a selective admission magnet academy or “newcomer academy?”
 - Does not disqualify the school from receiving SLC funds, but funds may not be used *directly or indirectly* to support structures that do not adhere to the student placement requirements.
 - Disclose the structures that do not follow the student placement requirements in your application and assure that SLC funds will not be used directly or indirectly to support these structures.



Requirements

Student placement (cont'd)

- Requirement does **not** apply to placement of students in specific courses or activities.
- Examples of permissible activities—
 - Assigning students to supplemental reading programs based on test scores.
 - Requiring students to participate in after-school tutoring based on test scores or grades.
 - Requiring completion of prerequisites for enrollment in specific courses.
 - Requiring teacher recommendation for enrolling in co-op and other work-based learning programs.



Requirements

Evaluation

- Applicants must support an evaluation of the project.
 - Conducted by independent party not involved in project implementation.
 - Produce annual reports for each of first 4 years, and a final report at the end of the 5th year.
- Evaluation should provide information that will be useful in gauging the project's progress and in identifying areas for improvement.
 - Audience for evaluation is project director and school personnel, not ED.



Requirements

Performance indicators

- % of students who score at the proficient and advanced levels on NCLB reading/ELA and math assessments.
 - All students
 - Major racial and ethnic groups.
 - Students with disabilities.
 - Students with limited English proficiency.
 - Economically disadvantaged students.
- School's graduation rate, as defined in your state's approved Title I accountability plan.



Requirements

Performance indicators (cont'd)

- % of graduates who enroll in postsecondary education, advanced training, or a registered apprenticeship program in the semester following high school graduation.
- Other indicators identified by applicant, if any.
- For each indicator:
 - Baseline data and performance targets for each year of the project.
- You will report annually on these indicators.
 - Think about how your evaluator can help with this.



Requirements

Other documents to include

- For each school in the application, the most recent NCLB “report card” produced by the state or the LEA.
- A copy of your approved indirect cost rate agreement (if you wish to charge indirect costs to the grant).
 - You may not charge indirect costs to the grant if you do not include a copy of the agreement in your application.
- Resumes or job descriptions for project director and key personnel.



Selection Criteria

Reminder

- In addressing the selection criteria, you can discuss activities that you are or will be supporting with your own or other funds, as well as activities that will be supported with grant funds.



Selection Criteria

Need for the Project (6 points)

- The magnitude of the need for the services that will be provided and the activities that will be carried out by the proposed project.
 - Your demonstration of need is linked to the services and activities for which you will use SLC grant funds.
 - How great a need is there for what you are proposing to provide with SLC grant funds?



Selection Criteria

Quality of Project Design

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 (5 points);
 - Note that the criterion evaluates not just support for the proposed project, but the extent to which there will be continued involvement in project development and implementation.
 - Remember to address all four categories—teachers, school administrators, parents, and community stakeholders.



Selection Criteria

Quality of Project Design

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 (5);
 - Grants awarded in June 2008.
 - Implementation in the 2008-09 school year.
 - Applicants that propose only planning activities in Year 1 are unlikely to be rated highly.



Selection Criteria

Quality of Project Design

3. School administrators, teachers, and other school employees will receive effective, ongoing technical assistance and support in implementing structural and instructional reforms (7);
 - Note that the criterion evaluates the extent to which “effective” and “ongoing” technical assistance and support will be provided.
 - The criterion mentions both “structural and instructional reforms.”



Selection Criteria

Quality of Project Design

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 (7); and
 - What courses do you/will you offer “all students” that address the criterion? Be specific.
 - Do they provide the knowledge and skills described in the criterion? Explain why you think they will.



Selection Criteria

Quality of Project Design

5. The proposed project is part of a districtwide strategy for high school redesign and strengthens the district's capacity to develop and implement SLCs and improve student academic achievement as part of that strategy (1).
 - What is the LEA's strategy for high school redesign?
 - How does the project strengthen the LEA's capacity to implement SLCs and improve academic achievement as part of that strategy?



Selection Criteria

Quality of Project Services

Extent to which 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 (9);
 - Evaluates the extent to which the project will provide the environment described in the SLC definition.
 - Recall that all students must be included by the end of the 5th year of the project.



Selection Criteria

Quality of Project Services

Extent to which project is likely to be effective in—

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 (8);
 - The *Quality of Project Design* criterion focused on course offerings.
 - This criterion evaluates the likely effectiveness of the strategies, activities, and services the project will implement to help all students acquire the knowledge and skills taught in these courses.



Selection Criteria

Quality of Project Services

Extent to which project is likely to be effective in—

3. Helping students who enter high school with **reading/English language arts** or **math** skills that are significantly below grade-level “catch up” quickly and attain proficiency by the end of the 10th grade (8);
 - Reviewers evaluate the extent to which the strategies or interventions you describe are “likely to be effective.” Explain why you think they will be.
 - Consider how your response here relates to how you addressed the preceding “Equipping all students” criterion. Are they consistent?



Selection Criteria

Quality of Project Services

Extent to which project is likely to be effective in—

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 (8);
 - The criterion includes not only professional development, but also “coaching,” “regular opportunities for collaboration with peers,” and “other supports.”
 - Note the references to implementing a “rigorous curriculum” and “high-quality instruction.”



Selection Criteria

Quality of Project Services

Extent to which project is likely to be effective in—

5. Increasing the participation of students, particularly low-income students, in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual credit courses (8);
 - How will your project not just offer these courses, but “increase the participation of students, particularly low-income students” in them?
 - Remember to explain why what you describe is “likely to be effective.”



Selection Criteria

Quality of Project Services

Extent to which project is likely to be effective in—

5. Increasing the percentage of students who enter postsecondary education in the semester following high school graduation (8).
 - Your responses to earlier criteria may tie in with your response to this one.
 - Note that the criterion asks about “increasing” postsecondary enrollment.
 - Remember to explain why what you describe is “likely to be effective.”



Selection Criteria

Support for Implementation

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 (7);
 - Note references to “clearly defined responsibilities” and “detailed timelines.”
 - This is the “road map” for implementing your project.



Selection Criteria

Support for Implementation

Extent to which—

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 (4);
 - Include resumes under *Other Attachments*. You may cross-reference them here.
 - If personnel have not been identified, describe their duties and required qualifications.



Selection Criteria

Support for Implementation

Extent to which—

3. The applicant will support the proposed project with funds provided under other Federal or State programs and local cash or in-kind resources (2); and
 - Note that you also must detail non-Federal contributions in the *Budget Narrative* and in Section B of the ED Form 524.
 - Reviewers will consider this information.
 - Be sure that you can fulfill the commitments you make here.



Selection Criteria

Support for Implementation

Extent to which—

3. 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 (2).
 - Note that reviewers also will be considering the information you present in the *Budget Narrative* and in Section A of ED Form 524.



Selection Criteria

Quality of the Project Evaluation

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 (3); and
 - Remember that we require you to submit annual evaluation reports for each of first 4 years, and a final report at the end of the 5th year.



Selection Criteria

Quality of the Project Evaluation

Extent to which—

2. The independent evaluator is qualified to conduct the evaluation (2).
 - Include resumes under *Other Attachments*. You may cross-reference them here.
 - If the personnel have not been identified, describe their duties and required qualifications.



Application Narrative

Recommendations

- Address the selection criteria in order.
- Limit the narrative to 40 pages (recommended, not required).
 - Clear, concise, and well-focused narratives tend to score more highly.
- Be sure to describe the specific needs and circumstances of each school in your application and how your project addresses them.
- Set clear, measurable goals and objectives for your proposed project.



Application Narrative

Recommendations

- Provide a detailed management plan.
- Limit attachments and appendices to no more than 20 pages (recommended, not required).
 - Does not include resumes, school report cards, the indirect cost agreement, or letters of support.
 - Be sure that your attachments are necessary to explain and support your application narrative.
- File formats.
 - All files you submit must be in one of the following formats: .DOC (document), .RTF (rich text), or .PDF (Portable Document) format.
 - Accept “track changes” in Word before submitting.



Budget Narrative

Reminders

- Prepare budgets for each year of the project.
- Reviewers consider your proposed budget.
 - Criterion D(4): 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.”
- ED staff review your proposed budget prior to award (34 CFR 75.232).
 - “Necessary, reasonable, and allowable” costs.
 - “Reasonable efficiency and economy.”



Budget Narrative

Recommendations

- Review OMB Circular A-87, *Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments*.
 - See application package for web address.
- Describe costs in detail.
 - Review recommended guidelines in application package.
 - Describe the basis for cost estimates.
 - Explain how budget items relate to project goals and objectives.



Budget Narrative

Frequently Asked Questions

- We do not require matching funds.
- Indirect cost rate.
 - May use either *unrestricted* or *restricted* rate; include indirect cost rate agreement in application.
- “Training stipends” line item.
 - Not applicable: include stipends paid to teachers for professional development under *Personnel*.
- District use of funds.
 - No limit on funds used for district-level activities, provided they support project implementation by the *schools in the application*.



Deadlines

- Notice of intent to apply:
 - Encouraged, not required.
 - Deadline: **January 10, 2008.**
 - Address: smallerlearningcommunities@ed.gov.
- Application:
 - Deadline: **February 25, 2008.**
 - Must be submitted by 4:30 pm, Washington, DC time.
 - Grants.gov.

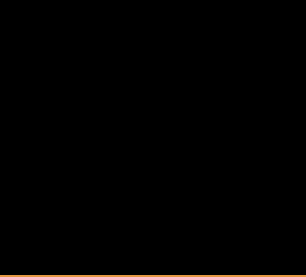


Questions?

Key Contact

Angela Hernandez-Marshall
Team Leader, Smaller Learning Communities
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 3W236
Washington, DC 20202-6200.
Telephone: (202) 205-1909.
Email: smallerlearningcommunities@ed.gov





Questions?